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Narratives of Home and Away:
Rural Youth Migration from the Gaspe Peninsula

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Sociology and Anthropology

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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Abstract

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Richard Element

The communities of the Gaspe Peninsula are in the midst of social and economic restructuring. This has led to the establishment of a culture of migration, most notably within the youth population of the region. This trend stems from a combination of factors such as a lack of jobs and services in the Gaspe, social demands for professional training and higher education, parental expectations for their children, community norms, migration networks, rural stigmas, the influence of media and popular culture and the allure of the city. These trends have resulted in a population imbalance, a loss of human capital and lagging socioeconomic conditions in the region.

This thesis is the result of a case study of Anglophone Gaspesian youths and the social construction of rural to urban migration. It explores how youths construct their view of 'the rural' and 'the urban' and how they use these views to form migration decisions. It discusses the to influence of deep-rooted migration networks as links and facilitators in rural to urban migration streams.

Finally, it demonstrates how youths are active interpreters, critics and agents, and how their experience, knowledge, and opinions can offer valuable insights into discussions of rural development.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to all the people who offered insight, motivation or simply a pat on the back throughout the process of this work. Writing is a craft that often requires a little spark from the outside. Thanks.

I would especially like to thank William Reimer, Anna Woodrow and the NRE research team for their encouragement, support and valuable suggestions throughout the writing of this thesis. I wish them all the best in their efforts to help reshape rural Canada. I would also like to thank Vered Amit-Talai, Melissa Clark-Jones and Jody Staveley for lending their help, hope and interest. I am deeply in debt to Jodie Boyle, whose sharp eye and knack for literary flow will certainly be appreciated throughout the reading of these pages. I would also like to give a special thanks to Teri, Dale, Janine, and my family for gauging my progress and making sure that I had my priorities straight, eventually. Finally, I would like to thank all the Gaspesians 'home' and 'away', who participated in this project. Their ideas and opinions lie at the core of this project and in the search for a solution.

Table of Contents

The Gaspe Peninsula, Quebec, Canada

Source: Gaspe Tourist Information, www.gaspesie.ca
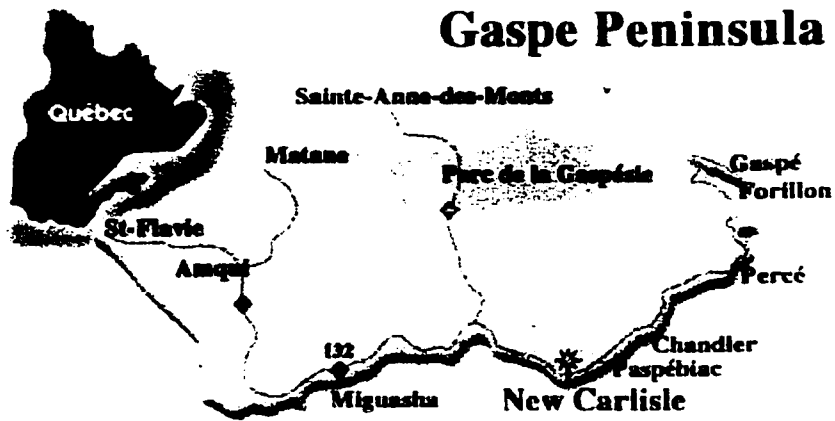
Gaspe Peninsula

Source: Gaspe Tourist Information, www.gaspesie.ca

Introduction: The Place, the People and the Problem

The Gaspe Peninsula is a region of Eastern Quebec composed of small to medium sized communities (pop. 1500 to 5000) scattered like out-ports along the coastline. It lies south of the St. Lawrence River and spans the coastline from Ste. Anne des Monts to Matapedia. While the region has long been a staple provider for Canadian manufacturing, it is known primarily for its historic significance. It is this point of land which is recognized as Jacques Cartier's first North American landing and meeting with Natives; "Before he ever reached Hochelaga or named its forested landmark Mount Royal," Abley notes in a Montreal Gazette tourism article, "Cartier had made landfall at Gaspe" (Abley, The Gazette, 1998). Gaspe's historic value, and scenic appeal, is reflected in the increasing revenue of the tourism industry, which has become the region's developmental focus.

Beyond the historic and aesthetic appeal that is marketed to tourists however, the communities of the Peninsula are in the midst of change and transition. For more than a decade the socioeconomic conditions of the Peninsula have been in steady decline. Closure and cutbacks in the region's primary industries (forestry, fishing and mining), and the depletion of major resources, have produced one of the highest regional rates of unemployment in the country. The cumulative effects of this decline have taken root in public consciousness and public opinion of the region. The Gaspe has become a place in waiting. It is described by the people as a place of opportunity past, a place where remembering and recounting the "good times" seem more important than looking forward and planning. It is a place where tourists come to visit, to witness the history of the traditional self-sufficient way of life that has come to pass; most importantly, it is a

place with a questionable future, a place in which youth are socialized and encouraged to leave. For the youth of the region who have grown up with the support of kin and the extended family, the scenario is not as simple as it sounds. Warkentin explains,

> *Yet despite such changes, there is consistency of life in the Gaspe-South Shore region. Life has never been easy, and in that respect it is like so many parts of Atlantic Canada. In fact, it has been said that the Gaspe is Quebec's Newfoundland. Bureaucrats, whether in Quebec City, Ottawa, or employed by large corporations, have difficulty understanding isolated communities that have deep roots* (Warkentin, 1997: 253).

Life in the region has always been difficult as Warkentin suggests, but the most recent decline began with the closure of the ground fishery in the early 1990's. The moratorium had a devastating impact on the communities of the peninsula. Eliminating hundreds of jobs for a largely single-skilled, one-dimensional labour force, the moratorium has left many questions about the future of the region, as it had done in a large number Atlantic fishing-based communities throughout New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador (Felt and Sinclair, 1995).

This event stood as a clear sign of the fragility of natural resources, resource-based industry and the consequences for communities and individuals that sustain themselves through the harvesting of resources. Within a backdrop of economic decline, this event has led many individuals and families to the conclusion that their best interest lie outside of the region.

The ensuing decade brought increased unemployment, out-migration and government subsidies such as the TAGS program. TAGS was a government subsidy program expected to alleviate and balance lost income to fishery employees (fishers and fish plant workers), and help to sustain the population while the rural economy recovered from the impact of the fishery closure and the subsequent restructuring. Rather than

3

relieve public tension however, TAGS had a demoralizing effect on the population. It became a paid waiting period, wherein individuals accepted the payments to offset the cost of living while they awaited the end of the moratorium and the reopening of the ground fishery (Calhoun, 2002). However, the moratorium did not end as planned after the initial five-year period and the ground fishery did not reopen. When the TAGS program did run out, the region was still unable to develop alternative sources of employment. From this point forward, the Gaspe continued to experience a slow and steady decline in all of its primary industries.

With the end of the TAGS program, hundreds of ex-fishery employees found themselves unemployed and in financial need; out-migration and poverty continued to increase. The government responded with a series of initiatives to stimulate local economic growth, and to slowly alleviate the dependency on transfer payments and top-down development models, such as TAGS. This initiative encouraged bottom-up development through entrepreneurship and community capacity building. As a result, the communities of the Gaspe Peninsula began the slow processes of economic reorganization, rethinking, restructuring, redeveloping, modernizing and diversifying which have come to characterize successful rural economies. As is the case with most efforts of collective attitudinal and occupational transition, the results have been minimal and have been gained slowly, through cooperation, collaboration and time.

In spite of these efforts however, the trend of resource depletion and industrial stagnation has continued to persist in the region. In 1999, Abitibi Consolidated closed the paper mill in Chandler, displacing 200 employees; more recently, Noranda Mines Inc. closed the last smelter of the Murdochville Mines, terminating fifty years of mining in

Murdochville, displacing the remaining workforce and threatening the very existence of this isolated single-industry town. With an ageing, single-skilled population, questions are still being asked about the potential of a town such as Murdochville, and the overall potential and capacity of the entire region to regenerate stable employment and growth.

The only industry that has proven successful has been tourism. Although there is high potential in this industry, as both federal and provincial governments have continued to support tourism growth with increased funding and investment, there are a number of lingering debates with regard to the nature of rural tourist development. First, it is a concern that tourism is predominantly a seasonal industry throughout the Gaspe Peninsula, and seasonal employment is not the ideal scenario on which to base the rebuilding of an economy and population. Second, although there are many facets of tourism, focusing exclusively on the development of tourism to re-instigate the lagging economy this is once again a one-directional development approach; as a result the economic well-being of the region remains contingent on fluctuations in the economy and to trends in the tourism industry. Third, tourist-centered development has hindered industrial and retail development, as well as efforts to modernize the region. Images of modernity, such as fast food restaurants and industrialization, stand in direct contrast to the images of the Peninsula being sold by the tourism industry. Finally, the development of tourism has been received with mixed feelings within the general population, due to increased spending on the development of tourist sites which have very little community connection and overshadow demands for local development. The direction of these debates continues to influence the future of development and tourism in the Gaspe.

A decade has passed since the cod-fishing moratorium, and although industry has slowly begun to branch and diversify, there has been no real resurgence of employment opportunities. There are signs of change, but change is slow and the local morale is down. This lagging development has brought a growing sentiment of discontent and uncertainty toward the region's economic dependency, lack of development on both economic and social grounds and lack of opportunity. Cumulatively, this social unease has resulted in rising levels of out-migration especially within the youth population. This exodus has continued to drain the region of its population base, labour force, and most importantly, its precious human capital. Human capital essentially represents the most vital link in the process of rural resurgence and diversification (Rothwell, Bollman, Tremblay and Marshall, 2002).

Table 1.1

NET MIGRATION IN THE 6 CSD'S OF THE GASPE PENINSULA, 1992-93 TO 1995-96
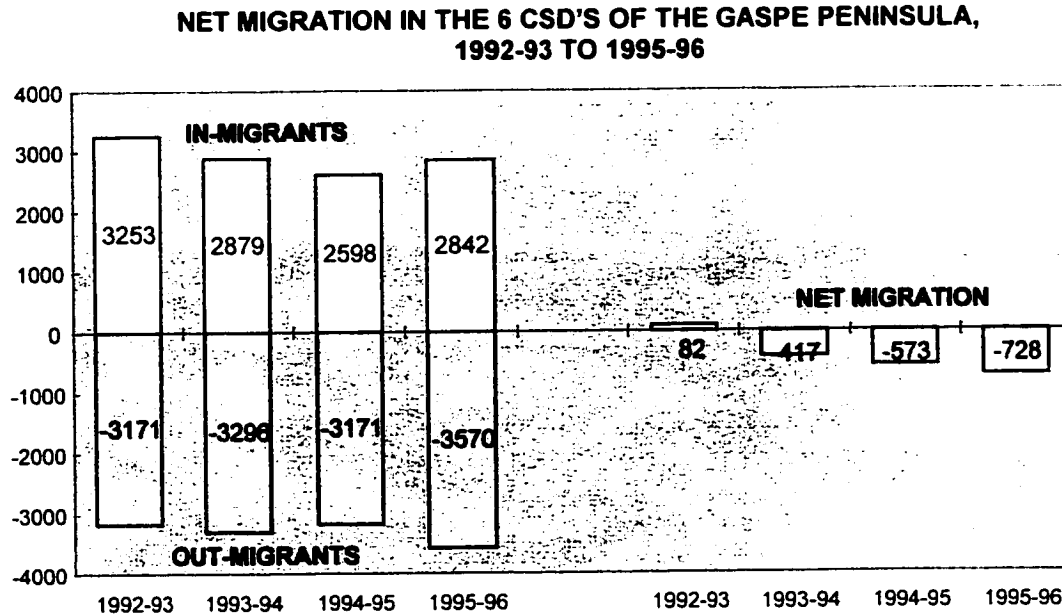
Source: Human Resources Development Canada, Gaspe, Michel Lecroix: 1998.

Out-migration is not a recent phenomenon in the Gaspe; it has been a recognized phenomenon in this region for the past thirty years (Smith:1970; Warkentin 1997). Historically, Gaspesians have departed for many reasons, some due to the economic conditions, others in response to the unsettling political climate of separation and referendum, and others still for the promise of opportunity and potential in urban centers. Throughout these shifting trends of out-migration, youth migration has always been particularly problematic.

Sociologists have long recognized the trend of youth to leave their childhood communities in search of independence, education, employment and diversity (Dupuy, Mayer, Morissette, 2002; Hajesz and Hajesz and Dawe, 1997). In the past, the trend of youth migration existed in a more balanced demographic form. Two groups have typically offset the region's departing youth. First, although many youth were leaving the Gaspe, many of their peers remained in the region to pursue employment in the resource industries. Second, certain young adults returned to the region from their experience and education in urban centers, to start careers or to begin building families within the support and security of parents, kin and community (Rothwell, Bollman, Tremblay and Marshall, 2002). Table 1.2 depicts how this balance has continued to shift as the numbers of departing youth continue to grow, while the numbers of youth that remain or return to the region have continued to drop.

Despite a national resurgence of rural youth in-migration throughout other parts of Canada (Tremblay 2002), young people have continued to leave the Peninsula. The 2001 Census report validated local perceptions by documenting that the region has

Table 1.2

NET MIGRATION IN THE GASPE PENINSULA, 1992-93 TO 1995-96
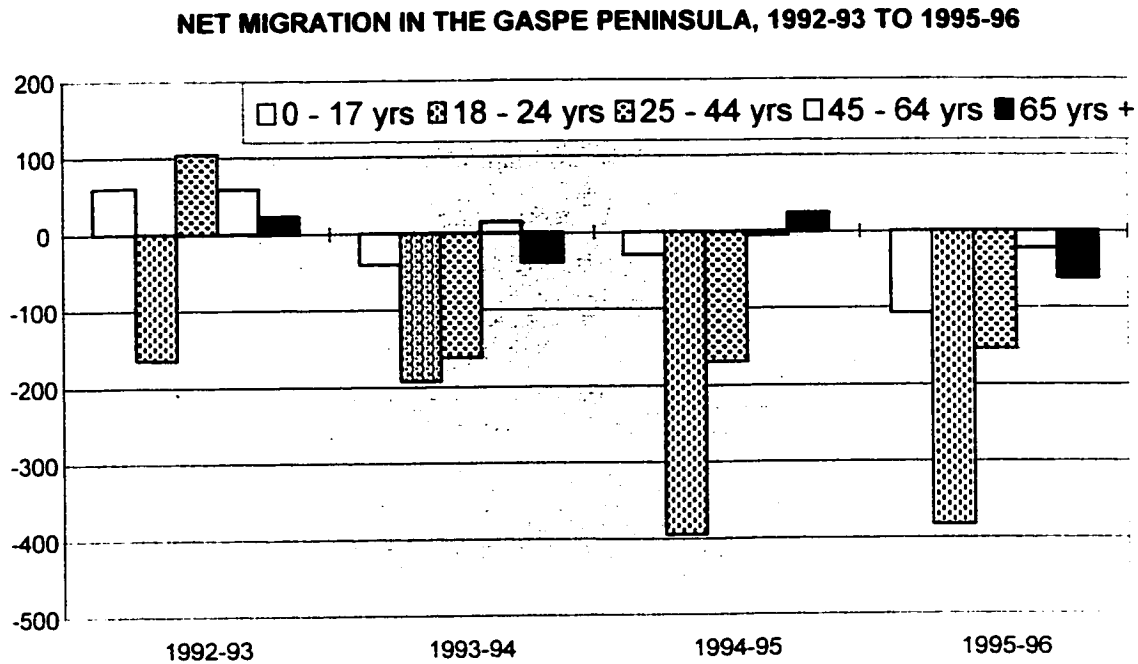
Source: Human Resources Development Canada, Gaspe, Michel Lecroix: 1998.

continued to experience population loss, which reached 7.8% between 1996 and 2001 (SPEC, vol. 28, No. 11).

In the midst of this uncertainty, education and training have become a highly expected norm for the present generation of young Gaspesians. Decades of hardship and unemployment have led peers, parents, educators and schools to encourage education as a means of progress and consequently, as a means of escaping the uncertainty of the region. The youth have been receptive to this changing norm, as the majority is making efforts to attain some level of post secondary education or training. These youth have witnessed the hardships that their families and communities have incurred, and they see education as a more flexible and stable route into the future. However, this changing norm presents two problems: first, the demand for education and training lead many of the youth away from

the region; furthermore, the educated youth are not able to return to the region, as limited diversity and opportunity prevent them from reestablishing themselves in the region after completing their education. This in essence is the root of the migration imbalance, which is slowly changing the demographic profile of the region. With a shrinking youth and young adult population, the potential of human capital continues to drop and with it, so does the potential for socioeconomic re-growth.

The Gaspe now stands in a precarious position of social and economic transition, from primary industry to secondary and tertiary industry. Research has demonstrated how such transition leads to periods of unemployment increase and youth out-migration (Haurin, 1988). As is the case with many rural and arguably more traditional societies, change occurs at a slow pace, a process that few youth are willing to expose themselves to. Migration thus becomes the most predominant norm of youth, as they are socialized to accept this and are educated to see their future elsewhere.

Rural youth as conscious agents in the construction of their reality (Hayes, 1998), describe the Gaspe as lacking support. Lacking in services, entertainment, diversity, options and most importantly potential for the future, rural society falls short of meeting the expectations and standards of today's youth. Reinforced by images of popular culture, which for the most part are unrelated to rural life, youth express a growing sense of frustration and nihilism toward their culture, environment and most importantly, their identity. They relate and interact within a cultural framework that alienates them and which they intend to leave, further establishing the culture of migration and making the process of transition towards development and growth in the region much more challenging.

9

Transition and change are necessary parts of any society, but in the case of the Gaspe, transition and growth are required as a basis on which to assure the existing population that there are alternatives and that there is potential for growth and redevelopment in the region.

This thesis seeks to explore what it means for young people to grow up in a community that is in the midst of such social and economic upheaval. It is the result of a case study of youth, and the experience of cultural negotiation and decision making, within the context of the Gaspe Peninsula. Through the use of youth narrative, I discuss how Gaspesian Youth experience and construct their reality and which factors influence their decisions to stay or to leave.

Chapter 1 outlines the theoretical background of the study; Chapter 2 details the methodological procedure; and Chapter 3 examines the youth perspective by attempting to depict how high school and college students construct and deconstruct 'the rural' and 'the urban' experience. In addition, Chapter 4 presents a description of a culture or institution of migration from the Gaspe Peninsula, and Chapter 5 presents a look at regional development from the point of view of the youth, while presenting local examples of community redevelopment. Finally, it concludes with suggestions and possible inroads toward a solution to the problem of rural youth migration and local development.

Purpose of the Project

In developing this paper I attempt to cover five main objectives. First, I want to elaborate on the subject of rural youth migration from the point of view of youth. Far too many studies present this topic from an economic reductionist-perspective,

oversimplifying the issue and robbing the youth of any agency in the decision-making process. Second, migration studies have tended to focus on international migratory trends and populations – conversely, I wanted to show how these trends exist with similar patterns within the national picture as well. Third, most migratory studies focus on statistical analysis. Statistics gain important general insight into the movement of people but often overlook some of the more human components and underlying details that influence and structure migration patterns. I wanted to construct a micro level analysis of a migrating population, in an effort to compliment the statistical data by gaining more insight and detail into the decision making process of youth, and the experience of migration. Fourth, I wanted to add to the ongoing discussion of rural development by presenting a dialogue of youth perspectives on development in the Gaspe. Gaspesian youth feel that all areas of the population were uninformed and underused in the process of municipal decision-making. It was the feeling of the youth that the best way to stimulate a population was by having them participate. Finally, I wanted to create a document that would serve as a resource that could be used by Gaspesians to generate ideas with regard to establishing a confident and comfortable youth culture on the Peninsula.

Chapter 1
Theoretical Framework: Migration, Youth, Development and the Gaspe Peninsula

General Introduction to Movement and Migration

> *Everyone is now caught between local origins and a cosmopolitan society
> in which all humanity increasingly participates'; human society is
> becoming more singular and inclusive.*
> (Rapport, 1997: 7)

> *Movement around the globe represents the quintessential experience of our time.*
> (Berger, 1984: 55)

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of humans is their propensity to migrate: "In a world of 100 million immigrants . . . migration is a major social phenomenon" (Sowell, 1996: 1). The linguistic, social, and nationalistic mixing of much of the world's population illustrates this mobility. Although the human population has always been mobile, its mobility has accelerated with economic and technological progress, particularly in the fields of communication and transportation.

Hundreds of thousands of people move annually into Canadian and global locations that are new and foreign to them. Between one and two hundred thousand come to Canada from other countries, while a constant stream of Canadians move within their own country (Peters & Larkin, 1993). They go from one province to another, from one city to another, from rural to urban areas, and from Native reserves to cities and towns.

Thousands of youth travel each summer to see the world, to search for employment, or simply to seek adventure and education. In addition, there are the adult transients: business people, contractors, athletes, entertainers, wanderers, refugees, etc. Some are established and some are in search of establishment. In fact, migration has developed into a very diverse phenomenon within this global world.

Migration has always been a feature of Canadian life, but the patterns of migration have changed in contemporary times, complicating the stages of adaptation to new environments and the settling-in process.

This paper is concerned not so much with the actual act of moving, or the magnitude and patterns by which it occurs, although these topics are touched on, the focus will be on the community, and individual components of migration. Guilmoto explains the importance of this perspective in stating, "the recognition of the complex interplay between social structure and human agency in shaping migration behaviour suggests the use of factors at various levels to account for the effects of personal, family and community characteristics on migration decisions and migration forms" (Guilmoto, 1998: 85).

Because migration involves leaving one place and entering another, two populations must be considered: the population of the area of origin, and the population in the area of destination. This examination of migration will refer primarily to the former (population in the area of origin), although it is impossible to avoid mention of the latter (population in the area of destination). However, before entering a discussion of the roots, repercussions, and results of migration experienced at the community level, I would like, as a means of introduction, to briefly discuss the various principles and theories of migration that have been generated thus far, and the social characteristics of migrating populations.

This discussion of migration will depict a regression, or degenerative movement, from the very general global socioeconomic conditions in which the current notion of migration is rooted, to a very local example of one region's trials with the persistent

13

problem of youth migration. Throughout this study, it would be to the reader's benefit to keep in mind that the topic is principally being viewed in a rural context, in which a youth population is the primary focus group. Within current sociological and migration-based literature, there appears to be a void in the area of rural youth migration, so this paper should play a small role in contributing some understanding to this area of inquiry.

Characteristics and Components of Migration

Before proceeding directly into a discussion of the causes and consequences of migration from the rural area, it is important to provide some background information on the migration process. Included are the forms of migration and the characteristics of migrants, or migration selectivity, that have been made available in the literature.

1 - Forms of Migration

It is clear that migration can take on many forms. Although the simplest explanation, and the most widely held view, is that migration streams are comprised of individuals, or perhaps families, moving freely from place to place, this has not always been the typical migration pattern. Several types of migration have been defined, notably *primitive migration, group or mass migration, free-individual migration, restricted migration,* and *impelled* or *forced migration* (Peters & Larkin, 1993). Since internal migration – the change in residence within a country – is the focus of this paper, with specific emphasis on migration from rural Canadian communities, it would only be appropriate to restrict this discussion to the migration forms that are most readily apparent in this refined context. These include the various categories of free-individual migration, and group or mass migration.

14

2 - Free-Individual Migration

Free-individual migration has been one of the more dominant forms of migration since the seventeenth century (Peters & Larkin, 1993: 221). With the advent of transportation technology, and increased individualization or free will of individuals in developed societies, free-individual migration can now be considered the dominant form of internal migration in North America. Fairchild, defines free-individual migration as "the movement of people, individual or in families, acting on their own initiative and responsibility, without official support or compulsion, passing from one well-developed country to another well-developed country with the intention of settling there permanently" (Fairchild in Peters & Larkin, 1993: 221).

Individual migration can take several forms, Guilmoto states: "population movements fall along a time continuum ranging from short absences to permanent changes in residence" (Guilmoto, 1998, 85). For the purpose of this discussion, we will limit our description to the forms experienced by youth, which include labour migration (both short and long term) and education migration.

Short-term labour migration or migrant labour is characterized by a temporary change in residence, serving as a means of temporary employment. This form of labour migration is often seasonal, where the migrant's income is earned over a relatively short period of time in the year. The majority of this time is spent working, and little money is spent. Contact with the community of origin is maintained and money is often sent back to members of the immediate family. Short-term labour migration is an effective means of solving an unemployment problem in the community of origin, while not having to undertake a permanent detachment from kin, in an area of high personal attachment. In

this respect, shorter terms of labour migration are more often undertaken by an older

population, as family (children in schools) and homes limit their mobility (Guilmoto.

1998: 95). Short-term migration may also act as a means of acquiring full. or completing

partial requirements for, unemployment insurance benefits that would allow the

individual to return to the community of origin. With respect to rural youth, this form of

migration would most often occur for summer employment prospects, and may be a clear

reflection of the lack of local employment opportunities.

In this case, the migrant also assumes a secondary role as community diplomat, or

representative of a larger society, revitalizing and even enlarging the community beyond

its own borders. Gendreau (1998) understands it in this way:

> *In fact, these are the ones who left with the idea of returning, and who not*
> *only re-create or stimulate their native culture in new directions, but also*
> *maintain an intense "long distance" communication with their place of*
> *origin --by telephone, by correspondence, by remittances of money to their*
> *families, and frequently by periodic returns to their native places in order*
> *to participate in ceremonial rites and festivities* (Gendreau, 1998).

Maintaining ties with the community of origin is an extremely important and

distinguishing aspect of short-term labour migration. Through the forms of long-distance

communication (identified by Gendreau), the migrant is assured that she/he will be

remembered as an integral part of the community, and a symbolic place will be reserved

for her/him until their return.

Thus, residency in the community of employment is directly dependent on the

availability of labour. No extreme efforts of integration in the temporary community are

made, as settlement is not a part of the plan. Once there is no longer a need for that

labour, the migrant returns to the community of origin where he/she will live off the

money saved. If possible, they will receive some form of employment benefits, such as unemployment insurance, or return to school.

In addition to the transfer of capital, the migrant labourer brings back, to the community of origin, novel pieces of culture, knowledge, lifestyles, stories and most importantly, the experience of success or failure in the world abroad. These often have specific effects on the social and cultural fabric of the community of origin, especially when the community of origin is one situated in a rural setting and increasingly susceptible to the innovations of the urban.

John Berger, in his empathetic portrayal of the Turkish migrant worker, describes the specter of the city, created by labour migration, this way:

> *Every day he hears about the metropolis. The name of the city changes. It is all cities, overlaying one another and becoming a city that exists nowhere, but which continuously transmits promises. These promises are not transmitted by any single means. They are implicit in the accounts of those who have already been to a city. They are transmitted by machinery, by cars, tractors, tin-openers, electric drills, saws; by ready-made clothes; by the planes which fly across the sky; by the nearest main road; by a tourist coach; by a wristwatch. They are there on the radio, in the news, in the music, in the manufacture of the radio itself! Only by going to this city can the meaning of all the promises be realized. They have in common a quality of openness.* (Berger, 1975: 23).

This description by Berger, although obviously referring to the diffusion of the urban to underdeveloped rural communities, perhaps even third world communities, is somewhat out of context for this Canadian example. In essence, the existence and the influence of these cultural flows are the vital factor – creating a stream of influence from the urban to the rural.

This susceptibility would appear to be especially true in the case of short-term, youth labour migration. The youth migrant being more receptive to novel elements of

popular culture will most often purchase elements of urban culture that are not available in the rural community of origin, or are available at a much cheaper cost. Upon their return, these elements will be transferred and may be adopted by a wider audience in the community of origin, signifying just one of the more obvious cultural influences of short-term migration.

Beyond this transfer of influence, one of the inherent problems that research has pointed out with regard to short-term labour migration from rural settings, is the in-transferability of skills, and its inability to produce increased opportunities for the individual in the community of return. Because the majority of short-term migrations in a rural setting involve an urban destination, the skills that will have been learned in the work place, mainly factory skills, will not be transferable into the rural job market (De Jong & Blair 1994). Thus, the migrant will return to the same position that they always held, the position that they had attempted to depart from. Although the work experience gained is of value, the skills are often not transferable to the rural work environment. This is also applicable to the jobs that the low-skilled (typical of short-term migration) migrant will receive in the place of migration: "rural migrants don't do well in occupational mobility because their prior farming and fishing occupational skills do not properly prepare them for the urban job market" (De Jong & Blair, 1994: 702). Hence, short-term labour migration is often a last resort to alleviate family or personal economic difficulty. This scenario was illustrated by an acquaintance, as he described his experience with job hunting in relation to moving from the rural to the urban: "You know how difficult a job fishing is – well, I fished for four years, and when I first came to Montreal, that is all I had to list as experience. For someone in a factory, fishing means nothing; they have no

idea how difficult a job it is, so getting work was hard at first because I had no experience." (Jason)

Although different in purpose, *education migration* has much in common with short-term labour migration. IN both cases, the migrant maintains ties, and often permanent residence status in the community of origin. Education migration can most effectively be defined as a form of semi-permanent migration, as it is marked by periodic returns to the community of origin, since the typical student is only enrolled in classes eight to nine months of the year. Thus, the remaining four months of the year are spent in some form of summer employment. These activities most often take place in the community of origin and more likely than not, in the residence of their parents, as this provides an effective means of limiting expenses and saving money.

Although there is very little documentation of the nature and effects of education migration on the individual and the place of origin, it is nonetheless a very important aspect of youth migration from rural areas. With the combination of increasing societal and employment demands for higher education, and the lack of availability of these institutions in rural settings, education migration is one of the major forces influencing the rate of youth migrating from rural communities:

> *A primary reason for the rural out-migration of youth is the fact that many*
> *must migrate out of the rural and small town areas to pursue educational*
> *opportunities. This is evident in the high rate of net losses of rural and*
> *small town youth 20-24. Education is important to migration not only*
> *because rural youth migrate to seek educational opportunities, but also*
> *because there is a positive relationship between educational attainment*
> *and migration rates* (Bollman, Rothwell, Tremblay and Marshall, Vol. 3,
> No, 6, 2002: 1).

The number of youth involved in this type of migration, and the nature of the move, as the youth become exposed to a range of new influences (the location, the

19

population and new skills), make this type of migration one of the most influential

periods in early life. By extension, the frequent exchange of students from their

educational environment to their home environment for long weekends, holidays and

summers, makes education migration an important influence in the rural environment of

origin. The student migrant will return with new ideas, skills and opinions that set them

apart from their rural counterparts, often making them role models in their communities.

They serve as examples of what is available outside the region, specifically for those

youth who are in the process of making their own educational decisions.

An additional point of importance, is the student's altering influence on the home

environment. An educational environment, especially that of a college or university, is a

setting which promotes the blending, sharing and integrating of ideas and people from

cultures and communities around the world. With a diversity of culture and ideas in the

educational environment, it is normal for an individual to step outside the bounds of their

culture/society and be influenced in many new directions. Although, as Cohen (1985)

demonstrates, these experiences and encounters help to reaffirm an individual's own

sense of identity and culture. They also allow an individual to pick up on things that they

may have felt were missing in their home environment. Thus, upon return to the

community of origin, the student (consciously or unconsciously) brings back novel items

and attitudes that, regardless of their magnitude, will in combination with links to pop

culture (TV, Internet) have an influential effect on the peer group in the student's home

environment. This is especially true of rural towns where youth criticize the

unavailability of diversity. Hajesz and Dawe explains, "despite the inherent cultural

richness and natural recreational opportunities of rural areas, lack of access to the arts and

state-of-the-art facilities are seen as limitations to the range of activities available to rural youth" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117). These factors make the student migrant a highly influential figure in the lives of their rural peers.

The second, and more substantial effect, of high degrees of youth education migration on rural settings manifests itself when the student has completed their education. At this point the individual receives her/his degree, and in most cases must sever those semi-permanent ties that have remained with the community of origin throughout their post secondary career. The job market – especially with regard to a rural employment market – will most likely not offer an opportunity in their field. At this time the individual will change migration status from that of a semi-permanent migrant to a permanent migrant. This is a phenomenon that social scientists have coined the "rural brain drain" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117). It has significant effects on rural communities as it slowly diminishes the community's source of human capital, in the form of ideas, initiative, and innovation that are characteristic of educated youth. This leaves the community with an aging population and low development potential: "Youth are leaving Canada's remote and rural areas and taking with them many of the valuable resources and human capital required for the rejuvenation of rural employment" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 228). Bollman et al define human capital as "the education, experience and abilities of the population" (Bollman, Rothwell, Tremblay and Marshall, Vol. 3, No, 6, 2002: 1) and have discussed the vital importance of youth and the availability of human capital in rural and small town development. They suggest that, "youth can be seen as indicators of the state of rural areas and are key factors in rural development" (Bollman, Rothwell, Tremblay and Marshall, Vol. 3, No, 6, 2002: 1).

More recently, Bollman et al, have created a counter position to the "brain drain", suggesting that recent data have indicated a "brain gain." in the form of youth aged twenty five and older, returning in greater numbers to specific areas of rural Canada. This change has resulted in positive forms of development. This data comes as proof of the value of human capital in developmental efforts, and it opposes previous ideas that rural areas are not attractive to youth and young adult migrants.

One of the inherent problems with determining the degree of education migration. and the places of migration through the use of statistical data, is the fact that during the period of education many migrating rural youth will maintain their family home as their permanent address. This has potential for confusion and misinterpretation in two ways: first, as the number of youth remaining in the rural community might be overestimated. and second, as the number of youth seeking education may be underestimated. It is important to recognize this, as it could alter the reality of the picture being offered by demographics and social science research.

Finally, *permanent or long term labour migration* consists of those moves of population where a change of residence is accompanied by a change of job (Johnson & Salt, 1990: 1). These moves entail an almost complete detachment with community of origin, and gradual integration into a new community. These are moves that are most characteristically undertaken by a younger population, as their adaptability and socially-unattached nature provides them with mobility and facilitates the psychological and emotional stress which follows such an action: "The probability of being a long term migrant increases very quickly from the age of 15 years to reach a plateau at around 30 per cent among the 35-39 age group . . . Longer-duration migrations are, on the other

hand, almost incompatible with family responsibilities" (Guilmoto, 1998: 94-95). As mentioned in the previous section on education migration, permanent migration is a move which is often the choice of recent university graduates relocating themselves to an area in which their specific skill is in demand: "Labour migration results in relatively long-distance relocation of skills of a variety of kinds" (Johnson & Salt, 1990: 2). This relocation of human capital and skills that the individual carries, marks an important change in both the community of destination and the community of departure. Although the effects on the community of destination are more obvious, because there is a visible addition of a skill that may be in demand, the community of departure is also effected, as it is marked by the loss of a skilled labourer from its workforce.

3 - Group/Mass Migration

Group or mass migration is the form of migration that was responsible for the majority of population movement prior to the seventeenth century, and the method by which the colonies of Europe were populated (Peters & Larkin, 1993: 221). Presently, group or mass migration in the North American context can be characterized by different parameters. Because transportation is so readily available, relatively inexpensive and efficient, group migration is no longer specifically characterized by large populations departing from one area to a common destination with a common goal at an exact time, as historic images of boats or trains full of migrant labourers have suggested. Group migration can now be broadened to encompass short-term migration trends, or chain migration, which for all intents and purposes, is quite similar. The difference lies in the fact that this recent form of group migration occurs as a snowball effect, where over a relatively short period of time (6 months to a year), a substantial population of one

23

specific area or community (families and individuals) will follow the lead of the initial

migrants in the hope of reaping a similar form of success. Due to the fact that it is not

simultaneous, this form of group migration is imperatively dependent on what the

demographic and migration literature terms a 'migration system'. A migration system as

described by Locher represents "the sets of linkages... built around the extended family...

within which migration takes place" (Locher, 1977: 1). Group migration has particularly

devastating effects on small communities, as over a short period of time, a substantial

percentage of the working population of a single community may disappear. This reduces

the availability of labour and, correspondingly, the rate of unemployment, making the

community less attractive to potential businesses and government funded labour projects.

4 - Migratory Selection: Individual Determinants

Propensity to migrate has always varied between groups of individuals on the

basis of a variety of personal characteristics, such as age, sex, race, culture and education.

Migration is definitely a selective process. Migrants, especially those in rural Canadian

contexts, exemplify specific determining characteristics, such as age, sex and education:

Trewartha explains: "Assuming a sedentary population with an inducement to move,

typically some individuals will leave and others remain where they are. But those who

leave do not represent a random distribution of the biological and cultural characteristics

of humanity in either the region of exit or entrance; for certain elements of the population

tend to be more migratory than others. This is termed *migratory selection*." (Trewartha,

1969: 137).

Age is one of the primary and most important determinants of migration; youth, or

individuals comprising the 18 to 25 age group, are considered to be the most active

migrants (Bollman et all 2002). Connell et al., in their study of rural migration from Indian villages, has determined similar results: "Almost everywhere, migration concentrates extremely heavily on villagers aged 15-30" (Connell, 1951: 39). The young generally have fewer social and familial obligations, like children, property or homes. With limited integration into the village social system as well (Connell et a, 1951: 40), they are provided with increased leverage and mobility: "Young people can generally adapt more easily to new conditions and, because they have only recently entered the work force, they can change jobs more easily" (Peters & Larkin, 1993: 229).

Marital status was once considered one of the primary components of migration selectivity. Young, single adults were considered to exhibit the highest degree of mobility due to their unattached status. This theory no longer receives this attention, as statistics have shown that in the 'developed world', "married couples seem to be almost as mobile as the single" (Peters & Larkin, 1993: 230). Felt and Sinclair (1995) have noted that widowed and single individuals show lower levels of satisfaction than married people, suggesting that even though families as a unit are as easily mobile as a solitary individual, they are perhaps less likely to migrate due to high levels of life satisfaction.

Gender likewise proves to have a bearing on the migration process, depending on the context of the argument. Because this paper is based primarily on migration in the 'developed world', the differences in gendered migration will be considered in this light. Although in the past (prior to 1971) sex ratios in migration patterns were predominantly male, the number of females migrating from rural towns to urban cities has gradually climbed to surpass those of male migrants (Dusgupta, 1988). This is primarily explained by three social changes that have occurred in both rural and urban society. First, rural

families have become substantially smaller; therefore the need for daughters as caretakers of the younger siblings has declined. Second, increased equality in education and the urban job market has provided increased opportunity for females seeking both education and employment. Third, the rural job market provides fewer opportunities to female labour and more specifically, quality labour (Dusgupta, 1988: 43). Felt and Sinclair deny a correlation between gender and propensity to migrate, using satisfaction levels as an indicator of future migration: "despite widespread consensus that gender conditions the experience of life, few studies indicate any relationship between gender and levels of satisfaction" (Felt and Sinclair, 1995: 45).

Another well-established characteristic of rural-urban migrants relates to *education* (Bollman et al, 2002). Education is typically a primary indicator of an individual's propensity to migrate from a rural area, the reason being that the rural employment structure does not provide sufficient opportunities for skilled labour. The more educated the individual, the more likely they are to relocate to an urban area where their skills normally provide them with a better selection of jobs and salary: "Individuals with a higher level of educational attainment were more mobile – both rural and small town out-migration rates were high for these individuals" (Bollman, Rothwell, Tremblay and Marshall, Vol. 3, No, 6, 2002: 1). This loss is crucial to the developmental success of the rural area: "The loss of education capital was more notable among persons with post-secondary schooling and operated largely as an out-migration effect." (Voss and Fuguitt, 1991: 661).

The attainment of higher education for the already educated becomes another reason for the high rate of movement by this section of the population. The unavailability

of post-secondary and technical educational institutions in most rural settings prompts a move. Among the migrants, it has also been noted that those with higher levels of education tend to take on moves of longer distances (Peters & Larkin, 1993). Felt and Sinclair have explained that the higher the level of education, the lower the level of rural satisfaction. They argue that one possible explanation for the decreased satisfaction might be explained through the lifestyle explanation: "As levels of education rise, values and lifestyle preference associated with urban living, such as libraries and theatre, may become increasingly desired" (Felt and Sinclair, 1995: 45).

It has been said that "quite often it seems that those workers and families with the most need to move for economic reasons are least likely to do so" (Kitching, 1990: 172). Both the concepts of propensity to migrate and migration distance are explained through the understanding that individuals of higher education, through their access to a wider range of information, possess a greater knowledge base of the optimal migration locations and migration networks. Since education levels can be positively correlated with social access to information and employment networks, it is understandable that the uneducated often hold fears and uncertainty of urban centers due to their inhibitions. Rather, the uneducated base their migration decisions on the availability of family and kinship networks (Joshi, 1999) as opposed to opportunities. Although this rationale might increase the sense of comfort regarding the move, it might also substantially decrease this population's range of opportunity for success: "The spatially constrained networks inhabited by working class communities may also be related to the limited ranges and sources of information available to them on opportunities elsewhere, dependent as many are on contacts with friends and relatives" (Kitching, 1990: 174).

27

Extending on the Push/Pull theory of Migration

Push/pull explanations of migration have been commonly used to explain the influences and driving forces behind migration trends. This perspective has offered much insight into the specific motives of what leads individuals to collectively leave a region or conversely, to enter another region. The strength of the push/pull theory lies in its ability to localize both the weaknesses of the area of departure, as well as the points of attraction or strength of the area of arrival. This theory has been used extensively to explain the context of rural to urban migration. Where the theory has fallen short is in its disregard for the existence of the opposite in each scenario. Allow me to explain more thoroughly. The push dichotomy of the perspective is most often associated with the "lack" in the rural area of departure. On the other hand, pull has referred to the qualities of the urban environment that attract individuals to move. My criticism is that this focus neglects two important factors in the migration decision, factors which exist in the mind of the migrant and which influence their decision-making process. In short, what the push/pull theory has neglected is the pull, or positive characteristics, of the rural and the push, or negative characteristics, of the urban. Both exist, but are rarely considered or addressed in discussions of rural to urban migration. This discussion of migration confronts this neglect by looking at the negative and positive factors of both the regions of departure and arrival. The push/pull of the rural, I call the bonds and boundaries and the push/pull of the urban, I call the allure and uncertainty. This perspective broadens the variables involved in migration, but it also offers insight as to why migration might not take place, or more specifically, who would be more likely to migrate. The second function that this expanded perspective serves is that it offers a chance to examine the often-overlooked

qualities of rural society. These are the factors which migrants suggest bond them to rural areas and act as inhibitors for some in their movement to urban areas. This could change the focus from hard-line negatives and positives to a broader perspective, where the possibilities and potential of the rural are more openly discussed and explored.

Having most generally and briefly introduced the characteristics of migration and the migrating population, it is important that some explanation be directed to a more specific discussion of the redefined social and economic global structure which accounts for the primary causes of increased movement and migration.

General Introduction to Globalization, Culture and Movement

With the end of the Cold War, more people moving than ever before, and the relentless innovations of communications technologies, the boundaries and identities of local political units appear increasingly uncertain. Indeed the ensuing scholarly celebration of border zones, the Local sometimes seems in danger of a premature epistemological oblivion: people may still be living there but academics, and graduate students in particular, appear to have decamped to the Superhighway (Amit-Talai & Knowles: 1996, 9).

If one were to browse the academic literature of the late twentieth century, the picture painted would be one, which was rather similar to that depicted by Amit-Talai and Knowles – a world characterized by spatial compression, cultural creolisation and the dismantling of political borders. These are all subjects that have received paramount attention by the social sciences, in particular cultural anthropology, and of which all are important aspects of the social and global redefinition that has contributed greatly to the increased movement of people.

We live in an age where technological advancements occur every second and where such advancements have rendered the globe, and most things in it, increasingly

29

accessible to all. As a society, we are more informed. educated and diverse than ever before. It is a world where the 'local' is in fact already quite 'global'.

Mass-mediated images and communication developments allow us instant access to a world of knowledge, tradition, and culture; all, however, are closely selected and dictated by the most recent trends of popular culture and the increasingly condensed number of individuals and organizations which control these areas. This is a phenomenon that Marxists might refer to as the commodification and compression of culture, or what Stuart Ewen has called, 'skinning the world'. This trend is actively penetrating local borders. continuously aiding in the redefinition of society and as globalization theorists suggest, is in the process of homogenizing everything from economies to culture. Rapport explains:

> *Societies are no longer discrete social spaces with their own discrete sets of people and cultural norms - if they were. They are now basically creole in nature, combinations of ways of life, with no invariant properties or uniform rules . . . the traditional picture of human cultures as forming a global mosaic - of cultures as plural, bounded, pure, integrated, cohesive, distinctive, place rooted and mapped in space - must now be complemented by a picture of " cultural flows in space, " and by "a global ecumene ", a world system, a single field of persistent integration and exchange, a continuous spectrum of interacting forms, which combines and synthesizes various local cultures and so breaks down cultural plurality* (Rapport, 1997: 10).

With these points in mind, let us take a step forward and examine the effects this process has had on rural society.

Globalization and the Rural

What effects do these processes have on the rural community and rural migration flows? First, let us examine globalization's effects on rural society as a pretext to discussing its effect on migration and in particular, rural migration.

Rural culture and economy are neither impenetrable nor frozen in time, as some romantic imagery (i.e. the classic farmhouse or the quaint little community) suggests. These pictures or icons of rural society, of 'the heartland' if you will, have all but vanished. They remain in the context of classic literature and film as a memory of a time gone by. The rural landscape of the present, such as that depicted by Davidson in *Broken Heartland* (Davidson: 1991), is a place which has experienced great desolation during the past decade. The small town farmhouse of the rural frontier is no longer characterized by its self-dependence and self-sufficiency. Rather, it is in the midst of transition. Faced with national highs of dependency, poverty and out-migration, rural Canadians and rural communities have undergone the ultimate transition (Davidson, 1991). Modernization and diversification have become the new rural way of life, signifying a necessary shift in order to remain competitive in national and global markets. The majority of rural farms and businesses are now high-tech companies whose connection to, and knowledge of, the world marketplace is imperative to their survival. Globalization not only redefines rural life, but what we have come to define as the 'rural' itself. In a chapter entitled, "Refiguring the Rural", Cloke and Thrift state:

> *Rural areas have undergone rapid change. Connected processes like agriculture restructuring, new environmental policies, the incursion of middle-class in comers, the commodification of the countryside represented by the rise of the heritage industry, and the accumulation of new media images, have all pushed at the limits of what can be defined as 'rural' (Cloke & Thrift 1994: 1)*

31

Sustainable development, human capital and capacity building have become the new definitions/objectives of rural Canadian communities. The changes that globalization has brought to rural economies have not gone unnoticed, as rural communities of the world have sustained great impact. Rural and small town Canada has had to withstand and redefine its traditional social structure in order to maintain a place in a constantly redefined world, a world that is becoming increasingly unfamiliar to the rural landscape, as the move to the 'urban' in all components of society (media, culture, knowledge) has never been so pronounced and wide spread.

Images received by rural Canadians when they flick on the 'tube' or see a movie are not that of themselves. These are images that have little to no relation in rural communities, and when they do, they rarely accurately represent the concerns and opinions of rural Canadians. These are ultimately urban American images, which have little or no reference point in rural Canadian communities. When the rural is depicted, it is often in the form of stereotypes which create a one-dimensional image of the rural dweller. The messages that these images present are not only unfamiliar, but indeed quite looming and unsettling, especially within the youth population of rural communities, as their age and position place them in a rather influential position.

Although the rural community has negotiated substantial change in the areas of technological advancements, entertainment and leisure (all of which are paramount in the lives of youth), no such change could compete with the reality of the metropolis. This reality now, more than ever, plays a daily role in the lives of rural youth, as they begin to reproduce 'the urban' in their dress, activities and speech.

Over a century ago, Marx and Engels depicted this process as an inevitable factor in the industrialization of the world, where the peasantries and 'primitive' communities of the Western world would be "liberated" by the demands of the industrial revolution, and so too the individuals of these societies, as they would be needed as labourers, or cogs in the great wheel of industrialization. They described the process as such:

> *In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, and universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous nation and local literatures, there emerges a world literature. . . It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adapt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world in its own image.*
>
> *The bourgeois has subjected rural areas to the rule of cities. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life.* (Marx. 1965: 64)

These are the general ideas which have helped sociologists to explain what has been referred to as the 'rural drift' and the rural 'brain drain', or the increasing exodus of youth from rural communities. Rural communities are now faced with the problem of creating attractive environments for youth and young adults, in an effort to raise levels of human capital as a means of diversification and redevelopment of the rural economy.

This brief recollection of the process of globalization has been used as a means of situating the local in the ever-present global system. Let us now take a step back and examine where the local is left in this shuffle, as we deconstruct a community's efforts to develop in the face of modernization and migration.

Global effects on Gaspesian Youth Culture

Youth commonly appear in social science research, but rarely are they seen in their own right (Amit-Talai 1995; Hayes 1998; Schlegel and Barry 1991). This observation has received attention by a number of anthropologists, who have all recognized the treatment of the term 'youth' as means to an end, a stepping stone or stage of development that is only as important as the stage of life which it leads up to, adulthood. Amit-Talai explains that this is a result of the continued dominance of socialization and developmental models to construct youth: "Youth appear, but as potential adults rather than in their own right" (Amit-Talai 1995: 224). The stage of youth is rarely regarded as a life stage, with its own boundaries, definitions, values and context. Consequently, youth are rarely seen as actors and agents in the establishment of their social worlds, or active constructors and critics of culture. Rather, they are viewed more commonly as reactors to the social forces that shape them and their social worlds – like television and the media industry.

This logic in regard to youth has greatly overlooked the distinction of youth and adolescence as a stage of life. Youth see themselves as in control of their worlds and opinions; they live and experience the world as youth, and likewise, they construct and criticize it as youth. It would indeed be nearsighted to neglect the fact that adolescence does lead into adulthood, but as anthropologists suggest, it is equally neglectful to ignore it as a stage of life with its own borders and boundaries. Youth are active participants and agents in the construction, observation and analysis of their culture and environment. One could even extend the argument to suggest that youth can offer a social perspective like no other because of the very nature of their position. As the younger generation, they

stand in a unique social position, where their impermanence could shed a different light on things, but older, more socially attached individuals would certainly overlook it. The fluid nature of youth may be a great asset in understanding the nature of certain social problems, especially those where youth and the lives of the young are directly affected and influenced by social and structural forces.

The topic of youth in rural communities has become an area of great interest within sociology and social policy research and discussion. This attention stems from the realization that the rural way of life is in the midst of transition, modernization, and reformation. The global economy has rewritten the social, and in this revision, has reached directly into the local to be played out on a daily basis in towns and villages of all shapes and sizes. Rural communities worldwide are in the midst of redefinition both socially and economically, in an effort to better position themselves within this fluctuating global system. Rural youth represent both a cause and cure of this social shifting. The cause lies in the fact that rural youth, in the pursuit of individual goals, tend to migrate from rural communities, leaving holes in the social structure and the community's potential for development. The cure lies in the notion that rural youth migrate for reasons of education and training, producing a generation with a high level of social capital, social capital that these rural communities desperately need to return. Rather than return, the inverse has been occurring in the Gaspe. Those individuals and families who have managed to maintain a sustainable living in rural communities now educate their youth with a clear vision of the lack of opportunity that the region has to offer them, and the hardships that come with the lifestyle. From this, the youth come to internalize and visualize their future as being something other than what their parents

have experienced. They come to visualize themselves as being elsewhere; their goals and dreams are rooted in the opportunities that await them outside of the Gaspe.

Social scientists agree that youth is a developmental stage of life, one which is characterized by flux, and an impermanent period of self-discovery, of growth and movement – both physical and cognitive. Each culture has appointed and agreed upon processes, structures and activities that mark the path through youth into adulthood. These rights of passage are culturally dependent, but within each culture they are agreed upon as norms, expectations that youth must meet before they are granted the succession into the following stage: "The movement into adulthood is often marked ritually" (Schlegal and Barry, 1991: 34). The existence of these norms is no different for Gaspesian youth. These rituals and rites of passage, which mark a coming of age, exist in the form of migration. Youth leave for many reasons - some for jobs, some for education, some for experience and diversity, and some just to get away.

Hajesz and Dawe (1997) explains that this is a phenomenon that is symptomatic of most rural regions:

> *Growing up in a rural community is often perceived as something to be*
> *overcome. Young people tend to base career choices and location*
> *decisions based on these perceptions. As a result, each spring high school*
> *graduation in rural communities across Canada is a precursor to a mass*
> *exodus of youth in search of higher education, better job opportunities,*
> *and the promise of excitement offered by the brighter lights of big cities.*
> (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 114)

Family and community expectations of their youth are indeed influential factors in the high rate of migration, but these young individuals also base their decisions on what they see around them; increased poverty, high unemployment, and political uncertainty are not indicators of a promising future. A micro-based service economy is

what remains to sustain a much larger labour-base. Thus, those who remain are left to
their own means and initiative, and risk falling into the ranks of government dependents.
With all this being constantly replayed before their eyes, most youth choose the route of
migration as the one they most intend to take. Many will leave to explore academic goals
or some form of post-secondary education; some, who have had less academic success, or
their fill of educational institutions, will try their luck in the intimidating urban job
market.

Though the present migration situation is one of increased escalation, migration
from the communities of the Gaspe Peninsula is not a new phenomenon. Its citizens have
been exiting the countryside and establishing themselves in Eastern Canadian cities, such
as Toronto and Montreal, for generations and generations. Hence, for many of the
intended migrants, especially those choosing the route of the work force, their
destinations will be mapped out by a 'migration system'. This system represents not only
a common linkage to culture and tradition, but also serves as an instant network for
support, lodging, information and most importantly, employment opportunities. With this
long heritage of out-migration, most residents of the communities encircling the Gaspe
Peninsula have firmly established systems of extended family and friends in at least one
urban center.

A migration system serves as a tightly knit unit, which helps in many forms, but
most especially to fill the void left after an individual's first permanent departure from
the intimate and protective confines of an extended family and rural community. In the
majority of cases, a move into a well-established system of kin will prove to be longer

standing and demonstrate a higher success rate that those moves that are made without a

system (Locher, 1977).

This represents a summation of the global effects on Gaspesian communities and

their citizens, as "migration has now become a local institution of its own," manifesting

itself to the highest degree in the 15 to 24 age group. Guilmoto explains;

> *At this point, migration should not be seen any longer as only a*
> *demographic response to exogenous constraints (like population pressure*
> *or labour conditions). Migration is also the result of a locally-defined*
> *institutional arrangement designed to co-ordinate migratory activities for*
> *the purpose of collective welfare. This means that the institution of*
> *migration follows its own momentum, somewhat independently of the*
> *effects of constraints related to other local institutions* (Guilmoto, 1998:
> 85).

The most recent statistics from Statistics Canada give a numerical reality to this

exact phenomenon. These figures demonstrate that the municipalities of the Gaspe

Peninsula and Magdalen Islands have an out-migration total of 8310 and a net migration

(total in-migrants minus out-migrants) of -1120 across all age groups over a 6 year

period, between 1991 and 1996. Of this net migration total, the 20-24 age group

experienced the greatest loss of -960 and the 15-19 age group the second with a -270.

Given the small population base, these numbers represent a substantial percentage of this

region's youth.

The expectation of youth migration from these communities has become such a

commonality that it is ingrained into the social fabric as the socially acceptable behaviour

of "youth wanting to make something of themselves". As Guilmoto has suggested,

migration has taken on the form of a local institution: "a system of norms and rules that

regulates social behaviour" (Guilmoto, 1998: 85). This is a phenomenon that has its roots

delved deep in many of the community's cultural and social institutions (family, friends,

38

and schools) and which stems from far beyond these into popular culture and media. Hajesz and Dawe explains the media influence:

> *Some rural experts have attributed the growing distaste for rural life among young people with the cynicism portrayed through the media. The traditional values of small communities seem "square" compared with the "hip" urban culture popularized in music videos, T.V. sitcoms and movies... The strong influence of the media image on young people discourages them from dressing, talking or acting like they are from "the country" and encourages them to make career and locational decisions away from rural areas* (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117).

Similar influences also stem from popular and academic opinion, such as traditional sociological thought: "Rural youth were seen as having limited access to the variety of experiences and events that could broaden their perspectives and increase their capacity for achievement" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117). Knight has even claimed that rural education has been guilty of encouraging its youth to migrate through its curriculum, by stating that the majority of Canada's curriculum is "urbanized" or urban-biased: "It (school curriculum) is standardized in terms of content and programs to primarily meet the educational needs of larger cities" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117). It makes little or no effort to transmit knowledge or skills of their natural environment.

Inevitably, most youth make an attempt at migration. They do so with a mixture of certainty and reluctance. Certainty because they consider this their greatest option for success, as they realize the limits of the Gaspe and the value of education; and reluctance exists because, like most rural residences, youth form strong community bonds and high levels of social attachment that migration forces them to break.

This migration decision, which for all intents and purposes, should be an individual decision, based on the wants, needs and desires of the individual, is viewed with such a degree of closed mindedness by the community that a stigma has formed

around those individuals who have, for whatever reason, decided to "buck" the trend and attempt to make something of themselves in their own community. This is especially true for those individuals who have been successful up to that point, in school or in life in general, and have come from a hard-working family. A decision to remain in a rural community is looked upon as a waste of potential. Hajesz and Dawe's explanation of a New York Times article entitled, "It's Not Hip to Stay", brings some reality to this concept:

> "It's Not Hip to Stay" tells of entire graduating classes leaving rural communities on the Great Plains with no intention of returning. This article reports that the imperative for these kids to leave exceeds employment opportunities or big city excitement. The real motivation lies in the valuation that these youth place on rural areas - "you're a loser if you don't leave". The article illustrates this attitude with the story of a graduation dinner in a small mid-west town in which 13 graduates were asked to stand and announce their plans for the future. Twelve graduates proudly describe their plans to leave and attend college. One young man stared at the floor and apologized that he would "just be staying here to farm with (his) Dad" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 117).

Just as the path out of the rural is the route for some, it would only be realistic to assume that it is not the path for all. With social, community and peer pressures such as those depicted above, it is also realistic to assume that many youth will choose the route of migration simply out of conformity to pressure.

In any event, the phenomenon of the institutionalization of youth migration described in this section inevitably leads to a multitude of singular social and psychological community problems. A more pressing problem, however, arises with respect to rural community development in the absence of youth.

Migration, Youth and Community Consequence: A Development Perspective

Can the local find a niche for itself within the ever-present global melting pot? Is sustainable development possible? Do communities hold the key to their own development? With existing evidence of the possibility of such community rehabilitation, one would have to respond with yes to these questions, but state that certain parameters must be in place before development can move forward. So, what are the parameters that foster rural community development?

Beggs (1996) suggests that for community development to achieve success it needs community action. By extension, sociologists argue "in order to deal with such issues (poverty & development), rural areas must build the 'social infrastructure' by retaining their population base and mobilizing residents for community action", which they also add is fostered by community attachment (Beggs 1996; Flora & Flora 1992; Wilkinson 1986). It is certainly a well-known phenomenon that rural residents demonstrate high levels of community attachment (Biggs 1996; Cohen 1982). So why then are some communities and whole regions suffering from a lack of sustainable development?

Well, I would suggest that community action has become increasingly problematic, particularly for the members of specific communities, as community members feel their power as citizens have been in a constant state of deference to the powers of privatization and centralized government. This has left rural citizens with the assumption that they have little or no control over their destiny, and has prompted feelings of helplessness and pessimism.

This is precisely the situation and feelings of citizens of the Canadian North and Newfoundland, who are held at bay by the powers of corporate/government development and forced to trade off territory with the promise that they will only see the benefits of economic prosperity.

For the population of Anglophones on the Gaspe Peninsula, the feelings of helplessness are quite similar, but their situation is quite the opposite, as they seek recognition. With representation at both the provincial and federal levels by a government whose primary focus is to represent the rights of French Quebecers, the Anglophone communities see little hope or promise in the politics of development.

Though these are intimidating adversaries, it is imperative that these communities continue to defend their place in the development process and continue to forge partnerships with both government and industry, as this represents their only means of achieving any level of community sustainability. To better understand these points on community development, let us return to the problem of development and youth migration.

Development in the face of persistent youth migration is an increasingly weary feat, as the primary base of the community's future development, typically the population aged 15-30, have already, or are making plans, to relocate. Hajesz and Dawe understands this phenomenon as cyclical: "the cycle can be described as: limited opportunity causes low perceptions/expectations; low perceptions causes exodus; and, exodus causes limited opportunity" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 118). Therefore, it becomes not only important but necessary for communities experiencing such a reality to work towards some form of development as a means of breaking this cycle. Academics such as Hajesz and Dawe,

Hajesz. and Looker have described that the means to such an end lies in the promotion and education of the possibilities of entrepreneurship. Most recently. the federal government has also joined this camp by creating a specific section of the *Youth Employment Strategy* program for the allocation of resources and services, in the hope of initiating and developing youth entrepreneurship.

Steps such as these require time, support and leadership from a multitude of sources in order to guarantee there success, but they are indeed, steps in a positive direction. The avenues of entrepreneurship must be made available not only through government initiative, although this represents the first step. They must also be facilitated through community support mechanisms such as family, business and industry. Education and leadership are also prerequisites to success, as education must provide these individuals with the necessary training, skills, contacts, and information routes that they need at their disposal, while leadership provides the example which reaffirms the belief that such a concept is possible. As a result, all sectors will benefit from a healthy. sustainable economy. As briefly argued in this review, community-based development is a possibility, provided that certain community, socio-economic and government links can be firmly established.

A Note on Terminology

The Gaspe Peninsula is the geographic name for the region, but there are many variations and alternatives used. It is often referred to as the Gaspe Coast, this again referring to the totality of the peninsula. In a skimmed-down version of this, I have heard people refer to it as simply 'the Coast'. Furthermore, although Gaspe is the name of a

specific town on the peninsula, the term is often used as a shorter version to represent the entire region. These words are arbitrary and used in various contexts by different people. For example, I have noticed that 'city folk', or people who live outside of the region, refer to it as "I am going down to Gaspe", meaning that they are going to visit the Gaspe Peninsula, as opposed to simply the town of Gaspe. For the purposes of this paper, I have attempted to use the term "the Gaspe" for reasons of simplicity and convenience. First, it was easier to use a one-word term since it appeared rather often; second, it avoids potential confusion between the town of Gaspe and the region which, as I have stated, is sometimes referred to by the same name. Thus, reference to the Gaspe in this text is my operational definition for the Gaspe Peninsula although the full title will be used at times.

Chapter 2
Methodology of Rural Youth Research

> *...I am convinced that the actual evolution of research ideas does not take place in accord with the formal statements we read on research methods. The ideas grow up in part out of our immersion in the data and out of the whole process of living...*
> (Whyte, 1943)

Notes on Method: Positions of Perspective

I entered this research project with "the fear". A fear that I believe every social science researcher has instilled in themselves from the earliest days of their training. Perhaps it is a fear that disappears with experience, but it is a fear that I felt nonetheless. This was not the fear of the unknown, or the fear that your hypothesis might be totally disproved. It is the fear that as a researcher, your preconceived notions of the situation that you are studying might skew your interpretation and representation of the phenomenon. With this notion came the possibility that I would be bringing along too much baggage, too many preconceived ideas, and far too much bias. After all, I had been in the same position as my subjects, just at a different time. I grew up on the Gaspe Coast a decade earlier.

I also realised that time and change did not hold the same relationship in the Gaspe as it did in most places. Change is a process experienced slower in small rural areas, especially on the coast. Although the faces change, I knew very well that the situation, for the most part, remained quite the same. I also knew that as a youth, I had probably asked similar questions and held similar opinions about my future, and the future of the place, as this next generation of youth did now. So these ideas, for good and bad, I dragged back with me to the Gaspe, into the field.

Social Anthropology and the research of ethnography have fallen under the gaze and scrutiny of postmodern thought, the reflexive turn, or an awareness of the researcher to question their voice and the voice of those that they are representing, as Rosanna Hertz explains: "Reflexivity implies a shift in our understanding of data and its collection – something that is accomplished through detachment, internal dialogue, and constant (and intensive) scrutiny of "what I know" and "how I know it". To be reflexive is to have an ongoing conversation about experience while simultaneously living in the moment" (Hertz, 1997: vii).

With that knowledge and training in mind, I needed to know that there was some kind of distance between me and the subject, allowing me to comfortably and confidently proceed with data collection. To do so, I situated myself in a town distant from the area in which I had been raised. I felt that this would provide the much-needed distance I sought. It was a place where I could be, as Simmel suggests, a "stranger," a place where I could be more attentive to the intimacies of social life and my place in it.

I also planned to use the survey and interview method, as opposed to strictly using observation, as I knew that this would help to undo researcher bias through structure, reliability and validity. I felt that participant observation was an inevitable part of being in the field of any research project, and that being a participant observer was an inevitable and important factor in providing certain details that other methods were not able to. I was open to its uses, necessity and value in the field. I simply wanted to balance that with a variety of methods, as it was, and very much is, my feeling that if this were possible, it would only help to strengthen my line of investigation and by association, my explanation of it.

I entered the initial research site (New Carlisle) and began to collect data and make contacts with schools and social action groups. Everything progressed nicely for approximately one month, until I was offered a job teaching sociology at the CEGEP de la Gaspe et des Iles (the only institution of post-secondary learning on the Coast).

This development, although welcomed on my part as a great opportunity of experience, would mean a compromise and restructuring of my research plan. The final decision to accept the appointment meant relocating myself to the town of Gaspe, approximately two hours east. Due to the distance, it also meant abandoning my original research plan, and my efforts to maintain some distance between me and the research subject, as the CEGEP was located in Gaspe and a place where I had spent two years as a student. This initially threw my plans out the window, and reinstated "the fear" of bias.

In retrospect, the teaching position provided an experience of interaction and data collection that I could never have hoped to find in my original research site. Each year it provided a daily interaction with a diverse group of students from all sectors of the Gaspe Coast, as well as some students from New Brunswick and the Eastern Townships. In essence, it provided access to a cross-section of the region's youth that, in the two years of CEGEP (in some programs three), would be forced to make the next step in their life course. This would require a decision about their future, and their future in relation to this region. In other words, it provided an unequalled opportunity for interaction and data collection with Gaspesian youth.

Although some of the students were familiar to me by family name, I knew very few of them prior to accepting the teaching position. This provided a distance that helped greatly in establishing what Merton (1972) would refer to as an outsider position, or a

position outside of the myopia of the "cave" - to borrow from Plato and later Bacon – a position of objective observation. Merton explains: "Only when we escape from the cave and extend our vision do we provide for access to authentic knowledge "(Merton, 1972: 31). This explains the outsider perspective of Merton's positional dichotomy, which he calls the insider/outsider position. On the opposite side of this dichotomy stands the insider. Merton sums up the counter position by stating: "According to the Insider, the Outsider, no matter how careful and talented, is excluded in principle from gaining access to the social and cultural truth" (Merton, 1972: 15).

As opposed to the Outsider perspective, four points helped me easily establish an insider position with the students. First, my position as a teacher gave me direct interaction with students enrolled in the four courses I was teaching. This allowed me to build a professional relationship with most of the students in these groups, as each group totalled on average 15 students. The second factor was my age. Because I was only about eight years their senior, the students in my courses, and the student body in general (which I interacted with regularly), seemed to feel at ease with my presence. I was quick to establish, and re-establish, this position through participation in many extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, and just hanging out. Students became comfortable with my position as a teacher, researcher and person, and I found students visiting my office and including me in their social activities on many occasions. The third factor involved my willingness to listen and allow these individuals to have a voice, or share a story of which they were, more often than not, very willing to share - after the initial jitters and shyness that accompany new acquaintances. The fourth factor was time. The majority of CEGEP programs take two years to complete, in four years of teaching I was able to

interact with four groups or age cohorts. In that period I was able to establish a two-year

relationship with students in two of the age cohorts. This time helped establish and create

a more open and inclusive social atmosphere of interaction and exchange.

My place in the two positions proved to be a valuable research resource, as it

allowed a perspective as both insider and outsider. This position Merton establishes and

explains in the following excerpts from an article entitled, "Insiders and Outsiders: A

Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge":

> *A great variety of inquiries into the roles of anthropological and
> sociological fieldworkers have explored the advantages and limitations of
> the Outsider as the observer. Even now, it appears that the balance sheet
> for Outside observers resembles that for Insider observers, both having
> their distinctive assets and liabilities.* (Merton: 1972: 33)

> *The cumulative point of this variety of intellectual and institutional cases
> is not – and this need to be repeated with all possible emphasis – is not a
> proposal to replace the extreme Insider doctrine by an extreme and
> equally vulnerable Outsider doctrine. The intent is, rather, to transform
> the original question above. We no longer ask whether it is the Insider or
> the Outsider who has monopolistic or privileged assess to social truth;
> instead, we begin to consider their distinctive and interactive roles in the
> process of truth seeking.* (Merton: 1972: 36)

> *This involves the conception that there is a special category of people in
> the system of social stratification who have distinctive, if not exclusive,
> perceptions and understanding in their capacities as both Insider and
> Outsider.* (Merton: 1972: 29)

In truth, this research had no starting point and no end, as I continue to be

immersed in the material each day and week. I meet friends from Gaspe, and their

relatives who have moved "away" and who I have never met before and they still feel a

sense of relation to me, although they are as foreign to me as the next stranger. And I too

feel that sense of commonality, that strange feeling that you get when you seem to

understand someone's position, or at least pieces of their personal history, on a very personal level.

In retrospect, this research project has presented a great hurdle – a hurdle that I am unsure that I have certainly cleared. I know that I have taken great care and caution to be wary of its clearance, but that judgement will at last be left to my readers.

Structure of Method

Multifaceted research designs are difficult to categorise and explain. They strive for depth and go about attaining it through a number of means. I will do my best to explain and detail my approach to this particular structure of research. Sociological research has danced far too long in the camps of one or the other form of research. Choosing quantity over quality, quantitative over qualitative, and debating as to whether certain pieces of information were useful. It is my impression that multifaceted research can only serve to strengthen the validity of your research. This is how I went about attaining it.

Selecting a Region

Gaspe was selected for a couple of reasons. In the early part of my time at Concordia, I took part in the NRE or New Rural Economy research project, headed by Dr. William Reimer. This project had selected a number of sites throughout Canada as the focus of their data collection. The aim of the project was to determine the economic state of various categories or types of small towns, and by extension, determine what factors facilitated or inhibited success. This concept of various types of rural

50

communities seemed rather interesting to me. I began to do more thinking about how I could typify, or categorize, the various communities that made up the region of the Gaspe Peninsula. In the midst of this thinking, I realized that the Anglophone communities and Anglophone population of the Gaspe Peninsula were part of a very unique situation within the various categories of Canadian communities. This was a region of Canada, that because of it geographic nature as a peninsula, was quite isolated. The presence of Anglophone communities within an overwhelming French population, and the depleting economy, added to the distinction of its character and the uniqueness of the situation.

I also knew that migration, and specifically youth migration, had been a problem within the region for many years. I felt that this situation was rather unique in this country, as it had not been investigated. Thus, researching youth migration might give the possibility of providing insight into the definition of the situation, and possible directions for possible solutions. In addition, I also noticed that two consecutive needs- assessment studies had been conducted in reference to community needs and the youth population in the Gaspe. This was a great starting point but both studies neglected to consult the opinions and ideas of youth, and as a consequence, neglected to address some of the key underlying social issues that affect the propensity of youth to out-migration. This neglect has undermined the problem, and as a consequence, overlooked some of the causes, thus hampering progress toward a solution. I hoped that my efforts would help to give the youth perspective a voice, which could offer suggestions and possibilities to solving a problem that, had not yet been tapped.

Interviews

Being a professor at the Gaspe CEGEP allotted me a large pool of potential subjects. I selected a group of social science students that I knew I could follow over a two-year period. I felt that these two years would provide an opportunity to gain detailed insight into the relationship these youth had with the region. Such a period allowed me to observe the details of their decision making process as they worked toward the completion of their CEGEP degree and made a decision as to what they would pursue next. This particular group was selected randomly because they were the first group to enter the college after I attained a full-time position; thus, I knew that I could follow them closely through their two-year progression through the college[1].

Interviews were conducted with these students at four periods in their two-year stay. The first interview occurred at the beginning of the students' first semester. All students in the program agreed to participate, and in total eighteen interviews were conducted. This interview consisted of about 10 open-ended questions that were intended to get an initial impression of the students' view of their transition from high school to CEGEP, and how they were experiencing this step in their educational development. Their responses were concise, and I sensed a strong inclination on their part to censor emotions and opinions due to discomfort with the novelty of our relationship, and being put on the spot.

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[1] Subsequent to the commencement of the research, the Tri-Council released their guidelines for ethical research with human subjects (http://www.nserc.ca/programs/ethics/english/policy.htm). These guidelines consider the practice of instructors conducting research with their students to be potentially coercive and unethical. In my case, the conclusion is tempered by the fact that my status changed from student to instructor part-way through the research (as did the Tri-Council ruling), and I made every effort to ensure the freedom of my students to exclude themselves from the research. In retrospect, this sampling procedure should simply be excluded as an option for future research.

The second interview was conducted at the end of the second semester, i.e. the end of their first year of CEGEP. At this point the interview followed up on the initial opinions and ideas offered by the students in the first interview, but were much more probing and in-depth. I sought to gain more insight into each youth's relationship with their community, family, peers, employment, and education, as well as their future endeavours. I also hoped to gain insight into their experience of youth in the Gaspe, and factors which influenced their opinions of the Gaspe Coast. As in the first set of interviews, eighteen students were interviewed.

A third set of interviews was conducted in the third semester and probed for more details, in an effort to plunge deeper into the personal narratives of relation between the student and their rural towns, and the place and future of youth in rural society. It also tested for any change in their opinions from the previous interview. This set of interviews took place with fourteen students, as the second year of the program saw four students leave the CEGEP for a variety of reasons, including failure and employment.

Finally, a set of concluding interviews were conducted with the fourteen students at the completion of their fourth and last semester, whereupon I questioned them about their plans for the next year and their overall opinion on the experience of attending CEGEP in Gaspe.

In summation, the two-year interview process was an effective means of attaining detailed information on the personal view and opinions of these youth. It also helped to gauge their changing perspectives as they matured.

Surveys

Surveys were conducted with high school students at two separate Anglophone high schools on the coast: the Gaspe's Polyvalent, and Bonaventure's Polyvalent. The sample population consisted of high school students around the ages of fifteen to eighteen. Convenience sampling was chosen as the survey was distributed through grades ten and eleven of each high school. In total, 84 students participated in the survey, 49 females and 35 males. The survey attempted to gain insight into the opinions and views of younger students in an effort to pool data, opinions and experience from a younger age cohort, as a point of comparison to the older CEGEP students.

Participant Observation

Participation observation took place on a number of levels. Given the structure and size of Gaspe's youth population, interaction was very common and often very insightful. This participation could be said to have taken place on two levels, one as a CEGEP professor, and the second as a participant in out-of-school activities.

Participant observation opened my field of inquiry to a much broader range of individuals than I had access to in the surveys and interviews. It included interaction with students outside of the classroom and school context, but most importantly, it opened the research to youth that were no longer students. Anglophone Gaspesians maintain very interactive relationships, wherein people cross paths for many reasons, and on many occasions. These interactions provided me with information and anecdotes that I would not have attained in the context of an interview.

More specifically, participant observation included periodic visits to the student lounge at the Gaspe CEGEP, where students would assemble during their spare periods throughout the day. The lounge was a non-threatening environment where the youth revealed many of their personal ideas, opinions and experiences about many aspects of life. It also included taking part in sporting events, leisure activities, fund raisers and community social events.

Chapter 3
Constructing Youth Culture: Narratives of Growing up on the Gaspe Coast

Life in the Gaspe is often spoken of with a strong sense of negativity. Local youths characterized the place as decadent, a stagnant place for young people to grow up and a place they state they will eventually escape. Within this negativity and criticism there also lie hints of a valued past. These youths describe an upbringing from which they have gained assets and experiences that have grounded them within the security, comfort and bonds of rural community life. However, they also suggest that there are elements of social and economic life that the rural has not exposed them to, or prepared them for; these are elements of cultural diversity and technology that they feel are essential to the experience of youth, the process of development, and the quality of life in modern society.

In this section I will address rural youth migration through an analysis of the way in which youths construct their reality. This approach presents Gaspesian society from the perspective of its youths, by way of narrative. This is an effort to portray youths as active agents in the construction and interpretation of their social worlds and to convey a detailed sense of the ideas and opinions youths have of rural society. The discussion will begin at the general, creating an overview or summation of how Gaspesian youths construct Gaspesian society. It will then divulge into the more specific, by means of presenting the ways in which youths construct 'the rural' and 'the urban'. Finally, I will discuss how youths use a combination of influences to construct migration as both a consequence and alternative to the Gaspesian youth experience.

Construction of the Gaspe in Youth Narratives

These youths describe Gaspesian society as a place that is socially inhospitable to the needs of its younger generation. The Gaspe is comprised of the towns and communities where these youths have grown up. It is the place that has nurtured their growth, and helped shape their identity. While they speak of the place with a certain reserved pride, the Gaspe is predominantly described by its youths as problematic. They are very critical of all aspects of the region, but they are primarily vocal about its lacking and lagging characteristics in relation to youth needs. They construct Gaspe as a place where the youths are underrepresented, they feel that this lacking has underexposed them to some of the key developmental necessities and social realities of modern society. Specifically, they construct Gaspe as a place where youths exist in, but not of the society. In other words, they express feeling of social exclusion and social estrangement. On the other hand, the majority of these youths describe goals outside the region as their directing force. Montreal Gazette columnist Mark Abley brings this point into sharp focus as he describes a 1998 visit to a Gaspe grade 11 classroom: "So, in my innocence, I asked a further question. 'And in 10 years' time, how many of you expect to still be here in Gaspe?' Nobody put up a hand. Nobody even hesitated. In the whole class, every student was convinced that he or she would be moving on" (Abley, Gaspe Blues, Gazette, June 7th 1998). This is not far from the reality of the situation, as each year hundreds of youths leave the Coast for education and employment reasons.

Gaspesian youths understand the history of the place and the important role tradition has played in the structure of society, as well as the attitudes and culture of the people. On one level, they respect this and realize that the lives of their parents and

grandparents have been difficult. However, they stand at a unique position as they represent a changing world, a global world in fact, and see few positive aspects of this change entering Gaspesian society. Consequently, they describe tradition as a competing factor with the evolving global world. Tradition is a cultural perspective that inhibits diversity, modernization, and development, all of which serve as indicators of progress and success. These youths link these absent factors to the stagnating social situation of their environment. These traditional aspects of society, such as the resource-based economic structure, are defined by local youths as problematic in the sense that they counteract diversification – which they see as the route to stability and growth. Gaspe's youths equate tradition with the old, and by extension, define Gaspe as a place for the old. Sandy and Kim elabourate on these points in the following statements:

> *Gaspe is a small town, and tradition runs deep in it. The population is high in senior citizens; due to this, many of the activities are centered around them. For the younger population, this breeds a severe lack of entertainment... In both cases there lies major issues. The elderly avoid change, and can almost afford to do so, seeing as how they are mostly no longer employed. Being able to stay constant in their lives, they are uncomfortable with even the slightest bit of change. Psychologically, they set mental blocks and in their close-mindedness, limit themselves and consequently those around them.* **(Sandy)**

> *It affected my relationship with my community because I didn't love my community. I thought of it as a boring and empty place, where old people should live, and I still think of it like that now...Old people like it in Gaspe. It's a quiet and calm place for them. They are comfortable living there. My grandmother told me that there's no place in the whole world she would rather be. I also think that it's a nice place for them, but they cannot understand that young people don't feel the same way as they do.* **(Kim)**

Tradition seems so overwhelming that these youths come to resent it, as Kim's statement reveals. It bears directly on her relationship to the place. Foner (1984) explains that a conflict of power and age is a common facet of societies inclined toward tradition.

She explains: "Age inequalities exist because younger adults do not have the same opportunities to reap such benefits. They must wait their turn." (Foner, 1984: 240). With an ageing population and the consistent out-migration of the young, there exists a competition for social space where these youths feel that they are not allotted their share. Sandy's explanation suggests that the difference between tradition and modernity occur on a psychological level, creating unseen barriers that function to limit the flexibility of the region and the population. Mark presents a similar narrative, where his experience within a community based in tradition exists as a limit to the region's capability of creating diversity and a stimulating environment for the population.

> *Things have been the same in my community since I've been a kid and probably way before my time. This is probably so because of traditions that communities keep for generations.*
>
> *You hear so many people say that if there were jobs, they would move back and so on. But really, the problem is not with just getting jobs, it's creating a social environment that gets peoples' interest and keeps it.*
>
> *Socially, we as people have to get rid of so much tradition and create some diversity, as found in society. Sometimes people don't move away from a specific place because it's too "French" or too "poor", but simply because there is not enough of what they are looking for.* **(Mark)**

In a roundabout way, Mark equates the state of social stasis to the disinterest of the people and to the decline of the population. Ashley goes a step further by explaining how these social limitations have taken physical form, and have occurred on both a social and economic level in her life.

> *On the job issue, it's not that there are no jobs, it's just that I find where I grew up in Gascapedia, when it finally came time when I could get a job, they wouldn't hire me because I didn't have any experience, or because of the people I hung around with. Another thing is that we have the river (salmon river) and the camps to work on, but they would rather hire older people that could retire, than young people with lots of life. Which ends up driving them (young people) away, we are not given a chance.*

59

The other thing that I do not like about living in a rural community now is that it seems that they do not want the younger population to have any fun. This I took into consideration, because all last summer when we would try to do something fun, we were always stopped and told that we shouldn't be loitering and hanging around the bridges because it didn't make the community look good. Then they wonder why the younger population wants to leave- they make it seem like they only want to change a rural community into a retirement community. **(Ashley)**

Both Ashley's narratives of economic and social exclusion point to an adversary, an opponent that she refers to as a 'they', which suggests that there is a force at work which opposes the culture of youth. Ashley's statements suggest that this creates an uncomfortable feeling within the environment, leaving youths to question their place in the social structure. Ashley's explanations also correspond with Foner's understanding of age conflict:

> Where the old are powerful and privileged, younger people often have much to complain about. They may not voice their frustrations openly, but inwardly they may be filled with envy and resentment, or at least be ambivalent toward old people on top. The young are eager to come into their own, and old people often stand in the way. Indeed, the young are often subject to, and are severely limited by, old peoples' authority (Foner. 1984: 241).

This theme was heavily reinforced by these youths, but it was particularly evident in the high school survey, where all the youths respondents, agreed that young people needed places that they could define as their own, places where they could 'hang out', be with friends and entertain themselves. "There should be more things around here for recreation", "A youth center for the town would be great and provide a place to go and have fun, and stay out of trouble," and "More things for kids to do" (High school survey 2002) were some themes that resounded through the responses of the high school youths. Community centers, skate parks, and basketball courts were three predominant suggestions for improvements. These youths narratives seem to suggest that they

60

experience a social detachment and social exclusion in rural society, mainly because the social structure has few options for places or activities that young people can attach themselves to. In fact, their narratives reflect high levels of detachment. These youths suggest that establishing such facilities would not only bring young people together, but it would allow them some social space where they were in control - a control that they feel they are lacking in all their communities, consequently, leaving many youth feeling dislocated, uninterested and frustrated with their surroundings. In addition, these youth spaces would diversify and improve the quality of youth activities, as well as get youths in off the street or out of public spaces, where as Ashley suggests, they are not welcome. Blair elaborates on the simplicity of establishing such spaces:

> *For a town like Gaspe, with so many vacant spaces, what would a skate park represent? A small piece of asphalt and a few ramps. I don't know if I'll live to finally see that park, but the youth of Gaspe have been asking for it for so long now. No concrete decisions have been reached yet. Why does everything have to be so complicated when it comes to city council?* **(Blair)**

> *All my friends complain about the Gaspe region. We would like to have things to entertain us when we go out.* **(Sue)**

Because of the lack of such spaces, youths become frustrated. Being adaptive and constructive manipulators and engineers of their environment, the youths modify public spaces, recreating these spaces for their own use. The pavement surrounding Government buildings become excellent skateboard locations, and by extension, youth spaces not only for those who skateboard, but also for their friends. These are adapted as congregation spaces for the young and are subject to constant change, as property owners and the police confront youth and direct them away from the public eye.

Many youths I spoke with, felt that because access to organized spaces and activities were limited, many youths were inclined to be influenced to explore other avenues where acceptance and acquisition of power were more openly attained, these alternatives most often being illegal activities, like alcohol and drugs. This is understandable, as these activities and social circles are not typically age-discriminatory, and thus become a means to gaining social power and mobility.

> *Suffering from a lack of resources, the youth turn to crime as an alternate source of entertainment, and in some ways a rebellion against their confinement. This raises social issues, such as juvenile delinquency, illegal drug use, and alcoholism.* **(Sandy)**

> *The only places to go that are fun are the bars, which you have to be 18 to go to. Many teenagers go even if they are not of age, because they have no other place to go.* **(Kim)**

Weston extends on this point by focusing on the role youth migration and the "brain drain" plays in creating both a negative atmosphere and negative role models for the youths that remain in rural communities.

> *Peers are the most important influence anyone can have. There's a "brain-drain" from the Gaspe as well as that of good and honest, hardworking people. With the exodus of such an influential social group, the "bad apples" if you will, are left to influence the younger generation (as well as no role models). I feel that this is one reason that students at the Poly (high school) are dropping acid "in school" at the age of 12. A lack of positive influences* **(Weston)**.

Given the economic conditions of the region, alcohol and drug use and abuse have continued to spread through the communities, having the most predominant effect on the regions youths. "Drug circles" and "drug groups" are becoming larger and more influential, as Weston suggests above.

My time in Gaspe, and interaction with CEGEP students, allowed me to witness the role that marijuana use played in establishing membership for these youths in a social

sub-culture. These are powerful mechanisms of influence in small towns, as the

marijuana subcultures not only provide youths with a social reality that brings young

people together, but also serve the function of clearly designating them from adults. It

becomes a social circle in which youths feel they belong, as well as have control over,

and the ability to exercise power over, others. It also stands as a sign of defiance within

the larger structure of the community and rural society.

Coming full circle with this point, these youth feel that this lack of physical space

is simply a result of the fact that youths had very little of what Anthony Cohen (1985)

would refer to as *symbolic space within the community*. The youths feel that there is little

effort made on the part of leaders and organizers to inquire about and meet the needs of

the youth. They feel that decisions are made by 'the old', and few of the decision makers

have any idea of what it means to be young, or the details of youth needs. These youths

suggest that involvement is a viable and constructive route toward a solution to the

problem of youth social exclusion.

> *Get more youth involved in politics! Right now everyone at the town hall*
> *is 40+ years old. Why promote youth? Youth are the ones leaving. The*
> *middle-aged people who are still here probably have very stable jobs. We*
> *the youth, are the future of Gaspe... Therefore we need to get the youth*
> *involved. Make classes, organize events for the town of Gaspe. Create a*
> *youth organization where every youth has the right to join and voice their*
> *opinions.* **(Chris)**

> *I think that political issues aren't expressed enough in Gaspesian society.*
> *I would ensure that there would be a special political leader to make sure*
> *decisions were made equally and in the best interests of the people of the*
> *community.* **(Kim)**

Foner (1984) suggests that in such situations of age stratum consciousness, the

disadvantaged group or "underdogs" as she refers to them, "are unlikely to engage in

concerted action to change the age system that puts them at a disadvantage" (Foner,

1984: 244). This she understands is a system that the young are not likely to confront, regardless of their exclusion, due to the possibility of upward mobility with age, and the legitimization of inequalities through hierarchies of respect: "One function that rituals serve, in fact, is to present symbols of domination in a cogent way and thus to dramatize, reinforce, and validate age inequalities for the participants. In addition to the legitimization of age inequality, close bonds of cooperation draw young people and many of the elderly together in the community. In the family, the young often feel affection for, and loyalty toward, the very same elders with whom they have strained relations" (Foner, 1984: 245).

This problem of social power based on an inclination towards traditional social structure, ironically also surfaces in the narratives of these youth, as they construct the positive aspects of rural society. They suggest that more traditional social arrangements, such as the extended family, kinship and social intimacy of the population, have had positive effects on them – aspects that Foner suggests youths value. This research has found similar findings (reported later in this section), as youths construct these positive aspects of tradition (family, kinship, community) as conducive of strong community ties and nurturing child development – aspects that they suggest fostered their own sense of childhood security and freedom. The youth link to tradition is not entirely problematic, as this example provides an aspect of tradition that they value.

Beyond the impact of tradition, these youth also praise the region for its aesthetic and scenic appeal. These are aspects of society which youths see as beneficial. They use these characteristics, however, to construct Gaspe as a place of temporality, a place to

visit and vacation, where the lifestyle, fresh air and freedom of the place are ideal for

those who want to escape, to retire, to relax, or to raise children.

> *Gaspe is considered a place for a family to grow up and for a family to go on vacation. It's small, quiet and considered very secure. It is the type of society where everyone knows their neighbours and communities work together to solve problems.* **(Kim)**

> *Some young people can deal with the fact that there's nothing to do but I can't, even though I go out much more than before. I still find it boring and I'm ready to leave. I will miss my family but I'm ready to go.* **(Kim)**

> *I will always come back to visit, not to stay, I think not!* **(Chris)**

These examples help clarify how Gaspesian youth construct the positive aspects

of the rural as having a timeline. They see the positive as being more and less important

at various points in life. Kim illustrates this by describing how Gaspe is equated with the

old, a place where routines are readily predictable but not easily broken, a place lacking

in social and economic diversity, a place where the youth are bored and ready for change.

This notion of boredom was a point that echoed throughout the opinions and explanations

of these youths.

> *People are constantly complaining about the lack of entertainment and activities in the Gaspe area. It seems like the Gaspe residents hate their town, especially teenagers... I often find myself complaining, saying things like, "I'm bored" or "there's nothing to do here." It gets frustrating and depressing.* **(Sue)**

> *Even though Gaspe is my home, at my age now I find it the most boring place in the world... There is no entertainment and fun places for teenagers to go...We are young and want to experience new things; but how do we do that when there is nothing to do and nowhere to go?* **(Kim)**

Beyond these social points, youths construct an even more dismal picture of the

economic realities of the Gaspe. The youth characterize Gaspe's economic prospects with

the same lagging sentiments as its social reality. 'No work', is a statement commonly

used. This lack of work they attribute not so much to the fact that the Gaspe is an isolated

rural region, but more to the lack of foresight and development of diversity in industry.

They describe the Gaspe as an economically static region with very little diversity of

industry due to an over reliance on resources. This they suggest has created a one way

thinking system in relation to industry, which has resulted in the present scenario of

exploitation, mismanagement, depletion and unemployment in the Gaspe. Lori's

explanation depicts the frustration the youth feel in facing this scenario. They have been

educated in basic economics and economic structure, and the picture that their

communities present creates a frustrating contradiction.

> *There is no work and it sucks, so we leave. But it's not just Gaspe (the town), it's the entire coast as far as I am concerned. We've depleted the copper, nearly the fish, and we are working hard on chopping down all our trees also. My father for example is now hauling lumber for Harris (Contractor). Like, what the hell? We've lived off the land for long enough, give it a break so that it can restore itself. Be a little more resourceful and step into the industrialization/manufacturing age. We do live in a developed society and Gaspe has to catch up.* **(Lori)**

> *Fishing, forestry, and tourism just aren't enough to keep the community alive any longer. With the rest of the world turning to "city life", one cannot expect to prosper without changing at least a little bit as well. People don't want to just survive anymore. They want to prosper. It is no longer enough to work the land on which you live for food, and make just enough money to get by. And so we must make changes. As we well know, resources run out and tourism, being only seasonal, will not make Gaspe prosperous.* **(Andrea)**

> *This is what happened with our fishing. We were relying on the profit so much, we never realized that all good things must come to an end. Leaving us with very few fish and hundreds of jobs lost.* **(Chris)**

The economic construction, understood and presented by the youth, has led to the

necessary conclusion that the possibility of prosperity in the region is slim. Socially,

youths construct the Gaspe Coast as a place that has failed them; economically, they construct Gaspe as a place that will fail them as it has failed others.

The Gaspe Coast has the highest welfare rate- that is not something to cheer you up. The employment rate would need to be improved, I don't care what they bring in here, a surgical supply company, a Canadian Tire, a natural gas exploitation plant, make a big port or whatever their tiny little brains can think of, but something has to be done to give some hope to the people here and to keep everybody from exiting. **(Blair)**

In response, the youth view migration as a necessary consequence in dealing with this problem. Perhaps this relates back to Foner's explanation of how the disadvantaged within the age structure rarely challenge the established norm of power – making the motivation and decision to migrate a viable alternative. It is certainly an abandon ship mentality, as Kirsten explains in this narrative description of progressive self-realization of her relationship to rural society.

Nevertheless, as time passed I began to recognize all of the things that Gaspe lacked. My future was much more important to me and I realized that Gaspe had nothing to offer. Jobs were scarce, the highest institute of learning was the CEGEP and entertainment was almost non existent. Many of my friends started to see these things as well and, as a result, began to form negative opinions. The general consensus was that if you stayed in Gaspe, you would never amount to anything and so it was in your best interest to get out.

Gaspe doesn't look appealing because it can't offer its youth anything. Thus, Gaspe's death certificate was sealed. Everyone planned to abandon this small town in search of better opportunities. Consequentially, looking back, I realize that I have formed some definite opinions about country living. I also think that these might influence the future decisions I will make. When I think of where I will be down the road I think, I never want to live in a rural town again. However, I must remember that "the dreamed-of future is not so much a place as a full-time, well paid job". Nonetheless, I have a feeling that I might go into something I don't like just so I can work for a big company in the hopes that I won't be stuck in a small town with menial services. (Kirsten)

With Kirsten's narrative as an example, the youth construct Gaspe as an uncomfortable place for young people to be. It becomes a sign of defiance and rebellion to leave the region behind – in a sense proving that there is a future out there and that the region cannot stand as a barrier. Youth narratives suggest that there is a lack of youth representation in the towns and communities, and a lack of facilities for the youth. As a consequence, the young find alternative ways to spend their time and place their efforts, with the foresight that their time in the regions is temporary.

This is a general representation of the views these young people have about the region. In the following sections, I will attempt to deconstruct the youth construction of 'the rural' and 'the urban' in an effort to see more clearly the array of motivating factors that cause Gaspesian youth to overwhelmingly construct migration as their future.

Youth Construction of the Bonds and Boundaries of the Rural

The bonds and boundaries of community and rural experience seem to exist as contradictions in the mind frames of most youths. The past and future stand on two counter-opposed levels. These youth construct the small town experience of their childhood and adolescence as a safe and flourishing environment in which to raise children - in fact, many suggest that they would seriously consider returning to raise their own children. This safety and certainty are values that youths are willing to forgo, as they see these assets as wearing thin and counteracting the experience of the present, the experience of their youth. On the one hand, the past provides these youth with a value of experience, social skills, and the comfort and security of social ties, family and

familiarity. On the other hand, the future offers opportunities that, for the most part, can only be explored outside the region.

This brings the discussion full circle, in the sense that youths describe their present social situation as a dichotomy where opportunities and possibilities can only be explored with the breaking of this security, familiarity and these social bonds; in short, leaving the nest in search of these opportunities. This exists as a difficult dichotomy in the decision making process of these youth, as their construction of 'the rural' and 'the urban' create pros and cons from which their decisions are influenced and informed. Understanding this process of reality construction provides interesting insight into the mental and social processes, through which constructions of *rural* and *urban* are arrived at, and from which individual decisions concerning migration are reached.

Upon closer examination, it becomes more evident that what youths characterize as positive attributes, or bonds, exist on an interpersonal level between friends, family and community and are established through the intimacy of social contacts provided by a rural environment. What they describe as negative attributes or boundaries exist at the level of social circumstance, social organization and social development, while the pros and cons constructed of the urban are exactly the opposite. A decision to migrate then, is based on the notion that the security and familiarity of the rural environment has been outgrown with age and maturity and becomes a limitation which some youths see as necessary to overcome.

Let us look first at how these youth construct 'the rural', and then 'the urban', in an effort to discern how these constructions influence and define rural youth migration in the Gaspe.

Home and the Bonds of Community

Home and community are terms that usher forth a strong sense of social significance and nostalgia. Both are places of security, nurturing, social bonds and familiarity. These are terms, however, that sociology and anthropology continually struggle to define and reevaluate as we delve deeper into the abstractions of a global social structure. Berger attempts to summarize this shift: "In short, home is increasingly: words, jokes, opinions, gestures, actions, even the way one wears a hat; no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived" (Berger, 1984: 64). Berger's description suggests our social understanding of home has taken on the very abstraction of the society from which it is defined. The world has become an open space, overwhelmingly organized and dependent on the free flow of culture, commodities, capital and above all, human beings. This has recreated the map of the human experience, where the very notion of home becomes lost in space and is then recreated in place, through the actions of those, who through migration, have experienced a detachment from their physical sense of home. The question that surfaces in relation to rural youth migration would be, is it fair to extend this understanding of home into the minds and decisions of those that have yet to leave their home? In short, is it fair to assume this global logic has taken root within a local population of youths who have not yet become rootless, and does this logic inform or facilitate their decision making? How do youths construct home as a bond and how does their relation to this bond affect decisions and actions of migration? Is the rural sense of home portable for Gaspesian youth as Berger suggests it has become in modern society, or does the departure create problems of adjustment and repositioning for rural youth?

Expanding on this point, but in a slightly wider perspective, community is a broader social arrangement than home, but as with the sense of home, community is a term that social science literature has also grappled with. Berger suggests that community no longer need be contingent on a sense of physical space. Rather it is suggested that communities can exist in a more abstract fashion, such as in the sprawl of urban space or in the most abstract example, virtual space, as with the internet and virtual communities. One thing that this perspective does certify is that humans do need to feel a part of a community of some fashion and spend a great deal of time as a member of a community or in search of it. Extending from this, a second question that comes to mind with regard to youth migration is how does the experience of having lived within a rural community affect a youth's decision to migrate? Do the bonds of community extend beyond the point of migration and how are they negotiated by youths?

In fact, there is a combination of the two – home and community – as the bonds of community experienced by Gaspesian youth express a strong sense of *home*. It exists in their minds as an asset, a resource that they have acquired. Contrary to the abstraction of Berger's definition, Gaspesian youth define home and community as very tangible realities, realities that the decision to migrate will distance them from.

> *Gaspe is the place in which I was born and raised, and I have never known any other place as home. This makes my opinion of Gaspe quite a strong one.* **(Andrea)**

> *Gaspe will always be my "home". The town had some work in molding me into the person I am today. Even though I may not have been exposed to the major opportunities in the city, I learned how to maintain close relationships and become very caring about others. If I was in the city, I don't think I would be able to get as close to people as I am with my friends in Gaspe. We are very close-knit communities who watch out for each other. Everyone knows everyone, so this gives us a sense of security.* **(Chris)**

The content of these statements suggests that youths experience home as a very real place of nurturing, understanding and security. It is a sense of home that these youths have linked to the formation and foundation of character, and linked to the establishment of friendship, camaraderie, and even personality characteristics, as Sue expresses below.

I have to say that I like the Gaspe Peninsula. I feel at peace here. I feel safe and comfortable. It was the place that I grew up in, and the place my relatives before me grew up in. It goes along with the type of personality I have. I am a quiet person that prefers the tranquility of the Gaspe to the clutter of the city. It can be a very hard place to live as well. It can be very frustrating to live here, especially when you're a teenager. The Gaspe is a boring place to live. There are not very many things to entertain the teenagers of the area. **(Sue)**

This is a home which, as Sue suggests, also holds youths from the potential and excitement of larger urban environments. This last statement brings forth a strong sentiment of the contradiction between the bonds and boundaries of home. The youth do see the product of their experience and the security that a strong sense of community has bestowed upon them, and they understand it as something that they can fall back on if there is a need.

Because of the economic troubles, Gaspe has taught me how to survive in difficult times. But I also know that any time I need comfort or support, my friends and family from Gaspe will always be there. **(Chris)**

This sense of comfort provides a mobile safety net if you will, as they prepare for a movement, both physical and cognitive into a world where home, as Berger suggests, and community, are increasingly blurred.

There is a certain comfort that comes with living in a rural area. Knowing that there are people living all around you that can be depended upon and that share the same experiences that you are in within the life of the town. The closeness of the community becomes almost a security blanket. **(Andrea)**

As Andrea describes here, most of the youth that I spoke with and interviewed

described security and safety as benefits of Gaspesian communities.

I have been living on the Gaspe Peninsula since the day I was born. It is a
very warm, friendly and familiar place to me. It's the one place in the
whole world where I feel the safest. **(Kim)**

There are of course advantages of living in rural communities, like those
in the Gaspe region. For one, studies show that there is much less violence
in rural communities. **(Mark)**

In fact, the fear or uncertainty of how these two elements – safety and security –

will change in relation to the place of migration often stands as an inhibition and a crucial

determinant in the final decision of where youth will move.

In one conversation, Alison, a rather nervous person, describes her thoughts about

her forthcoming decision of where she will attend university. She confesses that she is

not at ease with the idea of moving to a city and has subsequently chosen to live and

study in a location that she has heard, from recruiters and peers, fits somewhere between

the two, a stepping stone or transition point from rural to urban. In the following example

she explains the logic of her thought.

That's when I started to look at different areas; for example, I chose to
study at Bishop's University because of the small class size and small-
town feeling. I guess I'll always like a town for that secure feeling.
(Alison)

This choice is not unique to Alison, as this is a route often selected by Gaspe

CEGEP graduates. In the past five years, 30 students have chosen to study at Bishop's

University. In this graduating year alone, seven students selected this university. A trend

perhaps, but not one without social meaning. As Alison details, students are attracted to a

number of features that Bishop's University highlights as their assets. The first is its

small town atmosphere, its location next to a large urban center (Sherbrooke), and the

proximity to Montreal. Students also explain how they are attracted to the small class size and the low teacher-to-student ratio and overall, the sense of safety and security that the campus seems to offer.

> *I am presently experiencing the shift and I am seeing that I too am following a trend where I am aiming for wealth and productivity. After the summer is over I will be moving to Sherbrooke to go to Bishop's University.* **(Sue)**

In a final set of interviews with graduating CEGEP students, I discovered that the number of individuals who would be attending Bishop's University had increased. The explanation that was continually offered as a justification for this decision was that Bishop's University offered a social situation that was not completely unfamiliar to these youth. It provided safety and security, with a low teacher to student ratio. It becomes very obvious that although these students suggested that they needed to escape the limitations of a small town environment, they were not entirely ready for the transition into an urban environment which they classified as anonymous and unsafe. These youth seem to require a mediating point, a stepping stone, by which they can gain the experience of independence without completely jeopardizing the values of small town life. They need a place where they can slowly gauge the intimidating transition of leaving home, and leaving their childhood rural communities. This is a transition that urban people often take for granted, but one which obviously plays on the minds and in the decisions of youths.

Beyond the appeal of comfort and safety, these youth also place value in the bonds and closeness that they have been able to establish within the community in general, and more specifically within their community of peers.

The closeness of such a rural area was always something that I have enjoyed. Knowing and being able to have close ties with the people who live around you is something that everyone grows to appreciate over time. **(Andrea)**

The positive influences that growing up in a rural community have had on me is that you learn to appreciate life more and what you have, based on the fact that when you go to the city they do not have all the luxuries that we have like nature, security and feeling healthy... Another reason why I am grateful for growing up in a rural community is because you learn to be more polite and respect what you have. **(Ashley)**

The bonds of community are reaffirmed and made especially obvious at times of leisure, when youth have the ability to organize and create their own social worlds and experiences. The youth of Gaspe are especially active in this area, as their environment offers few opportunities for organized events and activities. This they balance by organizing their own sporting events, tournaments, musical performances, parties, etc. These events bring together large segments of the community's youth in an entertaining and interactive environment, which serves to reinforce and reestablish the social significance of friendship peers and communal bonds.

Kirsten extends this idea in a narrative of her childhood experiences of freedom, innocence, adventure and the reassurance of familiarity and familiar places and faces. In the same narrative the story begins to take on a twist, as hints of a new perspective develop. There is a sense that she has developed through her childhood and grown and so too has her point of view. The comfort and security of familiarity once felt as a child are translated into notions of repetition and redundancy as a youth. Kirsten's narrative brings into words the dichotomy of the rural as constructed by these youths.

As a child I played in a back yard of big fields and woods. My friends all lived near by. In the summer we rode bikes, picked berries, played games and went to the beach with our family and friends. My favorite activity was going down the hill to the local candy store. In winter we ski-dooed

75

with our brothers and dads, made snowmen and snow angels and enjoyed playing in the big snowdrifts. Our big yellow bus took us to school and home again through all the changing seasons. Everyday I expected to see the same people on the bus and I was never disappointed. Our bus driver tried to keep the hilarity down but most of the time it was noisy. Our small rural school was situated on a hill overlooking the ocean. A cool breeze always made the summer days bearable. Living here has made me appreciate open spaces, the beauty of the ocean, and the mountains, which surrounded our home. As I got older I found more and more to complain about. Now, I had to go to the high school in the town of Gaspe. The bus ride suddenly became more tedious and even noisier. However, I still had my close friends, which made things better because they were in the same boat as I was. Sometimes we would go downtown for lunch or ice cream in the summer. We didn't have to worry about traffic or a crowded restaurant. **(Kirsten)**

This twist from the bond to the boundary of rural community life illustrated by Kirsten's childhood narrative creates the counterbalance, the crux in the formula, the point of relation from which a bond becomes a burden. Nowhere is this made more apparent than in the stage of adolescence. But why do individuals experience this shift in perspective and why at adolescence?

In a book titled *The Community: An Introduction to a Social System,* Irwin Sanders makes the statement: "the community as a social system does not exist in a vacuum" (Sanders, 1966: 25). On the whole this statement is very true but in regard to these youth, this statement become increasingly complex and important in the context of modern media society. Hayes (1998), in an ethnographic study of Cree youth, extends on this notion, creating a thesis where he proves that Cree youth, although largely removed from the currents of modern culture, by location, are still able to act as active interpreters and manipulators of mass culture and cultural images. He suggests that they use these cultural flows in combination with the traditional Cree symbols and culture to reestablish a creolized Cree youth culture that is authentic to the time and place. The power of

Hayes' study is his ability to demonstrate by way of example, the point made by Sanders – indeed no society can exist in a vacuum, and that all individuals, especially youth, are subject to the influence of cultural flows from a variety of sources.

It is not a myth that the dissemination of popular culture has taken on a greater significance in this digital age. The power of communication technology to reach all has continued to grow, spreading the range and degree of its influence. This free flow of culture is then openly interpreted and highly influential as it constantly creates and recreates standards that spread and are applied by locals as a determinant of their region's social worth. Hajesz and Dawe (1994) expands on this by suggesting that "some rural experts have attributed the growing distaste for rural life among young people with the cynicism portrayed in the media... the traditional values of small communities seem "square" compared with the "hip" urban culture popularized in music videos, TV sitcoms and movies" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1994: 117).

Mike provides a practical example of this external influence on local culture by describing the realization of the inadequacies of his local environment to reflect the trends of modern society.

> *I learned very quickly that Gaspe was not a window to the real world. The real world was much different then to my hometown of New Carlisle, which to this day is still a community in many ways.* **(Mike)**

Mike's statement reveals the changing nature of an individual's relation to the rural, or the local, which comes with age. This reinforces a point seen in Kirsten's narrative of the growth from rural childhood to rural adolescence, and the increasing thirst for change and diversity that comes with age and which is offered in the urban metropolis.

Andrea sums up this set of points quite well in her explanation of the expected shift anticipated in the transition from rural to urban, and the opportunity cost, both social and economic, of her decision to migrate.

When the reality of it came into play, however, things began to change. My friends and family I realized mean the world to me, and leaving meant that I wouldn't have this closeness, this group that I depended on for support. My rock, and at the same time my safety net, would no longer be there. In the isolation that comes with urban life and the coldness of it, I would be all alone. In this sense, I can see myself as still living in somewhat of a "community". On the other hand, I still plan to move on in order to become successful, to prosper in urban life. By staying here in Gaspe there is no opportunity for me to do that. **(Andrea)**

Throughout the two years of interaction and conversation held with this group of CEGEP students, it became obvious that home and community were terms that they had taken for granted. Years of living in the same community and growing up with the same individuals had created a standard, a standard that for the most part had never been challenged. They were a tightly-knit group that only came to realize how tightly they were bonded when it came time to make decisions that would pull them apart. The bonds of peers, family, home and community became more apparent as they were to be challenged or broken by the decisions that they would make. As they reached the end of their two-year stay at the CEGEP, these youth became more and more aware of this. In the midst of this realization, Sandy and Sue created two narratives which represent the certainty of decisions and the process of preparation that take place in the minds and actions of youths as they get ready to leave. It also represents the power of security and familiarity of home, and the difficulty of uprooting the certainty and the consequences of moving on.

Personally I am about to leave Gaspe. For me it is a choice I have been forced to make. There are no other options but to leave.

78

To be honest, the thought of leaving did not bother me until a few months ago. I had been with my grandmother for the afternoon and she was telling me how life had been for her. She also taught me how to make bread the way she does (it's a family tradition that's been passed on for years). I realized that in leaving, I would have less time to learn about my ancestors and the struggles that they faced that initially brought them into such a tightknit community.

In the same way it occurred to me that I had only months to really comprehend what makes life in Gaspe so enchanting.

Personally most of my friends are also moving on. It seems sad, but in a number of years I will be returning for Christmas to find that I am the only one. I most likelihood my parents will not even be living in Gaspe anymore.

I get a lonely feeling when I consider these things. It is a harsh reality, but I know that my kids will never experience Gaspe life. **(Sandy)**

Since I was very young my family has been preparing me for this very change. They would tell me things like, "its time you start filling up you hope chest for when you go away to school". I think that it is the same for every family who lives on the Gaspe Coast. It is just a reality of living in a small community.

I think that the people around here have just accepted this fact and they have let their children go. When a child leaves home to go away to school it is of course a very hard time.

I myself am dreading the day when I leave for Montreal. I don't want to leave home to be honest, and I enjoy the Gaspe. I feel like I am just going because I have to and certainly not because I want to. **(Sue)**

Leaving home for many rural youths is a difficult step best negotiated through the use of mediating points. Their experience of small town society has provided them with a set of social characteristics and expectations that are better met and built on in a transition environment, like Bishop's University. This transition environment provides the needed change that these youths require but it also allows them to feel some of the comfort and familiarity of Gaspe, through peers as well as the security of a small town. Despite the

anxiety and frustration of the previous section (Youth Construction of the Gaspe), these youths hold a certain value and attachment to their families, and communities. Regardless they realize that the step has to be made. A final illustration of this bond is recounted in a story of Mike and the shift that has taken place in his life and the people that this shift requires him to leave behind.

> *I have a friend who is not in school and doesn't work. He does not even seem to fit...He is someone who got lost in the mix when we were going through this transition. Our relationship has suffered because of this. We are on two different paths and because of this we don't talk a lot due to distance.*
>
> *When you think about this logically its like we have no choice. I can end up like my friend who doesn't do anything or I can follow most people and enter in order to survive. This means leaving the Gaspe Coast, my family, my friends and everyone else.* **(Mike)**

Home and the Boundaries of Community

> *"Got a lot of memories tied up in this place, so much time spent in so little space, what seemed like the world through the eyes of a child, kind of closes in on you after a while" (Steve Earle)*
>
> *"Nothing ever happened 'round my home town and I ain't the kind to just hang around. "* (Steve Earle)
>
> *"Can't live to die-too easy, why stick around, I want my life to please me, not another small town hometown bringdown. "* (Canadian band - The Tragically Hip).

Although home and community are constructed as positive aspects or bonds of rural life, Gaspesian youth also construct 'home' as the above lyrical examples do, as places of stasis, where limited change creates boredom, dissatisfaction and a longing to escape. The boundaries of rural life make up the balance of the dichotomy of this debate – the advantages and disadvantages of rural life – constructed by these youths. Most of

the youth in this study have spent most – if not all – of their lives, in rural communities. They have physically traveled outside of the Gaspe, as they have vacationed and visited relatives, aunts, uncles, and cousins in the city. They have also been witness to countless vacationers, some of whom were also relatives, who have returned to the Gaspe from the urban environment, carrying with them values, norms and materials of urban influence. These youths have also traveled cognitively, out of the rural and into the urban each day as television, the internet, films and even their textbooks open them to the reality of the urban. These youths have a clear vision of the differences that lie between rural and urban. In this section I will explore and explain how these youths describe these differences and more importantly, how these differences produce opinions and frame the boundaries of rural and small town society and how these boundaries shape the thought that influence youth migration decisions.

The boundaries of rural society have often been addressed, but the focus has certainly been economic. Wenk and Hardesty (1993) and De Jong and Blair (1994) have provided evidence to the increased earning capacity and mobility rates of youths that have migrated from the rural to the urban. This is indeed a limitation and a boundary that rural youths associate with their environment and the reason why youths that openly choose to remain in rural areas such as the Gaspe Peninsula are stigmatized as underachieving and unambitious. The Gaspe is a place youths define as financially and economically stagnant. Poverty and unemployment are the local characteristics of the economy. In response these youths are clearly motivated toward migration.

> *However despite all of the good aspects associated with a rural area,*
> *there are also the negative ones, which follow. Gaspe's economy has been*
> *very much lacking for as long as I can remember. When growing up, I*
> *always heard someone complaining about the lack of jobs that could be*

81

found in Gaspe, and now, I am experiencing the same thing. This creates,
in my mind, an image of Gaspe, which does not prove to be appealing in
the least bit. **(Andrea)**

The economic downfalls of rural society in the most general sense as well as in

the Gaspe have been well documented but few studies have developed a broader view or

range of motives that would influence youths to migrate from rural areas - boundaries

that extend beyond the economic scope of life.

In this section I will turn the focus from the bonds that attach youth to rural

environments to the limitations that frustrate youth and influence them to leave rural

communities.

Social Reality of Isolation

However, Gaspe does not only suffer from scarcity of opportunities but
also from another factor, name seclusion. Being that we are at the end of
the peninsula it is hard to get anything to come here, it's too expensive. As
well, it is a five-hour commute to the nearest city. Who wants to do that
when they want to shop or need a specialist? **(Kirsten)**

Kirsten's statement suggests that social geography plays a prominent role in the

social reality of youths in the Gaspe. Indeed the location of a community can influence

the overall state of the economy, the availability of employment, social services and most

importantly, for these youths, the quality of life available. The Gaspe Coast being located

at the end of a peninsula is situated in a position of both physical and social isolation.

With this position come consequences as Kirsten's narrative suggests, such as, a sparse,

dispersed population, lagging development, employment and modernization, limited

social and entertainment services and a lack of cultural diversity. Kirsten's statements

revel how this isolation cuts the society off from the larger lifeline of the urban. This

physical isolation manifests itself in the establishment of social limitations, which these

youths become very critical of. Ashley illustrates this point in relation to the limits of cultural diversity and how such limitations create an accepted and culturally reinforced ignorance of experience and knowledge which the youth recognize as outside the norm of modern society, prompting them to define this as a negative characteristic of the rural.

The negative side of growing up in a rural community is that most people seem to be ignorant towards different cultures and races. You see this especially in elderly people that have lived in a rural community their whole lives. Also the way it kind of isolates young children away from experiencing different cultures and races which often results in ignorant comments from them based on the fact that they have never really been exposed to different races while growing up. **(Ashley)**

This is simply one example of how physical isolation creates social consequences. With three to five hours from the nearest small city, Gaspesians only occasionally experience the full reality of urban culture. These youths however, feel rather strongly about this social dislocation and isolation. Living on the Gaspe Coast, they feel cut off from the larger cultural elements and issues of their generation. They see the array of luxuries and possibilities advertised, promoted and portrayed on a daily basis though, television, magazines, the internet and in film. These images create an overwhelming standard in which the rural environment of the Gaspe falls short. This simply exacerbates the problem of youth migration in regard to youths, as it creates a perspective, which clearly exemplifies what youths do not have access to in the Gaspe.

The Anglophone population find themselves, not only in a position of geographical isolation from a metropolitan region, but also as a minority group within the Francophone majority. This has placed great limits on the Anglophone population as a whole, with respect to the availability of and access to services, entertainment, recreation and most importantly business and employment opportunities.

These youths express dissatisfaction with both these positions of isolation as this physical distance and social exclusion is translated into both a cultural and cognitive distance, a physical manifestation of the space between their reality and the reality of the urban/popular culture. The interpretation and explanation of this distance protrudes from the words of Blair, a CEGEP student, and her description of Gaspe.

> *Small town situated in the extreme East of Canada. Population: approx.*
> *4000 habitants. Particular features: beautiful landscape, lots of water*
> *around, besides that, hummm... well... nothing... And like that wasn't bad*
> *enough, we live 4 hours away from the closest civilization that is*
> *Rimouski. (nearest small city)* **(Blair)**

Her choice of words, to exemplify and accentuate her point, are interesting. By suggesting Rimouski as the closest "civilization" she is, by extension, excluding the Gaspe from such a definition. This characterization of Gaspe as being outside the realm of civilization is a representation of how Gaspesian youths represent their environment and see their situation. Mike further reinforces this point;

> *When I had questioned my fellow peer about why he thinks there's nothing*
> *to benefit from in the community, he said, "we are at the center of this*
> *region and the government thinks that we are too far from civilization that*
> *we don't realize the indication of the word when we come into contact*
> *with it.* **(Mike)**

These youths construction of the rural, as we see in the examples above, reveals one of the general boundaries that lead many young people to feeling frustrated and disconnected from the Gaspe. These examples define not only the region as isolated but also the people, as is made evident in the second statement. As a result they distance themselves from rural culture because it lets them down, consequentially they seem to express a stronger connection with an alternative culture – the image of urban culture.

This resentment of this rural reality seems to exist for two reasons. First, the isolation limits their contact with society at large and their involvement in, and consumption of popular culture. It also limits the pool of individuals (friends, social groups etc.) and opportunities that youths have available at their disposal. Secondly, the fact that they compose the minority places the Anglophone youths in an extreme version of isolation and alienation. "They exist in but not of the community." They exist within the larger cultural framework of the Gaspe but are rarely active participants on any large scale. Rather, they relate more closely to the images of popular culture that they see through the various forms of media. They interpret these and use them to form social distance between themselves and the region through the formation of subcultures, which are more in synch with urban society. They have distanced themselves so to speak and in doing so, cut themselves off from the already sparse services and activities that are available. They act and react as a minority, a small sub-culture which defines itself by maintaining its distinction.

This isolation means that Gaspesian youths are cut off from many of the aspects of modern and pop culture. For example, because of the distance and the value of the Gaspesian market, the price and availability of goods are effected. Thus, the very act of purchasing or consuming, a very instrumental part of a consumer culture, is negated or only partially offered because of social location. Buying clothing, music and technology in local stores means that all individuals will pay more, simply due to the basic laws of supply and demand. This has an incredible effect on youth as their spending power provides them with much less flexibility.

The Automobile, Immobility, Dependency and Isolation

Along with the sense of physical isolation provided by space and place, Gaspesian youths also experience a prolonged stage of dependency based on the geographic structure and layout of rural communities. Given the dispersed nature of rural communities many youth find themselves excluded from social circles and social activity simply because they are unable to commute. Whether it is getting to a friend's house, to a weekend party, or simply to meet at the mall, Gaspesian youths find the lack of physical mobility frustrating.

Carrabine and Longhurst (2002) have documented the importance of the automobile as, a principle factor in, "maintaining and developing social networks, friendship and relationships" (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002: 190). They have also associated the car and the flexible use of a car as representing an early symbol of independence. The ability to drive, and the importance of not being left out show the importance and reassurance of peer networks. Moreover, access to and use of a car can be used to broaden the activity base of youths and help them mediate the boredom they feel in their rural communities.

In the same study, Carrabine and Longhurst also draw attention to the ongoing neglect of the automobile in sociological literature. They express the dual importance of the automobile, as an organizing factor in society and in the daily lives of individuals. They state,

> *We tend to agree with Urry (2000) that car use should be thought of as
> 'quasi-private' for there are few technologies that so readily impact on the
> public sphere as the car, and have been so systematically ignored in
> sociology. Moreover, thinking of the car in this way facilitates
> consideration of how the car mediates between 'two rather different types*

of consumption action, that geared towards impressing others and that
directed at reassuring oneself (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002: 194).

This is doubly true of considerations and analysis of the importance of the

automobile in rural society and as an important variable in rural youth culture.

In many rural areas, specifically the Gaspe Peninsula, the automobile represents

the only means of transportation. The physical mobility of all individuals is contingent on

the availability of an automobile. Therefore, the automobile takes on a highly important

role in rural society as it represents the physical mobility of an individual and their ability

to independently negotiate their way in and around the physical and social environment.

An individual without an automobile finds themselves in a precarious position of

immobility and by extension a position of dependency as the need to negotiate a "lift,"

due to the very decentralized structure of rural communities and rural services become a

common task. The absence of an automobile makes getting from point A to point B, for

even the simplest requirements such as buying daily necessities or accessing the post

office a dependant position, as rural society affords no such thing as public transportation

thus, leaving no alternatives beside dependency on the automobile.

This idea extends directly into rural youth culture with increased complexity, as

all youths find themselves with a need for transportation with the exception of cycling or

walking. But as I have noted, given the nature of Gaspesian towns and services, these

means, while effective on certain grounds, such as transportation over short distances, are

not useful for most of the transportation needs that would encompass longer distances.

Also cycling and walking become even less effective in the winter. Thus, a teenager

without a driver's license will find themselves in a position where they will need a "lift"

from their parents to and from a weekend night party. This would not be so complex,

supposing that this party was located in their town but due to the dispersed population of the Gaspe Coast, attending a party or get together might mean traveling thirty minutes to an hour in each direction. Some teens might be able to negotiate a "lift" from a friend who has a driver's license and access to an automobile but in many situations youths remain dependant on their parents. This extends feelings of childishness and dependency while the tendency of all youth at this stage in life is to obtain independence. It also reduces participation of youths in planned events and increases individual frustration. Kirsten provides a good explanation of these feelings,

> *However, in the past it was not like this. I enjoyed living here. It was safe and all my friends were around, I did not have to worry about being kidnapped. Although as I got older this changed. Everything seemed so far away, I felt like a prisoner in some respects. And everything because expensive to do. Traveling costs money and I had to go away to school... Honestly, because of the segregation I really do not like it here. But of course this is mainly because of the stage of life that I'm in now. I want to be independent and I do not feel that I can achieve that here.* **(Kirsten)**

The automobile does not only represent a physical means of transportation but it holds a symbolic value as Carrabine and Longhurst have demonstrated. This is represented by youths as a progressive step in the quest for increased independence. The car becomes an affirmation of acquired responsibility and brings with it the ability for youths to more freely construct their social worlds. In fact the automobile often becomes an activity in and of itself. "The car is used as part of group activity... the car is seen as facilitating sociability" (Carrabine and Longhurst, 2002: 190). This is exemplified in the following statement where Kim discusses the role of the automobile in Gaspesian social activity.

> *My father took me for long drives almost every night all over the town. When I was young I didn't really search for places to go and things to do, but as I got older I realized that there wasn't that many places to*

88

*go...Right now when I want to do something I either go out to the bars, go shopping or drive around for hours.***(Kim)**

The rural experience of space represents a very different reality from that of the urban and even suburban areas, especially for youths. Urban and suburban youths would not require to travel as much, given the very structure of services and entertainment in the suburbs and urban locations. When transport was necessary, the availability of public transpiration would allow youths, without access to an automobile, an ability to become mobile. For this reason I will argue that rural youths suffer from prolonged feelings of isolation and dependency with respect to social activities and social networks, thus, increasing their feelings of frustration and inadequacy.

The concept of the automobile can be analyzed further to suggest a limit to the jobs and hobbies or social groups (sports, music, crafts etc.) that are available to youths. One could also bring forth a discussion of the correlation of social class and the likelihood of attaining a driver's license, given the costs, and more importantly, the frequency of access to an automobile once a license has been attained. The automobile plays an important role in personal mobility in rural society and it stands as a sign of responsibility and independence in rural youth culture. It is a facet of rural life that requires further research and discussion.

Minority Consciousness

Mark Abley, a in a newspaper article entitled, "Gaspe Blues", points out the following observation. "The high school is shared by between French and English-language students. It's a friendly enough relationship, for the most part. The students

know each other, often date each other. They're all, if you pardon the metaphor, in the same boat" (Abley, 1998). Kim, responded to the article in this manner:

> *Mark Abley writes in the Gazette saying that the high school is shared between French and English and it's a friendly enough relationship for the most part (The Gazette) I don't agree with that at all. He went by what he saw but I was once in that school and I know how it is. Most of the French people despise the English-speaking people. They always fight. It's not a nice place to be at all. I do not hate French people; in fact I have many friends who are French. I don't like the idea that just because we are in a French province means that people shouldn't have to talk English. I went in a boutique once and I asked the saleswoman a question and she couldn't answer me because she didn't know how. It makes me mad that English people have to make an effort to speak French. I know how to speak French very well but I will not. Why stay in a place where I can't even speak my own language in public. I'm going somewhere where I'll be respected for my language... I am 100% sure that I will be moving out of the province of Quebec, most likely to Ottawa to live with my sister.*
> **(Kim)**

Kim's narrative of linguistic frustration is a common sentiment within the Anglophone population of the Gaspe. There is a certain bitterness within the English speaking population of the Gaspe, that they must make extra efforts to speak French while the individuals who are serving them, make no effort to meet them in the middle.

On a general level, Abley is very correct in stating that both Anglophone and Francophone youths share the experience of local frustration and mass migration. The general problem does indeed extend throughout the entire youth population and for the most part the two groups of youths do share similar feelings, but the specifics are rather different. The difference lies in the base population of each language group. Anglophones make up a distinct minority within the communities of the Peninsula so the exodus of youths has a more profound effect as the loss of youths is more visible and has a great impact. Warkentin (1997) sets the context by explaining the history of the Anglophone exodus from the Gaspe.

Since the 1940's there has been a very rapid decrease in the English population; this past generation has experienced the shock and exhilaration of a very rapid switch from a dominant English-speaking to a dominant French-speaking population in many communities. The town of Gaspe was between 75 percent and 80 percent English0-speaking in the 1940's; in the 1980's it was about 18 percent English" (Warkentin, 1997: 253).

There is indeed a marked contrast between growing up as an English Gaspesian and a French Gaspesian. Anglophone Gaspesian youths make up a highly underrepresented category of their community's population. They find themselves on the losing end of many battles and decisions because they represent a definite minority in all areas of community demographic categories. The marginalization of this population on all social levels has had tremendous affects on the opinions and consciousness of these youth and is directly played out in their decisions as a group.

Minorities are formed through demographic categories and power relations within the organization of the society. In this sense, Gaspesian youths comprise what I will call a multi-level minority group, meaning that they exist within their society and communities as minorities on all social and demographic levels. For one, they are Anglophones living in a predominantly Francophone region. Secondly, they are youth living in an area with an ageing population. Thirdly, they are youths living outside the realm of popular cultural images. How does this categorization effect the lives and consequentially the decisions of Gaspesian youths?

Since Anglophones represent a distinct minority on the Gaspe Peninsula, one would assume that for many purposes, integration and cooperation within the larger Francophone population would be in the best interest of Gaspesian Anglophones. This is not at all the case. The experience of Anglophones in this region of Quebec can easily be

compared to the attitudes and opinions of many Quebecers being located within Canada. Their social identity is formed by definition of what they are not. They clearly distinguish themselves from the French population and remaining segregated from that population. Thus, Anglo's of the Gaspe resist the notion of integration, as their inability to function in the language of the majority becomes a clear marker of their separation. This has placed tremendous barriers on the level of involvement and integration of Anglophones within the larger community and social events. Mel explains the frustration of the situation,

> *I think it sucks to be an English there. There is more to do in Gaspe than we English 'potheads' are aware of. Swimming, music courses, artsy stuff that the French purposely keep to themselves. It pisses me off.* **(Mel)**

CASA (Committee for Anglophone Social Action) outlines the limitation that this resistance and reluctance to learn French places on the Anglophones of the region.

> *More meshing between the French and English-speaking communities is needed... It is an asset for an English-speaking person to learn French in order to increase his/her chances of finding employment...Recreational activities in the Gaspe exist primarily within the French-speaking population. A lack of English-speaking organization activities has created a serious need for fundamental English-speaking entertainment in existing communities. Although drive-ins and movie theatres exist in the Gaspe, there are few movies played in English. Last year, in Cortereal, only one English movie was shown the entire summer... An even greater need exists for access to English literature... The English speaking population is in dire need of more activities aimed at making them more cohesive as a community.* (McDonald, 1999: 25)

A recent newspaper article entitled, *Canadian Parents for French is hoping to make a comeback in Quebec*, explains how this grassroots organization works to ensure that young people have access to the French language. This article and this organization makes similar assertions, "The organization realizes that French is a necessity for English residents of Quebec. As Cooper (spokesperson) puts it, 'if you want to study, work and live in Quebec, you have to speak French. Many parents as well as a large percentage of

young people... stress the importance of heightened access to French resources. One parent eloquently stated... 'we are teaching our kids to export them'" (Spec. March 10. 2002).

To understand this phenomena perhaps it is better to take a step back and examine the geographic location of these divided communities. Geographically and historically, Gaspe has been composed of two populations, the French and the English. These populations have shared a long history but a sharing of history does not necessitate a sharing of anything more but division. This division begins at the geographic level with the geographic structure of the communities.

Although these communities are scattered throughout the southern shore of the Peninsula, Anglo communities exist as almost exclusively English speaking communities. Tourist are often surprised to find themselves being served in English and thus pose the question of why there are Anglos on the Gaspe Coast. It seems that the existence of these Anglophone communities is a very well kept secret to the outsider. Thus, the children and youth of these communities, both English and French grow up in a predominantly monolingual community where contact with individuals of the opposite language is often limited and usually impersonal. As Kim suggested earlier, the high school is shared by both English and French but again interaction is not as free and flexible, as one would expect. This has proven to be a great limitation on the English speaking youth, as the inability to function in the French language seriously limits the range of activities that they can take part in.

A student research group at the CEGEP de la Gaspe et des Iles concluded,

We have discovered that there may be no future in certain occupations,
but in order to achieve a prosperous future Anglos must be fluent in the
French language to subsist in Quebec... This would probably be the best
way to maintain a healthy future for the Anglos in the Gaspe. (Student
Paper Entitled: Overall Synthesis of the future for Anglos in the Gaspe
Region, 1999)

Although integration into the larger French society and culture would seem

beneficial to young Gaspesians they operate within their own Anglophone subculture.

Mullen has stated, "*We also are more prone to ingroup bias when our group is small*

relative to the out group" (Mullen & others, 1992). While Myers has added that, "*When*

we 're part of a small group surrounded by a larger outgroup, we are also more

conscious of our group membership" (Myers, 1996, 407). These theories offer some

understanding into the consciousness of a minority group. And although Gaspesian youth

do not refer to themselves as a minority they operate as one.

Beyond the limits placed on employment, entertainment and education... minority

status is also played out in the limited areas of social access available to these youth.

Limited access to information, library facilities, community centers, role models

supportive social groups and networks that encourage and promote diversity limit the

range of activities and social realities open to these youths. Rather, issues of difference

become issues of ridicule, homophobia, artistic expression and identity exploration to

name only a few. In addition, the youths complain about the high levels of gossip in small

communities and schools and the destructive and negative environment it creates. The

youths expressed clear signs of confinement and they felt that was something that they

would surely escape in a urban environment.

This outlines the major boundaries that exist in youth narratives. It also sets up a

minority consciousness that youths define as limiting and uncomfortable. In addition

Anglophone youths find themselves dispersed across a large geographic region which inhibits any semblance of experience or opportunity for solidarity. As a result these youths criticize their rural environments and look to the urban for their future.

The Uncertainty and the Allure of the Urban

Like the rural environment, Gaspesian youths define the urban environment from two different points of view – allure and uncertainty. These youths use these constructions of the urban to weigh against the construction of the bonds and boundaries of the rural environment, in informing their decisions about migration.

Gaspesian youths express a typical fear of the uncertainty that comes with moving into a new environment. More so, the youths express an uncertainty and uneasiness with the city itself. For a person raised in a rural environment, the city exists as an unstable, unsafe environment. It represents the very opposite in terms of safety and familiarity that their rural communities offer. This uncertainty can be attributed to a number of things, such as; the depiction of the city on the nightly news, where the focus is on violence and crime. It could also be due to stories that travel orally from the urban to the rural, through local informal communication networks. Thirdly it could have to do with images from television and in film that construct the city as a threatening environment – an environment where murder, rape and robbery are an everyday occurrence. These are images of a reality that are foreign to the experience of rural youths and quite understandably, intimidating, especially for those whose experience in a city is limited. This fear and uncertainty seems to occur as the greatest barrier that these youths constructed of the urban.

*Living on the Gaspe Peninsula has been comfortable for me. It is a calm,
peaceful place to live. I have always preferred it to the business and chaos
of the dangerous city.* **(Sue)**

These youths also constructed the urban as a place where their social support

systems would be drastically reduced. This seemed to create a level of individualism that

most youths felt uncomfortable with due to the fact that they had always relied on strong

social support though community, family and friends. This was an uncertainty to the

youths but it was a factor that they expected and felt that time and experience could

remedy. They also suggested that friends and peers would help alleviate the transition

from rural community to urban society.

*I'm introduced to the idea of having to leave the Gaspe or remain.
Drawing from my experience, as well as the strong encouragement from
my parents, I was worried at the thought of venturing into the unknown
and yet I was comforted with the idea that it was for my own good.* **(Andy)**

*The first time that I experienced this shift is when I went to Montreal for
one month to work in the summer. I was just finished grade nine when I
decided to take off. The very first thing that I noticed was that I felt alone
and insecure. People did not say hi to each other or even acknowledge
their existence. This opened my eyes to a whole new world. This world
was based on money and efficiency. It was a world that concentrated on
individualism.* **(Mike)**

*I always knew I would have to leave the Gaspe cost for employment, which
is kind of upsetting. It is upsetting because when moving to a bigger town
you never get the same psychological support as you do in a small
community. Meaning that when people know you are from a small town
they tend to take advantage of you and walk over you, especially if you
come from Quebec. When people know you come from Quebec, their first
reaction is that your French and a separatist, which makes it harder to get
involved with the new society that you have just entered.* **(Ashley)**

In this sense, youth construct the urban as a formal network of professionally

motivated individuals. They seem to suggest that moving from the rural to the urban also

meant moving from community to society. These youths represented community as being

a small intimate social space characterized by familiarity and certainty, while the urban they associated, as Mike states, with a world centered on individualism and as a consequence less support for the individual. This diminished support and uncertainty represented in depictions of the urban, in conjunction with the overwhelming sense of safety and supports that they have experienced in the rural, is perhaps the greatest mental barrier that these youths grapple with as they attempt to decide on a migration location. As I mentioned earlier in the section "The Bonds of Community", a migration decision is often based on finding a middle ground between what youths construct as absolute rural and absolute urban. Youth also use peers and family migration networks as established social support systems.

An additional barrier was expense, as a move of such magnitude would present to most youths. Cost was not spoken of as a great barrier, it was something that they felt others had incurred and that they would find ways to negotiate as well. Sandy brings up the disadvantage of rural youths in having to accumulate a mounting debt as they extend their education.

> *The biggest effect this is having on me is economically. Living away from home and paying for my education I will be put well behind in my financial situation.* **(Sandy)**

This debt was seen as an extra burden placed on rural students. It was also the reason most listed for attending CEGEP in Gaspe

> *As for academically, while first of all, I did not want to go to school in Gaspe. I really wanted to leave this place. But my parents did not want me to leave so I ended up staying in Gaspe for another two years.* **(Jill)**

> *Deciding to move to Gaspe and attend school here was not something I had chosen to do on my own. It was under the "advice" (or force) of my parents that I decided to attend CEGEP de la Gaspe here in Gaspe.* **(Steph)**

There is a degree of ambivalence in the way rural youth speak of the city. They accept the transition and recognize the potential of the city but they suggest that in making the move they must leave something behind. That which gets left behind and which lies ahead are the markers which determine migration decisions and by extension the experience, enjoyment, and success of the migration.

The urban environment is also constructed by rural youth, as a dangerous place. It is a place of crime and uncertainty, a threatening environment. But within this threat, lie the seeds of countless opportunity, for development, social interaction, entertainment, diversity and consumerism. These are aspects of life, including the threat, which stand opposite to the youth construction of the rural, aspects of life, which contribute to the allure of the city. Change is what these youth suggest they want and need and change is exactly what the city represents to them.

The city is constructed as an exciting place, a place better suited to the demands of youth than a rural environment.

> *Gaspesian society is not the type of society that teenagers want to live in. For me, I disliked growing up in Gaspe in my teen years. In high school I had many friends who moved away to much larger towns and cities and I was jealous of what they were experiencing.* **(Kim)**

The city is constructed as a place where opportunities and experience are plentiful and diversity is intriguing and educating. A statement made by a student from Gaspe, who was recently in the process of making the adjustment to the urban environment, captured the dichotomy of how the rural and the urban exist in the minds of rural youths.

> *Some days I walk out my door and all the noise and pollution make me think that this is the biggest hole, while other days I look around and see it as a place of amazing opportunity.* **(Joe)**

Chris reinforces this perspective,

> *I have many friends in the city, there are many job opportunities and I love the "rush of the city life* (**Chris**)

These youths construct the city as a polar opposite to the construction of the rural that these youths have grown up with and have slowly grown out of. The experience of the city is spoken of as holding great possibility and variety, but most evidently it is spoken of with great anticipation. Gaspesian youths seem to want a change more than anything.

> *I have been influenced, however not only by the depressive economy of our small town, but also by the vastness and excitement of the city life.* (**Andrea**)

> *It will also give me an opportunity to experience life in a big city. It will be a very different lifestyle, but I'm very excited. I want to go to these places and experience the life that other kids have at my age. I know not everyone can have the life they want to have but I think that it's unfair.* (**Kim**)

There is a feeling that being located on the outskirts, geographically has also placed them on the outskirts culturally. Kim's statement above reveals the notion that youth feel that growing up on the Gaspe Peninsula has meant missing many opportunities and experiences that other youth have been exposed to.

> *Psychologically, this made me sad, lonely and depressed at times. My friends in Montreal would call and tell me how much fun they were having and it would make me sad and mad...But I am very ready to move to a larger city because that is my place. I like big stores, big nightclubs, lots of traffic and a constant flow of people. I'm a person who needs to have stuff going on around me. I don't like living in a town where on Sunday night you can drive around and not meet other cars; it's just not the place for me.* (**Kim**)

Blair extends on this idea of the rural coming up short in comparison to the urban as she creates a narrative explaining how she sees the cultural relationship between the urban and the rural.

No matter what we do, Gaspesians will always, to a certain extent, follow bigger societies, cultures, because we are exposed to it through the various media's and when we travel. It is human nature to be reluctant to believe in something alone and to have a tendency to follow the majority. The majority being the big centers... our smaller communities will have no choice but to evolve in the same direction.

Growing up in Gaspe I was able to see how living in the country is a totally different setting then big cities. I was also able to observe how the people around me were influenced by those cultures in their clothes, music and behaviour.

Just by watching TV I remember when we were in elementary school we would say expressions we heard on television because they were so "cool" and of course none of the pop starts lived in a small community.

Even today, our dress code still corresponds to whatever the newest and most popular actors and singers are wearing, even though we are miles away they couldn't care less about what people in Gaspe wear, cause they'll never see us. **(Blair)**

Blair's narrative further illustrates the pressure the urban precedent places on rural society and the allure that it creates in the minds of rural youths. She speaks of the urban as a central locust of culture, a place where action and meaning begin – a place where most youths want to be and if they cannot, they want to imitate and emulate it. Thus, the rural environment constantly comes up short in its representation and simulation of modern society, as it is not the city.

But I am very ready to move to a larger city because that is my place. I like big stores, big nightclubs, lots of traffic and a constant flow of people. I'm a person who needs to have stuff going on around me. I don't like living in a town where on Sunday night you can drive around and not meet other cars; it's just not the place for me. **(Kim)**

Instead of spending tremendous amounts of money on useless "nic nacs" at stores here, we save our income and spend it when we go away, to get more stuff. **(Blair)**

But in a city there is just much more variety as to what it is that you want to do and what to be. **(Mark)**

The urban is constructed as a place of great freedom and flexibility. The youths see it as a place where they can escape the social confines of rural society and rural social pressure. It is a place where the vast number of options and opportunities will give them a greater taste of modern culture and more options and freedom. For instance, Kim and Blair use the simple example of consumerism and how the city gives youths more options for exercising their role as a consumer. Consumerism has become a great part of modern society; it has become much more than a simple activity it becomes defined as a means of expression and identity formation. Rural youths have expressed how this facet of modern culture is challenged in rural society. Thus, in comparison the rural identity, as made apparent in the words of Blair, is considered a mere imitation of the urban. The president is established by the urban way of life and the rural must follow suit. Youths seem to be attracted to experiencing this standard first hand and this is what creates the allure of the urban.

Concluding Thoughts on Youth Construction of the Rural and the Urban

Although the group expressed a keenness for departure they did relay the difficulty of breaking the bonds of community. Most appreciated the fact that they were a member of a tightly knit community and showed signs of uncertainty about the nature of life outside the communities of the Gaspe Peninsula.

There is a definite emotional side involved in the departure from a place that you call 'home', whether the move is regarded with reluctance or excitement. For the youths of the Gaspe Peninsula, a decision to migrate represents their first move of great distance from their familiar surroundings and most often their first move from their parents.

One truth that offers very little debate is the sense of security and safety found in rural locations. The youths have expressed their value for such security and freedom, that follows from knowing that their environment holds very little in the way of threatening obstacles. They have placed a greater value on this security in their childhood as it has given them the ability to grow up undaunted by their surroundings.

This sense of security and familiarity creates a certain anxiety with regard to moving to an urban environment and learning to live in and with the heightened levels of crime and insecurity. These stand as obstacles for the migrant to overcome.

These youths also suggest developing resentment toward rural culture because of all the things that it lacks. This results in things that they are missing out on. This can be seen on many levels such as; entertainment, clothing, social diversity, sports, etc. The result is frustration, resentment, and distancing from rural culture. This distancing is further exacerbated by the images of popular culture, which do a very poor job of relating to the reality of rural youths. Thus, these youths feel at a disadvantage and take on images and icons of pop culture in an effort to fit into a larger social picture. This is seen in their preferences for music, clothing, language etc.

The Gaspe is constructed as a limited environment for youths as it is judged by the images they have of the opportunities and potential of the urban environment. The decision to migrate is most contingent on how youths relate and define these two social worlds, 'the rural' and 'the urban'.

Gaspesian Youth and the Social Construction of Migration

Youth is a developmental stage of life, which is characterized by flux, a period of self-discovery, of growth and movement – both physical and mental. Each culture has appointed and agreed upon processes, structures and activities that mark the path from youth to adulthood. These rites of passage are culturally dependent but within each culture these rituals exist as norms and expectations that youths must meet before they are granted succession into the following stage. Schlegal and Barry explain the stage of adolescence in modern society.

> *The movement into adolescence is often marked ritually... in contemporary society the youth stage occurs between high school and the concomitant or sequential events of full employment and marriage. The social timetable for modern society is to complete one's education, settle into a job, perhaps after a period of experimentation with several occupations or a stint in military service, and then marry. Research indicates that people who experience these events out of sequence may suffer adverse effects in terms of decreased lifetime earnings.*
> (Schlegal/Barry, 1991: 34-36).

Gaspesian youth rituals marking the process of development of adolescence often follow this pattern as migration becomes defined, both by youths and the community, as a step toward independence and adulthood. Moreover, migration takes on the role of a necessity in the explanations of these youths as they construct migration as the only way to achieve success and security in the future. Mark explains the interplay of individual and community experience in establishing the construction of migration for youths.

> *If you would ask someone, "what's here?" They would say, "Nothing! The seas got no more fish in it, the forests have no more trees and you can't grow anything on the land."*
>
> *So, why do we say that 'the Gaspe region is a place to be escaped?' For one reason and one reason only, there is nothing to gain and everything to loose from sticking around!*

103

The youth in the community realize that there's nothing located in our environment, and are being forced out of the region...The majority of individuals around my age aren't planning on sticking around the region after the completion of their education. Many of my peers are thinking like I am, they want to move to a region where they can create an active and positive future for themselves.

The reactions of others when asked about their life in the Gaspe region is shocking. Most replies were, "our young school lives were great, but things change when you get older and need to support yourself and family. It seems as though this region is no place for that, unless an individual plans on applying for 'welfare,' or unemploymet,' basically that's all that is being offered for us.

Some of my family members tell me that this region is 'no place to live the rest of your life, get out as soon as you can. " **(Mark)**

Mark's explanation makes clear the stigma attached to staying in the Gaspe and the certainty of the population of how youths should plan their future. As with any collective social phenomenon, if repeated long enough and/or by enough individuals, it grows to be accepted and constructed as a social norm. This is the form that youth migration has taken on in the Gaspe. Migration is set as a community norm with high expectations for those who leave and social pressure for those who stay. Youths seem to gain a sense of security and certainty knowing that their peers are experiencing the same reality and are contemplating the same decisions. This creates a common understanding of the situation, which leads to a common construction of the reality and often a common solution to the problem as I mentioned earlier; it is rather common for Gaspesian youth to migrate in groups and networks. In this section I will explore the construction of migration as a rite of passage for youths and ask the question, what social factors influence this norm? As Mark's narrative reveals, the community, peers, family and individual experience all play a collaborative role in the construction of migration and bear direct influence on an individual's decision to migrate.

Role and Influence of Families, Peers and Community

Families are very powerful institutions, and their influence over their young members registers in every part of their lives, including schooling". (Connell et al, in Fagan, 1982: 137)

As Connell suggest the family holds great influence over the decisions of their children. The youths in this study suggested that their families played several roles in influencing their decisions on education and their future. They focused on how the experience of their parents had come to shape their opinions and decisions about the region and migration.

It plays a major role in my life. Forever since I was a little girl, I wanted to leave Gaspe. When I was young, my family moved away to Ontario for a year. We had to move because my father lost his job due to lay-offs and could not find another one in Gaspe. So he left for Hamilton, Ontario and we moved up when he was settled in. I loved it! There were so many things to do and so many kids my age. As well I didn't need to speak french (I always had trouble with that in school) so it was sort of an escape for me...

Why, for many reasons, first my mother still had her job here with all of her seniority, which she didn't have in Hamilton. Second, my family was here and it was easier to get someone to baby-sit my sister and I, than in the city. So, we moved back to Gaspe. I remember how it affected my family. My sister and I were very sad because we missed our friends, but we were also very happy for we got to see our old friend again.

As for my father, he was angry for different reasons. He was back in the same position again, jobless, so instead of taking his anger out on others he took it out on Gaspe. He used to curse Gaspe left and right. He hated this place; he would constantly harass himself by asking the question, "why didn't we stay in Hamilton." My mother, on the other hand, missed the city and all the opportunities she had there, but she came back to her normal job and friends; which I think helped her to cope.

As well, since my parents did not want to come back and because of the financial problems my father had to face, they often promoted the urban life. "More opportunities" was constantly the golden term of why I should leave Gaspe. From that day on. I have always stated, that as soon as I can I will leave Gaspe (that was 11 years ago). **(Chris)**

Chris' narrative entails one example of the influence of parents in the migration decisions of their children. Beyond the direct influence of parents, family influence extends to the actions of siblings, and extended family. Kim extends on this point by explaining the influence her sister's move to Ottawa has affected her ideas and decisions.

My sister Louise is 22 years old and living in Ottawa. She went to high school and to CEGEP for two years taking human science like me. She worked at Sobey's for six months and then she quit so she could leave Gaspe. She went to University for two years and now she is working. My parents want here to come home. She said, "come home, for what?" Life is much more interesting for her up there. When she wants to go out for supper she has like a hundred restaurants to choose from. She can go see a movie at the theatre the day it is released, and she can go see her favorite bands in concert. Why would she trade all that to come to Gaspe? **(Kim)**

These youths also highlighted the influence of the extended family on their notions of what was available to them as options for the future. Models of success and failure are often transmitted between rural communities and the out-migrants, as justification for their actions and as models of action that should and should not be replicated.

If one person left out of the family and became successful, then you often saw the rest of the family pack up and leave. It became sort of a fad. For groups of people would move away. Friends would find friends jobs, family would find you a place to stay and if everyone was leaving, why couldn't you? **(Chris)**

As for the rest of my family members (aunts, uncles, etc.) they are all located in B.C., Ontario, and New Brunswick, where they all have good paying jobs and well oriented businesses. **(Mike)**

It is important to note the influence of simply living in a community where transience and migration become a facet of social life. The youths stated examples of watching friends and cousins "pack up and leave" as their parents had become unemployed.

I have cousins who have moved away for the same reasons All my close family lives in Gaspe, but everyone else has moved either to Montreal, Quebec or "out west." **(Kim)**

While the narratives of youths reveal that family holds a great influence on the decisions of these youths, friends and peers seemed to hold a greater degree of influence. The youths seem to find justification and commonality in the actions of those around them, and in the decisions and experiences of those who have come before them and have already made the step, in one direction or another to stay or to go. The overwhelming conclusion that they have drawn, and everyone else has drawn, is that anyone who is young and wants to do something with their life, would have to leave the Gaspe while those who do not, simply have no goals or ambition.

I am not the only one, however, who is planning on leaving. The majority of young people have plans to move to "bigger and better" places where they will be able to make something of their life. **(Andrea)**

My friends and all the people of my age group, have similar plans. They all plan to move away to a big city...they are all leaving the Gaspe area to go to University. They want to live in the city because the city has more to offer them. They all are very anxious to leave Gaspe. I believe that most of them will not be returning to Gaspe. **(Sue)**

The majority of individuals around my age aren't planning on sticking around the region after the completion of their education. Many of my peers are thinking like I am, they want to move to a region where they can create an active and positive future for themselves... One of my peers said to me, "you know Mark, when I get out of college or university, wherever I shall be located, I want to go create a good life for myself, which will consist of a good job. I don't want to laze around like school years. So, this hereby forces me to leave the Gaspe region. **(Mike)**

Migration become the accepted response, perhaps to a certain extent a conditioned response, but these youths clearly and certainly see these decisions as a necessary step in their lives. In the case of this specific group of individuals, education becomes the justification motivating them to act. Through deeper analysis education simply becomes a

107

way out, education holds the promise of providing these youths with a better job - a job

that in all likelihood, would not be available in the Gaspe.

> *This shift has affected my family in many ways. They realize that if I want*
> *to become educated then I have to leave this place I call home.* **(Mike)**

> *In education, I have to go away, because I need a University degree. So*
> *therefore, why stay in Gaspe?* **(Chris)**

> *Therefore, I know there is a better life out there. So far, my future plans*
> *consist of leaving next year after I receive my D.E.C. I will further my*
> *education by going to McGill University and studying for a Bachelors in*
> *Teaching. From then on, I will travel and probably go work in the west.*
> **(Chris)**

> *Positive, it has motivated me to get a good education so that I will not end*
> *up jobless or just with a seasonal job. It has also made me learn and*
> *respect what I had growing up and to want to achieve my goals. Also it*
> *makes me look at family life and how if I were to have a family in the*
> *future that I would want to raise my children in a community like that till a*
> *certain age so that they could learn to appreciate the natural things in life*
> *as well as the material things (health, nature, freedom vs. money,*
> *expensive things).* **(Ashley)**

It is through the negotiation of this process that migration gets established as the

standard or the norm. The experience and advice of family members, the consensus of

peers and the support of peer social networks, set a great precedence for the future

decisions of each individual youth.

Social Comparison and Social Construction

As Irwin Sanders has stated, "no society can exist within a vacuum" (Sanders,

1966: 25). Societies are constructed and negotiated through the ongoing process of

interaction, cooperation and mutuality of it citizens. Society's influence reaches within, to

influence the attitudes and behaviour of it's people, likewise, this influence travels

outside the borders of a society to influence other societies and vice versa. Simply said,

the construction of one social element, be it a society or a simple photograph, is always

relative to the standards of comparison that exist within our frame of reference. Thus, in

socially constructing and representing a society, the constructors will use a whole array of

influences and points of comparison to package that reality. This point becomes apparent

as I attempt to encapsulate the construction of Gaspesian society by Gaspesian youth.

These are a few examples of this point.

> *From hearing teenagers complain about how Gaspe is a "hole" to*
> *middle-aged individuals groaning about the lack of jobs and the poor*
> *economic situation, it is obvious that the Gaspe Coast is loosing its*
> *popularity.* **(Chris)**

> *It reminds me of the other day, a young girl around 20 years old stopped*
> *me at the CEGEP and said, "excuse me, could you tell me where*
> *downtown Gaspe is?" I said, "you are in downtown." She replied "how*
> *can you live here."* **(Kim)**

> *Gaspe is not a town that is recognized...There are people who live in*
> *Quebec that don't even know where Gaspe is. It's not a place that stands*
> *out above other places because of its small population and small size. The*
> *people who do recognize it is mostly for the tourist attractions.* **(Kim)**

> *No matter what we do, Gaspesians will always to a certain extent, follow*
> *bigger societies, cultures, because we are exposed to it through the*
> *various media's and when we travel. It is human nature to be reluctant to*
> *believe in something alone and to have a tendency to follow the majority.*
> *The majority being the big centers... our smaller communities will have no*
> *choice but to evolve in the same direction.* **(Blair)**

From these statements we can gain insight and understanding to the reference

points that are used to arrive at a specific construction of a social reality. In the above we

find reference to internal opinions, from parents and friends, external opinions, from

visitors and media opinions. It is obvious that Gaspesian youths draw on a number of

sources to form their construction of the Gaspe. Standards of development, progress and

quality of life are set, and reinforced at many levels of social interaction, by images of

what exists and what is available within that society. This is clearly the point Blair is creating in suggesting that Gaspe must follow and attempt to meet the standards set by what she refers to as "bigger societies". This standard she refers to, is one created within urban society, a standard which would be impossible to replicate in Gaspesian society or any rural society for that matter. The impossibility of meeting this standard is what makes one rural and the other urban. The youths are surrounded by the images and the standards created within urban environments and their preferences, even their demands, are filtered by this urban lens, a lens though which the rural will always fall short and thus be open to criticism by youth.

While I lived in Gaspe, I always had friends who would return for vacations at various times throughout the year. Time and again they would put forth the question of how I avoided boredom and how they did not believe that they could survive if ever they returned for any longer than a week. The answer is that everything is relative. Most importantly, one must realize that all places have different qualities and that one must always be aware of what various places have to offer. There is a reason why people who want warmth, vacation in the Caribbean or why skiers move to British Columbia. The problem with youth is that they were not given this choice, they live where they were raised because their parents have chosen to live there. and they are situated there as a result. Thus, it becomes no surprise that as the option of relocation become available many youth decide to act on their criticism and leave.

Conclusion: Deep Roots

These youths recognize the difficulty and uncertainty of Gaspesian life and reconstruct that reality in their narratives of youth experience and development. Through travel and diffusion, images of the urban are received and anticipated as a welcomed diversity to the traditions of the Gaspe. Gaspesian youths are socialized, educated and influenced by a dominant 'urban view' of the world, a view that has few reference points in the Gaspe. By extension this view, creates an interest that cannot be satisfied in the rural environment. Youth are attracted to these images of progress, change, diversity and opportunity. As a result of the suffering economic and social conditions of the Gaspe, many youth leave the region in search of education, employment and change. Despite the lure and potential of the city, Gaspesian youth still have difficulty pulling up their roots and moving on. Their link to tradition and family bond them to the place and the history of the place, as they have grown up amongst uncles, aunts, grandparents, and cousins. Thus their link to the region is strong. They value some traditional aspects of rural society such as the security of the social environment, the bonds of peers and family ties. These aspects of rural society youth have difficulty parting with, as they are aware of the anonymity and insecurity the lie ahead in the city. Many compensate for this by selecting locations that make the step from rural to urban more feasible and less traumatic – increasing the potential for success by controlling potential onslaught of obstacles of adjusting to a new environment.

Chapter 4
Gaspe and The Culture of Migration

This chapter will build on the idea of youth constructed migration discussed in the previous chapter, incorporating youth constructed migration into the broader perspective of institutionalized migration within the culture of the Gaspe. It examines how this social construction of migration has lead to the establishment of a culture of migration within this rural environment. It will explain the role that this culture of migration has taken on in community consciousness and how the flow of people to and from the Gaspe continues to influence and perpetuate the outflow of youths. Migration is a two-way flow of materials, ideas and people, to and from the Gaspe, but social and economic trends have determined the balance and direction of these flows for decades. This has had a great impact on the ability of local communities to meet the needs of their citizens on both a social and economic level. This chapter will also demonstrate how this institution of migration has lead to a perpetual cycle of limited opportunity → low perceptions/expectations → exodus → limited opportunity – as demonstrated in the narratives of Gaspesian youths in chapter three (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 115). Finally, it will discuss the ramifications of this cycle and how it is altering the demographic balance of rural communities and more specifically the ability of the Gaspe to create sustainable development.

The Social Institution of Migration

Migration is now a facet of Gaspesian society that I would argue has come to permeate the structure of these communities and community consciousness. It takes place

on many levels and is understood as a necessity of life by all. Andrea, a youth, explains her relation to this facet of the social structure:

> *Throughout my life I can remember saying goodbye to family members and friends who have had to move away for one reason or another. Most of them left for work, and some simply, for a change of pace. Whatever the reason though, there is a noticeable pattern. It is usually the younger generation who are just settling who are the ones who choose to move away.* (**Andrea**)

To further illustrate this dimension of Gaspesian society, while renewing some unfortunately overdue books at the university a few weeks ago, a conversation sparked up between the librarian and I, concerning a hold that was placed on a book that I very much needed. This prompted her to pull up my circulation record and in the process my address and personal information. I watched as she looked at the screen and then back at me, exclaiming, "you're from Perce!" In agreement with the stated fact, I answer, "yes". She then turned to her neighboring collogue and said, "this guy lives thirty minutes from my home town". Looking back at me she continued, "I thought so, when I saw your last name". We took a second to place each other and bridge the gap through mutual family contacts Gaspesians typically do, when she exclaimed with a perplexed expression, "I can't think of anyone you might know, they have all left". What followed was a short discussion that I have had many times in the past. She stated that she had grown up in Gaspe, which indeed was thirty minutes from my hometown of Barachois. I explained my link to the place and my uncertainty with returning at the completion of my degree due to there being very few people of my age, when she concluded "that's because all the people of this generation have moved". What she was stating was that she was just one of the many individuals who had stood at the same point in the past and had decided, like

many others, to take her life elsewhere leaving these Gaspesian communities with an almost absent generation as her statement suggests.

The story of leaving has become one of the most common social trends in Gaspesian Culture. The patterns are very apparent. Migration it could be argued has taken on the level of an institution. A social institution that has come to dominate the very structure of these communities, socially, psychologically, demographically and economically. By extension, is has grown into the social fabric of community consciousness as the accepted, natural route of individual development and betterment. Migration is understood as a necessity of life for all, especially for youth. Sue explains, *Leaving the Gaspe area is something every teenager has to do, literally, we have to move away to continue our education.* **(Sue)**

These youths understand this as a reality in the Gaspe. They are weaned on the idea of "getting out and moving on." Gaspe is simply a stage of their life that they realize they will have to put behind them at some point. This logic is a part of their socialization process, the influence of which stems from all segments of society, family, school, peers, economy and the media, creating the notion of a normative social institution.

Kirsten expands on this idea of a social institution of migration by stating, "*In the schools we are taught to focus on ourselves. How can I make myself better?*" **(Kirsten)**. Kirsten brings forth an important point in the development of a culture of migration, the departure from community based consciousness and cohesion to the rising prevalence of individualism. Rural society, with its small population and close social ties and networks, has typically been the epitome of collaboration and community spirit – the notion that the good of the whole is more important than the good on the individual. These youths

expressed a strong sentiment that their communities and the individuals within their communities, have undergone a transformation from the more traditional community consciousness, first described by Tonnies as Gemeinschaft (social relations resting on unity and understanding), to an individual consciousness or Gesellschaft. Kirsten expands on her earlier notion by stating, *"today in the town of Gaspe we are lacking in community spirit primarily because we have been taught to "* (**Kirsten**). Andrea and Mark add,

> *Now, however, I can see that we really have gone from a community to a society. Neighbors don't help each other like they used to. You don't worry today about whether or not your neighbor is doing well for himself or herself, and by no means would you concern yourself with helping them if they where not doing well. The success that counts right now is the success of your own household. This shift for me has affected me in many different ways. I think that for the most part, if Gaspe would still be truly community based and had I have not experienced this shift, then I would be perfectly comfortable staying here.* (**Andrea**)

> *Around the 1900's the Gaspe Coast was more like a community because people depended on each other more for food, clothing and shelter. My Grandfather told me when I was younger about the Old Gaspe Coast. He went on to say how everybody used to help each other when they were in need... this is not the case today. We are no longer depended on each other. Our food is shipped into us, we buy our clothes and fabrics from stores and we don't get to know people like we used to do in the old days.* (**Mark**)

The youths also describe a lack of community spirit and participation as a factor in the social stagnation of their communities and the lack of social events and activities.

> *One constraint that we have is that people don't participate. Everybody's got their little gang and their own activities and they just don't bother showing up to any community activities.* (**Blair**)

They describe the sentiment of the people as being pessimistic and divided as a result of the depleting social and economic situation. In the following narrative, Chris describes how the cycle of limited opportunity → low perceptions/expectations →

exodus → limited opportunity, as proposed by Hajesz and Dawe (1997) is perpetuated though this culture of migration.

> *From hearing teenagers complain about how Gaspe is a "hole," to middle-aged individuals groaning about the lack of jobs and the poor economic situation, it is obvious that the Gaspe Coast is losing its popularity.*
>
> *People who stayed here began to think they were missing out on a better lifestyle, so they left. As well the attitudes of people who did stay here were left to be desired. For, with the poor economic situation, the loss of hope in the development of the town, along with the exodus of people, the ones who stayed viewed Gaspe as a very negative place.*
>
> *These attitudes were very easily taken on by the youth. Often you could hear them preach about, "when they can get out of here – they will never come back." And like everything else, once you hear these ideas long enough, you start thinking about it too.*
>
> *I am surrounded by negative opinions of Gaspe. Everyone wants to leave and is leaving.*
>
> *I think deep down I really do enjoy Gaspe. I am just confirming to other's opinions. Gaspe is a beautiful place, but because there is no development and all my friends are leaving, I could not see myself coming back.* **(Chris)**

As Chris' narrative reveals, the youths characterize the negative attitudes of the people and describe how they have typically looked to the government to initiate change but have been very inactive individually in taking responsibility for the situation and beyond that, trying to bring about change.

> *Gaspe's society is very negative. We are constantly demanding change – but we do not do anything to get it. Instead of trying to fix the problem, we flee from it. I think I am frustrated with the situation. It seems that there is always a disappointment. People want to have hope but no one seems to be giving it to us.*
>
> *Individuals tend to always want more – but never want to work for it. We are very spoiled. We constantly demand but never give. Before anything has to be done – attitudes need to be improved.* **(Chris)**

Youths use a combination of these factors to describe the notion of migration with little alternative; they explain it as the only available alternative.

> *When you think about this logically, it's like we have no choice. I can end up like my friend who doesn't do anything or I can follow most people and exit in order to survive. This means leaving the Gaspe Coast, my family, my friends and everyone else* **(Mike).**

> *I have always known that leaving Gaspe if I wanted to continue my education was my only option. All around me my cousins were leaving to go to school. It became natural, it became as if it were not a choice but just something you do* **(Sue).**

These narratives reveal further evidence of a culture where migration plays a predominant role. Let us elaborate on this point by taking a look at some of the factors that influence and reinforce this institution of migration.

Socialized to Migrate

To move beyond one's childhood environment is a cultural indicator of individual maturation and independence. Willekens explains, "Migration-triggering events are highly concentrated in the years of young adulthood. These years can be denoted as a transitional period in the life course" (Willekens, 1987, in Mulder, 1993, 123). Guilmoto supports the idea of a cultural institution of migration by suggesting that patterns of migration and migration initiatives can become inherent in the social structure of a society.

> *At this point, migration should not be seen any longer as only a demographic response to exogenous constraints (like population pressure or labour conditions). Migration is also the result of a locally-defined institutional arrangement designed to co-ordinate migratory activities for the purpose of collective welfare. This means that the institution of migration follows its own momentum, somewhat independently of the effects of constraints related to other local institutions* (Guilmoto, 1998: 85).

Extending from this, McNicoll proposes that migration can take on a cumulative pattern, where individuals base their decisions toward migration on that of the established order and their networks of family and friends. He explains, "part of people's behaviour follows fixed procedures; procedural shortcuts avoid troublesome individual decision making. Society codifies these procedures by providing a 'decision environment' consisting of institutional forms and cultural patterns" (McNicoll, 1980: 30).

These explanations point to the understanding that humans by their nature, as social beings, like to act within the support of a network. Mulder explains two reasons for this; first a 'decision environment' serves as a reaffirmation of individual decisions and, second, it pools previously gained experience from individuals who have already undergone the move from the Gaspe, and uses it to better inform the decisions of those to come. "This implies that people do not behave very differently from other people in their societal context. There are two for this; first it is because they need social approval; second, because they adapt the procedures society makes familiar to them" (Mulder: 1993: 18).

Socializing a community's youth to exodus would seem like an act of community-mutilation, a self-imposed and sustained hurtle that would make development an impossibility. The data provided by Gaspesian youths in their construction of the rural and the urban provides evidence that this is occurring in the Gaspe, but this institutionalization of migration can also be seen from a defensive or adaptive perspective. Examining the institutionalization of migration from the socio-evolutionary perspective we find that youth out-migration could be understood as being prompted by the long-standing situation of economic depletion of the region. With this context, the

reality of migration simply becomes a defence mechanism, a means of social survival that

has been adapted as a form of social survival. Given the history of the Gaspe Peninsula

and the Atlantic Coast in general, it would seem quite rational for some to abandon

notions of finding a good opportunity in their home towns and choose to seek out

alternative places of opportunity (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997).

Gaspesian youths recognize this and express the inability of the rural economy, to

meet individual needs established and reinforced by modern society.

> *This is what happened with our fishing. We were relying on the profit so*
> *much, we never realized that all good things must come to an end. Leaving*
> *us with very few fish and hundreds of jobs lost.* **(Chris)**

> *I feel that because we are capitalists some people don't fit in the Gaspe*
> *Coast. This is due to the fact that there is little work and place for them.*
> *These individuals then develop the attitudes that the coast is "boring,*
> *useless" just to name a few.* **(Mike)**

This institution with its social networks of information and experience serves to

benefit the community on three levels. First, it benefits the youth (leavers), as it provides

time and opportunity for personal and professional development in terms of education,

training and exposure to a multitude of opportunities and experiences. Second, it benefits

those who are presently employed in these communities (stayers), as out-migrant means a

smaller pool of reserve labourers and thus, less individual competition for jobs.

Although this defensive position might prove to be beneficial at the individual level, at

the community level, and the developmental level, it has proven to be "a knife in the

back." Finally, migration proves beneficial in the sense that as more individuals choose to

leave, migration networks are further established and developed for the future, helping to

facilitate the outflow and resettlement of Gaspesians.

To better understand the notion of an institution of migration it would seem
necessary to take a step back, in an attempt to set the context of the present with the
historical look at migration from the Gaspe.

Gaspe and the History/Culture of Migration

My Grandaddy was a miner but he finally saw the light
He didn't have much, but a beat up truck and a dream about a better life
Grandmama cried when she waved goodbye, never heard such a lonesome sound
Pretty soon the dirt road turned into blacktop Detroit City bound

Down that Hilbilly Highway... Goes on and on.

He worked and saved his money so that one day he might send
My old man off to college, to use his brains and not his hands
Grandmama cried when he said goodbye, never heard such a lonesome sound
But daddy had himself a good job in Houston, one more rollin' down

Down that Hilbilly Highway... Goes on and on

Grandaddy rolled over in his grave the day that I quit school
I just sat around the house playin' my guitar, daddy said I was a fool
My mama cried when I said goodbye, I never heard such a lonesome sound
Now I'm standin' on a highway and if you're going my way
You know where I'm bound

(*Hillbilly Hightway* - Steve Earle)

Through the autobiographical lyrical narrative of the *Hillbilly Highway*, Steve

Earle captures the essence of the succession of generations and the culture of migration

that have become a characteristic of the rural life course. Many Gaspesians, especially

young Gaspesians, have drawn a link to Earle and the images that his songs create of the

rural experience. These are images that are not at all commonplace in popular culture, so

Earle's depictions stand as one point of relation, a point from which 'a people' can view

their reflection. These points of relation, created by Earle and other country music artists,

allow Gaspesians to feel attached to a larger common sentiment, and it gives them some certainty that they are not alone in this social picture.

Migration from the towns and villages of the Gaspe Peninsula is by no means a recent phenomenon. Earle's song suggests, migration has become a common generational behaviour within rural society. It exists as a common means of transition, a rite of passage, moving one both physically and cognitively, from out of the rural and into the urban. Andrea constructs a narrative of her family's relation to this generational migration system.

> *For example, my grandparents, when they were just starting off, moved from their home to the city of Montreal in order to find work. After about five years or so, they decided to return because they did not feel Montreal was any place to raise their children. About twenty years later, their daughter did the exact same thing that they had done, and around the same age. At twenty-one years of age, my aunt left school and went to Montreal to find work. Unlike the endless job hunt that she found here in Gaspe, she found a job just one month after moving to the city.* (**Andrea**)

The migratory signs to and from the coast lie everywhere, evidence of the established social patterns of a people. Browsing through an issue of "the Spec," Gaspe's only English weekly; I find multiple strands of the thread of migration.

Obituaries in their manifest sense mark the passing of an individual, in this case one Gaspesian, but in a latent sense, an obituary marks the presence of the deceased descendant's and their children's patterns of migration, dispersal and resettlement. For example,

> *John Pendilton, passed through Heaven's gate… at Ajax Pickering Health Center… Ajax, Ontario… Loving father to John Jr. of Douglastown, Quebec; Raymond of LeSalle, Quebec; Hayward of Woodstock, Ontario, Kevin, of Hamilton, Ontario; Noreen of Chicopee, Massachusetts; Connie of LaSalle, Quebec; Holly, of Whitby, Ontario. The deceased, a ninety one year old man, made his final migration back to Douglastown, Gaspe,*

along with family members to be buried in his home town cemetery
mourned by friends and family (Spec, January 20, 2002).

The "social notes" of the same paper also provides evidence of a culture in movement. It traces population flows by displaying regular examples of children returning to their hometowns, grandchildren returning to meet their grandparents, parents departing from the Gaspe to spend time with their children in many areas of North America. One particular week of "Social Notes" traced the return of dozens of children from such locations as, Ottawa, Medicinehat, North York, Montreal, Fredericton, etc., to spend the Holiday Season on the Gaspe Coast with their parents. "Steve and Sarah (North York) and Danny (Toronto) spent holidays with their mother Elva and other relatives and friends." It also tells of journeys away from the Gaspe, "Helen has returned home after spending Christmas in Montreal with her daughter and son-in-law. Her son David and his wife Patty came from Toronto and Brian also joined them for Christmas so she enjoyed her holidays with her family" (Spec, January 20, 2002).

The content of a headline story follows suit, "Barachois native to receive Order of Canada" (Spec January 20, 2002). Other headlines tell of the "Gaspe Picnic" in Scarborough, Ontario, the "Seventh Annual Great Gaspe Golf Tournament" in Williamsburg, Ontario or "Gaspe Day" on the West Island of Montreal (Spec. July 7, 2002). These examples show signs of a Gaspesian culture that has established and assembled itself outside the Gaspe.

The importance that migration plays in Gaspesian culture is made evident by many cultural elements, an example of which is the "Wakeham/York Homecoming Festival," a once long-standing, two week summer celebration of return migration. For almost two decades this one event symbolized a high point of summer for both local and

departed Gaspesians, as it marked the return and reuniting of family, friends, and many generations of departed Gaspesians. Throughout the summer months, homecoming festivals such as this take place in communities throughout the coast. These festivals symbolize the migratory history of a people and their need to recommune and reestablish their roots. They help organizing a time frame and point of return for many of the coast's out-migrants. But with the decline in population, Anglophone communities have continued to witness the erosion of third sector activity and social events such as these festivals in their communities. Fewer people make it difficult to plan, organize and follow through with community events.

The theme of migration can also be found threaded through the work of local artists and artisans in stories, paintings, plays and poems. The local newspaper carries weekly examples of artistic expression. Many of the submissions come from relocated Gaspesians who use their art to maintain a connection their home as well as a source of inspiration. The following poem is an example of one type of Gaspesian artistic nostalgia, a sign of one person's remembering and longing to return to the Gaspe.

> *Black Cape*
> *No matter where I travel throughout the land,*
> *I know where to go for a helping hand.*
> *There's a little street in my hometown,*
> *Where friends and family are still around.*
> *Powell Road is its name,*
> *There is no other place that's quite the same.*
> *I wish to live there again one day,*
> *But things have changed I've heard them say.*
> *Though time goes slow in that little place,*
> *Death still comes to touch your face.*
> *And though many people will be gone when I get home,*
> *I don't fear I'll be alone.*
> *For all I'll do is close my eyes,*
> *Then they'll come, to no surprise,*
> *All the faces that I've missed so much,*

Wrapping me with that gentle touch.
I pray the day when I cease to roam,
And I go back again to my home,
To that little town down on the Coast,
Where I will be but one more ghost.

(*Black Cape* - Howard E, Burton, Cobourg, Ontario)

These local communication extracts and examples of artistic expression present

evidence of a scattered people, it gives examples of the multidimensional nature of

migration to and from the Gaspe.

Before progressing forward into a discussion of the situation and results of

migration in the present, it is important to briefly examine the history and establishment

of this local example of an institution of migration.

Gaspe: History of a Staple Provider

The communities of the Gaspe Peninsula, like most Eastern Atlantic communities

were established around the cultivation of primary resources, fish, lumber and minerals.

Harold Innis has suggested that Canadian society in general, "could be viewed as a series

of resource-based communities centered around extractive processes and primary

industries" (Hiller, 1996: 56). The Gaspe Peninsula, with an abundance of resources,

became a prime location for resource industry. Under the demand of the Charles Robin

Company, Gaspesians communities became staple suppliers, exporting their resources to

urban and foreign markets. (Desjardins, Frenette, Belanger, Hetu: 1998). The exclusivity

of a staple industry as Clark points out, leaves a community vulnerable to the boom and

bust of demand and the market economy. Hiller extends on this by outlining two

important aspects of resource-based economies. The first is a high degree of investment

124

and technological dependency from core nations resulting in a high degree of foreign ownership. The second is vulnerably to market demand and fluctuations. Hiller states, "When market demand increases, boom conditions prevail; when market conditions are poor or weak, poverty, unemployment, and displacement of the population results" (Harris, 1996: 57). With an occupational focus on resource extraction and export, these Gaspesian communities would have experienced periods of prosperity but likewise, they would have experienced periods of depression. With large rural families and the lack of employment diversity, it would seem almost necessary that some individuals would have had to seek alternative forms of employment during bust periods in the local economy. Since primary industry was the focus in the Gaspe, production jobs (secondary industry) could only be found in urban areas. This vulnerability described by Clark would have led some Gaspesians to seek work outside of the peninsula at least during certain periods. As Harris has stated, this would have initiated the displacement of the population and the out-flow of migrants from Gaspesian communities (Harris, 1996).

Looking at the Gaspe Coast today, a number of aspects of the society have changed and continue to change but the industrial structure of the region is still very much resource based. The shift to secondary and tertiary industry has been slow and has taken place primarily because of lagging in the resource sector and a high level of unemployment. The focus of development is now on tourism. It is an industry with much potential but in the Gaspe tourism has only been developed as a seasonal industry, it is also an industry, which is extremely vulnerable to market fluctuation. Gaspe's present economic structure has not helped to reverse the need for out-migrate.

Gaspe: A Brief History of Migration

As with the rest of the province, migration to urban centers has been a common behaviour for Gaspesians since the Quiet Revolution and the industrialization of cities such as Montreal and Toronto. These urban centers developed and sustained a great demand for labour, and created a lifestyle, which appeared very attractive to rural youth for a number of reasons. First, it was work, steady work as well as paid work. The industrialized labourer was guaranteed a weekly salary as well as a strong possibility of progress and upward mobility in a company. This was experienced as a great change from the employment system of the traditional rural economy, which was primarily based on yearly survival. Families were large, eight to twelve children, thus education would have been completed at an early age as the family required them as labours (Desjardins, Frenette, Belanger, Hetu: 1998). They would have been employed in a number of jobs, which were primarily centered on "keeping the family". This might have involved some fishing in the spring and summer mixed with farming, forestry and other jobs around the home and in town, while the winter might not have offered as many opportunities for labour. These youth would not have received a direct salary or weekly pay but would have exchanged the majority of their labour for goods and supplies that would have been used toward the sustenance of the family. Second, urban migration would have also given the young migrant a greater level of independence as she/he would have moved from the family home to a space of their own, earning a salary that could be independently controlled, saved and spent. Third, rural youth were well aware of the social structure of the country work system as well as family hierarchy and descent systems of wealth and property within the family. They would have realized that if they were not the eldest son,

126

there would have been very little opportunity to inherit the family property. So, the opportunity of migration allowed these individuals, who were left out of the inheritance loop, to work toward building their own future. This was especially true of young women, as there was a strong division of labour, based on traditional roles for both sexes and was limiting to the power and property attainable by women. Migration then, offered a revolutionary reality, diversity never before seen and a promise of potential, in every social category, that youth could never have imagined finding in their rural environment.

These reasons made migration very attractive and luring for many youth who were struggling with the subsistence lifestyle of the Gaspe Peninsula. Additionally, the lack of housing would have meant that the youths who did stay in the Gaspe. lived with their parents until they could afford to buy or most likely build a home of their own and this usually corresponded with marriage and beginning a family of their own. With few prospects for employment, independence or prosperity, many youth followed the road to the city.

In thinking about the factors that would have originally encouraged youths to migrate from the Gaspe, it becomes rather apparent that the basic structure of the problem has not really changed. In comparing what the youth population of the present suggest to be the main motivation for migration (as discussed in chapter 2), it becomes apparent that although the times have changed, the main motives of migrating youths still remain based in the inability of the Gaspe Peninsula to provide a conducive environment in which youth feel confidant and comfortable about establishing a future. Let us explore a few of the reasons why this might be true.

Rural Youth and the Identity Society

In 1972, William Glasser proposed the emergence of a new social philosophy he coined the identity society. He explains, "led by the young, the half-billion people of the Western world have begun a rapid, turmoil-filled evolution toward a new role-dominated society that I call the identity society" (Glasser, 1992: 5). According to Glasser, the conditions that foster the emergence of an identity society are societies that have attained a level of social security and comfort. "The Causes of the identity society include, affluence, political alignment for human rights or freedom and finally the media especially television, are the final and perhaps the most important factors influencing the emergence of the identity society" (Glasser, 1972: 16).

Glasser claims that this change translates into individuals who are no longer exclusively preoccupied with carving out a space in the social hierarchy, rather an increasing concern is placed on the youth establishing an independent role or an identity. "It is a rare young person today who is willing to subordinate his identity to security. Almost all are working primarily to support a satisfying concept of themselves. The more successful this concept is, the harder they work." (Glasser, 1972: 12). The formation and maintenance of this identity still consists of achieving goals, but these are goals that reinforce the individual's self-concept. Glasser explains, "rather than work for a goal and then search for personal satisfaction, young people today strive first for a fulfilling role, for something to do that has personal significance and promises pleasure" (Glasser, 1972: 6). This identity society, has been the backbone behind this generation gap that exists in rural society, specifically Gaspesian society and what Glasser extends to call a cultural gap.

Unlike the cultural gap, a generation gap always existed; although questioning their parents' values was normal for children, rejecting their parents' values was unusual. In earlier times children argued that they wanted to achieve a goal in a different way or that they wanted to try for a new goal foreign to their parents. For example, they may have wanted to leave the farm and seek their fortunes in the city (Glasser, 1972: 10).

This helps to explain the cultural divide that seems to exist between the youths and the older social groups in Gaspesian society. Parents and the older generations of Gaspesians have increasing difficulty understanding and making sense of the social worlds of Gaspesian youth. Glasser notes, "Rather than the well advertised generation gap, this is a cultural gap. Today in many families there are two cultures: the parents, who are goal oriented. live in one and their children, who are role-oriented. live in the other" (Glasser, 1972, 11).

This is a common sentiment of most Gaspesian parents, but it is understandable, as these rural parents have grown up in a time and a place that looked and expected something very different of them than what is being demanded of their children, the greatest difference being the role of education. Education was not a necessity for the older generation of Gaspesians as good jobs could be obtained without a high school diploma. A number of Gaspe's most successful businesspersons hold neither a college degree nor a high school diploma. Education was not vital and thus it was not a value or norm of the society. It is now and in relation, it is common to hear adults defend their lack of education as a change of social norms. Fagan (1998) illustrates this generational divide by using the words and explanations of Newfoundland parents in an out-port community. "If we only had the chances they have today, we'd do something" was a common remark by seniors. The favorable conditions were there; youth had only to take advantage" (Fagan, 1998: 130). Thus, the level of education attained by the parents of

today's youth is rather low, but the reality of being uneducated and unskilled or semi-skilled in the Gaspe in this day, is a reality that these parents know far too well, the majority of whom are working class and very familiar with the limited, insecure nature of life and work in the Gaspe. As Fagan (1998) suggests, these adults are very clear about the status of their children. These parents, although very much uneducated, are strong advocates of education and training, and are supportive of their youths attaining a degree or diploma that will lead them to a more stable employment and a better quality of life.

Glasser explains that parents in the identity society describe their children as being much different than themselves. This he states, is due to the goal-oriented nature of parents and their ability to provide a more secure environment for their role-oriented children. According to Glasser, this has created an environment where much less is expected of this generation's children in terms of contributing to family security. In turn, this encourages individual thinking on the part of the children, reinforced by their parent's encouragement to establish themselves and succeed. "Valuing themselves, the children cared less about goals than their parents had. They were concerned, rather, with their role, with their human potential, and with their happiness" (Glasser, 1972: 9). These trends are quite apparent in the attitudes of Gaspesian youth.

Glasser suggests that this generalization can be made of Post World War II children or children born since 1940. I would suggest that this period would be extended when applied to the case of the Gaspe Peninsula. A traditional means of subsistence, centered around the resource industry and a slower pace of technical change would have delayed and extended the period in which a significant number of families would have moved into a secure position financially. Additionally, family size would only have

130

dropped substantially in the present generation. Thus, the conditions that foster the emergence of the identity would only have been common in the Gaspe within the past decade. What I am trying to say is that the parents of this generation, although born post 1940 would not be considered members of the identity society as the social structure of these communities would have extended the goal-oriented society by one generation.

Additionally, I believe that this theory takes on an interesting extension when applied to the Gaspe Peninsula as the level of technical and economic development will have created only a limited number of positions, careers, activities, organizations and people that youth feel represent their identity. Rather the media and pop culture create a more accurate picture of the social and cultural worlds that the young feel connected to and by extension feel are a part of them. Youth construction of the rural has proven that there exists a high degree of alienation in the connection of youth to the rural. This changing mentality of the present generation, "the identity society", in Glasser's terms, explains the reasons why youths feel so disconnected from their rural surroundings which in turn proves to be a highly influential factor on the high rates of rural to urban youth migration. Let us expand on this to look at the influence of the media on the identity society and the culture of migration.

Rural Identity and Coming of Age in the Pop-Cultural Machine

> *Once more he stepped into the street/And to his lips again/Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane./Before he blew three notes (so sweet and soft, and yet so cunning),/ There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling/Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling. Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering, Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,/And, like fowls on a farm when barley is scattering,/Out came the children running.*

*But lo! As they reached the mountain side/A wondrous portal opened
wide,/As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;/And the Piper advanced and
the children followed,/And when all were in to the very last,/The door in
the mountainside shut fast./Did I say all? No! One was lame/And could
not dance the whole of the way;/And in later years he used to blame/His
sadness on that very day:/"Our town is dull since my playmates left!/I
can't forget that I'm bereft/Of all the pleasant sights they see,/Which the
piper promised me.*

*For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,/ Outside of town but near at
hand,/ Where waters gushed and fruit trees grew,/And the flowers out
forth a fairer hue,/And everything was strange and new./The sparrows
were brighter than the peacocks here,/And their dogs outran our swiftest
deer,/And honeybees has lost their stings,/And horses were born with
eagles' wings;*

(*The Pied Piper of Hamelin* – Robert Browning, 1988: 31-37)

The classic tale of the Pied Piper proves an accurate metaphor to represent the

looming influence of pop culture and the creation of 'cool' and 'now' and on the opinions

and actions of Gaspesian youths. Pop media create images that are powerful points of

judgment that create demands and needs that the rural could never provide for youths. In

this narrative, Mike tells of his first real encounter with this alternate reality.

> *I learned very quickly that Gaspe, was not a window to the real world. The
> real world was much different then to my hometown New Carlisle which to
> this day is still a community in many ways.* (**Mike**)

'Hillbillies', 'hicks', and 'my country cousin' are some of the more stereotypical

images that have been carved into our consciousness and immortalized by television and

film. These are images that are still very present within popular culture, as stereotypes of

rural identity. They are images that have never been undone or updated, but remain and

are reinforced in film and television and hold high degree of influence on youth opinions

and ideas.

Hooded Fubu sweatshirt, Tommy Hilfiger jeans, and Fox visor creates another image, one that rural youths of the Gaspe Peninsula try to emulate. These are more than simply clothes, they are powerful images sent out by the popular cultural machine, images that many Gaspesian youth use as a statement of influence and a point of relation with mainstream culture. Cunningham and Lab explain the social significance and importance clothes play in establishing a cultural connection.

> *We recognize the powerful communicative aspect of dress. It can express consciously and unconsciously our personal attitudes, values, beliefs and emotions and in turn those aspects of the larger culture... The idea of appropriateness in dress is important for both expressions of self and to show group affiliation... We need to appear "right" in order to conform to groups to which we belong or those which we seek membership... Dress provides a way then, to explore culture on an intimate plane which taps into individual thoughts, hopes and dreams, as well as general ideas, attitudes and beliefs of the masses*
> (Cunningham and Lab, 1991: 17).

Dress, as Cunningham and Lab explain, is an interesting aspect of social analysis and thus, it is an interesting way in which to view Gaspesian youth culture. Clothing serves as a window through which we can gauge the degree of pop cultural acceptance and influence. The message that is set by rural youths that wear these clothes is affirmative. It suggests that they can relate to the larger picture – it is a statement of the youth's connection with the larger culture and a sign that they are not out of the loop – that even though they are from the country, they can fit in, they can be hip. Dress is only one small aspect of culture but it is very representative of the influential nature of pop culture.

Popular culture and the images it creates and are conveyed are a product and representation of the urban world and an urban version of reality. The youths of the rural receive these images, not just from television, but in video games, magazines, film, even

in their textbooks. Rural youths, just as urban and suburban youths, are bombarded with cultural imagery. Rural youths have trouble relating to these images as they do not relate to the reality that surrounds them. They feel a cultural gap, a bifurcation of consciousness between the reality of the rural and the pressing influence of the urban. Their environment holds very few similarities to that which they see being portrayed as the standard. These standards, especially in this very influential time of growth and self-discovery, are used heavily by youth to judge their surroundings. More often than not these standards fall short of what exists on the Gaspe Peninsula. These points of judgement create distance between Gaspesian youths and their environment.

On the other hand the accessibility of pop culture through mediums such as, TV, internet and film, provide these youths with a sense of satisfaction that they are able to connect with the members of their generation. It also provides a relief to the incurring feelings of isolation by making them feel a part of something larger than their communities and something more inline with their way of thinking. Thus easy access to pop media creates a solidarity that is irreplaceable. This solidarity is weak as it is only ever virtually realized but some rural youth still value the lines of connection. These youths still feel at a deficit and in so doing, realize that they have only a weak imitation of these cultural images. Rather than seeing their interpretation and reinvention of these images as agency in the face of conformity, youths focus on their inability to comfortably replicate or take part in popular youth culture because their surroundings lack the means to such a reality.

The term rural youth exist as an oxymoron, two words that share very little. These youths construct rural society as representative of tradition, security, and social control,

where as youth and the values and objectives of this stage of life are constructed around exploration, self-discovery, diversification, education and experience. It is not surprising that these two concepts have trouble coexisting, it is written into the very way that youth define themselves. So, it is no shock that rural youths have problems living in rural societies.

Blair summarizes the reality of this situation,

You have to understand why all the young people are leaving, if we cannot find what we are looking for here, a good job that can provide us with a decent life, we ought to go look someplace else. Simple! **(Blair)**

As detailed in the previous chapter, Gaspesian youth feel a strong sense of being left out, of feeling like they are missing out on something, and in fact to a certain extent missing out on an important part of their youth.

This relationship of the individual to the Gaspe and to a larger extent rural society, exists as a fluctuating point of relation. One has only to compare the testimony of youth in Chapter 3 with the nostalgia suggested in the poem Black Cape to see how age represents the crucial determinant in the individual's relation to the Gaspe Coast. Let us move to a brief discussion of the "life cycle theory" of migration flows and how this relates to migration to and from the Gaspe.

Migration and the Life Cycle

> *Got a lot of memories tied up in this place*
> *So much time spent in so little space*
> *What looked like the world from the eyes of a child*
> *Kind of closes in on you after a while*
> *A place to grow up and a place to grow old*
> *You keep your mouth shut and do what you're told*
> *I told mama from the day that I ran*
> This ain't no place for an angry young man

(Angry Young Man – Steve Earle and John Porter McMeans)

As I have said, migration from the Gaspe is not a recent phenomenon, it has taken place for decades. In discussing the nature of the migrant and the patterns of migration, it becomes obvious that the nature of migration, to and from, the Gaspe Coast, has taken on a broader social meaning, one, which shifts with respect to the individual and their position in their life course.

For example, I have documented how Gaspesian youths become fixated on migration and accept it as a normative behaviour in the course of their social development to the point where it might be said that this course of action has become a social institution. If we open our social scope and examine the totality of the individual life course, something very interesting becomes apparent. Gaspesians define and redefine their relationship with 'the coast' and their migration to and from it, with shifts in age periods. The life cycle approach to migration characterizes the migrant as both an agent and a socially influenced decision-maker in the larger process of determining the logistics of their move.

Clara Mulder, in *Migration Dynamics: A Life Course Approach* (1993), puts forth a model of four assumptions that she explains, "make the combination of a life course and cohort perspective a sensible, useful way of studying the behaviour of individuals"

(Mulder: 1993). These assumptions include; first, people's goals in life, which can be broken down into both general, and specific. The general goals are easily assumed and include happiness, independence and well being. Specific goals are the instruments by which the individual reaches general goals, which Mulder refers to as preferences, stressing that, "preferences may vary between individuals and during an individual's life course" (Mulder, 1993: 18). The second assumption relates to the relationship between behaviour and people's preferences. She states that people behave rationally in a means to end relationship in an effort to meet their goals or preferences. The third assumption is that of biographical continuity, "People's past actions determine the means and capabilities they have accumulated and so condition future action. Furthermore, it is assumed that, to some extent, people act and think with a long-term perspective in mind. They have some notion of what they want in the future and so they adapt their current behaviour to longer term preferences" (Mulder: 1993: 18). The fourth assumption pertains to societal change.

Theory translates into actions in the sense that a child will enjoy the safety and security of the rural environment and the freedom that it provides through childhood. This was clearly demonstrated by the youth construction of the bonds of rural society. Then as the individual moves beyond childhood and into adolescence they will begin to develop the longing for something more – more diversity, more opportunity, different friends and new experiences. These needs incubate throughout adolescence as the teen confronts the issues of identity, self and the future. These needs alter the preferences of the individual resulting in a demand by youths for short-term goals that cannot be provided in the rural environment. Frustration and impatience builds as the youths reach

the completion of high school and become more responsible for their own decision making. It is at this point when most youths will migrate away from the Gaspe. This move is usually viewed with anticipation as the individual looks forward to the challenges of adapting to a new environment. This optimism is certain to fade in time, for some sooner than others. But for the most part this will develop into a yearning to return home. This counter position often follows several years in an urban environment and a wanting to escape and return to the security and confines that they once so harshly criticized. It often falls in line with the onset of middle age and the thought, or conception of a child and the notion of a blossoming family.

A return to the rural is a reality for some but with the conditions of employment on the Gaspe Coast it cannot be a reality for all. Those who do return, express that it is a decision for the whole of their family and that the Gaspe is just a better, safer, and easier environment for raising children. Those who are unable to return express feelings of homesickness, and return for vacations. Finally, given the nature of the demographic transition of the Coast, the life stage of retirement becomes yet another stage at which this reality gets shifted. Retirement brings many return migrants, some that remain the duration of the year and some that migrate to and from the Coast with the seasons. In any case it has created a polarization of the population in which there is very little population in the youth and young adult age cohorts. Let us explore the causes and consequences of this trend.

Migration Patterns

Gaspesian migration patterns, like all discussions of migration, are bi-directional and take place on many levels and for a number of reasons (education, labour, retirement, vacation etc.). Migration from rural areas, especially within the youth population, has been a well-documented trend since the early days of industrialization and urban expansion. The city offered a future and a lifestyle that greatly appealed to youths. This was especially the case for rural youths as it was a lifestyle and reality that was so far removed from the traditions and stasis of rural culture. The existence of these patterns is indeed nothing new. Rather as I have stated, they are indeed a long-standing step in the development of most Gaspesian youths – a stepping stone in their growth and discovery, a learning process, a platform from which an individual could prove oneself and develop into an adult, a rite of passage.

This development has traditionally been followed by a number of young adults returning to their rural communities, to settle, have children and raise their family in a simple and secure environment where the extended family and the social support system of friends would share in the rearing of children. This movement in and out, created a sense of balance with regard to migration as returning couples and their offspring would offset the hordes of youths that departed each year.

One day early this spring in a shopping mall in Gaspe, I met such a returnee. A young man who had once left Gaspe and returned to take a job on an offshore fishing boat that was owned/captained by the father of his girlfriend. In talking with him, I got to questioning his plans. "I'm back" he stated, "for a while, I'll see how it goes around here... but I remember my way back to the city."

This was a unique wording to a very common position. Gaspesian youths are constantly exposed to the notion that they are facing uncertainty and instability when living on the Gaspe Peninsula. They are aware that all good things come to an end and thus, although migration might not be a present reality, it looms not far off in the distance. Thus, all youths must learn and most importantly, remember their way to the city, as a means of survival. In fact, the very sentiment of this youth's words and voice, in responding to my question, held much more in meaning than just that of his words. His response, as his words make clear, was one of defence; to the fact that he had left a proven opportunity, a stable job in the city, to return to a job and an industry which was prone to failure. So, in the end, I was not at all surprised that he responded in that manner. In fact, his response was probably well rehearsed, as he would have had to explain himself to his parents, family, as well as many others who would have thoroughly questioned his return to the coast.

The presence of this individual, who has remained in Gaspe and has, since started a family, has become much less typical in these communities. A lack of employment, entertainment, and peers has contributed to a decline of return migrants. Other wider social factors, such as the increasing average age of marriage and childbearing have also extended the stage of adolescence and offset adulthood. This in fact could account for a delay in the time in which an individual considers settling down and having a family and by extension the age, which they consider returning to the Gaspe.

This notion of a return to the Gaspe Peninsula at a later life stage, is not something that has disappeared from the mind of today's youths. A number of individuals expressed their willingness to return but notions of return migration were contingent on

the availability of opportunity and a preconceived time frame. The youths expressed a

willingness to return later, they held strong ideas that the Gaspe Peninsula was not a place

for youths but rather a place for one to raise a family, settle down and grow old.

In and Out Migration – Two Sides of an Unbalanced Story

> *Now, when I ask my grandmother if she would ever consider leaving*
> *Gaspe, she responds by saying, " No, I love it here". Then the pattern*
> *seemed evident; all of the older generation to whom I had spoken to all*
> *seemed to think that Gaspe was a great place to live, and that they would*
> *never think of leaving. Mind you most of these people were no longer*
> *working.* **(Andrea)**

When we look at the basic problem of migration it becomes apparent that it is not

so much a youth migration problem as a migration imbalance, that has and will continue

to grow into a greater problem. Allow me to elaborate. There always exists two flows of

migration, one in and one out. The out-flow, as we have heard in this paper and from

sociologists in the past decade, is primarily composed of youths. Each year, throughout

the summer and fall months, hundreds of youths depart from the Coast with the intention

of employment and education outside their rural communities. Most follow well

established migration patterns into Montreal, Lennoxville, Scarborough, and South East

Ontario. The product of their departure is an ever-growing absence or depletion of youths

and young adults.

The in-flow or return migration is not quite as predictable, but on one hand, it is

somewhat seasonal. This group is composed of individuals of the retirement age. People

who for the most part are retired or semi-retired and thus looking to return to their once

departed home as an escape and a change of pace. More specifically, this category is

composed of individuals who are relocating their lives and returning permanently. These

return migrants represent a smaller category, and secondly it is composed of individuals who are returning to summer homes for weeks or even months. These individuals for the most part have inherited homes or purchased them with plans of possibly turning a summer home into a permanent retirement home. This is reflected in the increased real-estate prices and has reduced the availability of house on the market. Individuals with retirement plans quickly purchase homes that now go up for sale.

In essence what we are experiencing in these communities is a slow demographic transition, which is for the most part the end result of decades of migration, and a culture of migration. These trends stand only to increase as the potential for immigrants of this particular type holds tremendous potential for increase as more and more individuals of the Baby Boom generation reach retirement age and search for retirement homes.

One would only have to take a attentive drive along any section of the coast, in the late fall to winter months to notice, that of the many homes that scatter the Gaspesian coast-line, all of which appear to be very well kept and hospitable, that only a very small fraction are being permanently used. It was once explained to me this way. So many homes but so few with smoke in their chimneys. This is not due to a transition to electric heating, rather it is a clear sign of the transitory nature of the current population in these communities.

These seasonal migration patterns play a significant role in the dynamics of these communities. Communities experience the greatest transition in the summer months as the population and population dynamic alters significantly. This is offset by a very slow and quiet winter season. This great imbalance has direct results in the direction of development and the creation of a perpetual circle of migration.

In the past as employment and the potential for development wasn't such a seemingly dead end, the picture of migration to and from the Coast was not so two-dimensional. Young families made up a proportion of the returnees and thus increased the potential for a vibrant youth population. With the present condition of migration there is in fact no potential but rather a deficit and a growth in only one section of the population. This trend has no counter balance and thus, will only become exacerbated.

The problem with this direction of migration is that it creates a predominantly ageing population in these communities and a culture of retirement. The existence of this culture and its growing imbalance is very much at odds with the youths of these communities and their efforts to create and sustain any sort of youth culture. These two population groups are directly at odds with each other both physically and philosophically, thus conflict becomes a problem. This population imbalance also becomes a motivational factor in the migration decisions of many youths.

Chapter 5
Three Dialogues of Rural Development: Attitudes, Tourism and Youth

The Limitations of Attitudes

When you sit and think critically, it seems that we have grown very forgetful of the meaning of the word community. In fact, not only have we forgotten the meaning of the word, we often misuse it and substitute it for such synonyms as "town", when in fact these hold very different meanings.

But beyond this simple English lesson, a community is a group (of people) with a commonality – a group that works to promote issues of self-interest a group with a common history and a common future. A community, like a family, is a grouping and as with any group, (be it a team, an association or even friends) they have to be maintained – they require work, thinking and planning – they are not natural and are never a given, although we sometimes think of them that way.

Communities require maintenance and if we neglect to maintain them, consequences will surface – just as if we were to neglect a piece of machinery – it will rust, leak and in the end fail. Communities are not immune to such effects and simply because a group of people live within proximity of one another, is certainly not an acceptable justification for the existence of a community.

Maintaining a sense of community will always require some active participation – and that is part and parcel of the problem in the Gaspe. Gaspesians have grown very dependent – as individuals, as families, as communities, as a people.

What happens when one takes on a position of dependence is that it removes that which we know best – our interests, or needs, our wants, in the end our communities. Dependency trades local knowledge for public handouts – in the end we place these

144

important matters in the hands of those who know very little about the local situations and communities. Thus, our future comes to be set by agendas that have very little to do with local people and local interests. Youths have recognized and made reference to the fact that community organization and planning have been taken out of the hands of the individuals.

The youths recognized this as an inherent problem with many of the issues in the Gaspe. They felt that major decisions were never the product of consultation within the local, therefore, many unnecessary and ineffective decisions have been made.

The current trend in community planning (particularly in reference to rural communities as their ways have been hardest hit by the economic changes of the past ten years) has been to reverse these attitudes of dependence and change these feelings of helplessness and inability. The goal is to find, once again, the community within these communities, the capacity of a community and to make communities and their members, active, linked, knowledgeable, participating, cooperative places. Places where individuals feel that they can and will make a difference – where people feel that they can take matters into their own hands.

But literature of community change informs us that ideas are always the slowest and most difficult aspect of a culture to change and thus stand the problem of public attitudes. Thus we are only limited by our thinking, it is a familiar human condition. The communities of the Gaspe Peninsula fit this character.

In the course of the past decade the communities of the Gaspe Peninsula, regional planning officials and local leaders have incurred the ups and downs of this rural restructuring model. The transition of rural society and rural economic structure is known

to be a difficult and slow moving process, where potential and progress can only be realized and exercised once collective attitudes have shifted from remembering and negativity to positive and supportive of socioeconomic climate of rethinking and restructuring. These make for frustrating times for all individuals involved but these are times that require patience and most of all cooperation.

Recently local leaders in the Gaspe region have spoken out about their focus and in general, a collective representation of the region as stagnant and decadent. Their logic is that although these depictions might be accurate, they will not bring progress and change. Change of any kind begins at the psychological level. This research has brought light to the details of the collective opinion of the Gaspe and in particular Gaspesian youths, which can lightly be summarized as negative. The greatest challenge standing in the way of development of the region is just what these local leaders have been critical of themselves for transferring and perpetuation, negative attitudes (SPEC 28:19, 2).

Gaspesian youths also recognized this negativity and construct it as one of the initiating factors in the youth exodus. As discussed earlier this commonality of negativity is not ill founded, but the product of decades of developmental decline and unemployment highs. The youths explain how these attitudes of negativity get transferred from generation to generation and as a result get built into the fabric of the people. They point to this as one of the major influences in perpetuating the youth exodus and a major factor in their attitudes about the region and individual decisions to migrate. As a result the narratives of youths highlights an attitudinal adjustment as the first step in the rebuilding process. Chris explains it this way,

> *But why do so many people leave Gaspe? A large amount of people has*
> *such a negative ideology of this little town. Even the Montreal Gazette*

wrote an article calling Gaspe a "tragedy". In his article, Mark Abley continued to refer to Gaspe as, "a harsh place to live" and he thrashed Gaspe continually. He more-less said it was an embarrassment to live here. After reading this article, I was very upset and insulted, but I realized something. We ask ourselves why people have such a negative impression of Gaspe. Well, comments like these, which are heard all over, can be a good reason. If people were constantly exposed to this negative attitude, it would be fairly easy to fall into it as well. **(Chris)**

Chris' reaction to Abley's negativity seems to take on a different role in his perception of the region. In his reaction we see his sense of local pride come to the surface. The youths acknowledge the power of pride to build confidence and the power of negativity and pessimism to create an atmosphere of despair. Their narratives suggest that negativity is intertwined in the collective opinion of the region and they stress the fact that this has to change before any progress can be considered. The people of the Gaspe Peninsula certainly suffer from a negative self-image and a negative image of place. Kirsten sums this up in the following statement,

We have to change people's attitudes before anything else will begin to happen. I think the main problem is that we do not care anymore, we have simply given up. Therefore, I would try and bring back the sense of community that has been lost. In this way I would hope that the people will start to feel a sense of pride in their home towns. **(Kirsten)**

Kirsten's understanding is that attitudes must change in order to resurrect a sense of community that will in-turn foster community participation and community pride. Although it seems like a very large feat, these youths were very adamant about this point and very positive that if this transition were to take place that Gaspesians would start feeling better about their communities, themselves and their place with these communities. The youths felt that changing attitudes would create a more open environment physically and most importantly cognitively, for the introduction,

147

acceptance and participation in and support of new ideas and initiatives of local people.

Chris emphasizes this point,

> *After we change the attitudes of people, then we can concentrate on the financial standing of the coast. For if we are more positive about Gaspe, then we are more open-minded leaving welcoming arms open for business... with the right attitude and determination, Gaspe does not have to become a ghost town.* **(Chris)**

These youths see this regional insecurity and pessimism as a collective malaise in which the solution can only come from within. They were very vocal about the people taking responsibility for the situation and suggest that it should be up to the people to find solutions. They were firm in their belief that change must come from within for any real change to take place.

> *It is us who created the problems of the Gaspe Coast and it should be up to us to fix the problems of the Coast.* **(Mike)**

> *We have to help ourselves if we want other people to help us. If you want something to move you have to make it happen because no one is going to take care of it for you. And the people who have ideas for new businesses to often stay silent, Gaspesians need to voice their ideas, and take their future in their hands* **(Blair)**

The local newspaper editor agrees and supports these ideas and summarizes these points in stating,

> *Frankly, I cannot be quite so neurotic about it all. The real causes of the economic malaise in the Gaspe are so numerous and so varied that it would take pages just to enumerate them... And these causes cannot all be blamed on politicians, or civil servants. We Gaspesians must shoulder some of the blame ourselves.* (Cynthia Dow, Spec Editorial, Vol. 26, No. 7 Feb. 20, 2000)

There is a feeling that Gaspesians have taken on the role of the victim, which in turn has led to a perpetuation of the problem and the creation of further problems. The youths felt that stepping beyond this victim attitude, through the acquisition of

knowledge and taking on more responsibility, would opening the doors to more options and possibilities for the people which in turn would help Gaspesians and the Gaspe to take on a more positive attitudes about the place and its future. With a renewed sense of pride, the youth felt that Gaspesians would be in a better position to promote the area and the potential of the area to tourist, businesses and youths. Kirsten and Chris narratives of local pride and promotion explain this point.

> *We have to become proud of our Gaspe culture and heritage and when that is achieved we can step out into the global arena. Of course we might have to give up some of the tranquility that we have now, but what change does not come without sacrifice... Continually, I would advertise more. We could promote everything good about Gaspe. The beautiful weather. the parks, the healthy environment. Personally I think we should build spas and advertise in big centers. We need to show that even though we are not a big city we have just as much to offer. In this way, hopefully more people will come and in turn this will create jobs.* **(Kirsten)**

> *We need to promote Gaspe business. Such as the Café des Artists, the Museum, anything and everything that "our people" are doing. More business, equals more profit, equals more investment, equals bigger businesses, equals more jobs! Ask any tourist who visits Gaspe, the majority of these people adore the place. Use this modernity idea which destroyed us to promote us. Internet/Magazine articles...etc. Media attracts attention. So let us gather people! If we continually promote the Gaspe, as well as make our citizens feel as if they are needed by letting them get involved more, this may actually turn out positive.* **(Chris)**

There was a strong sentiment among the youths, that the Gaspe and Gaspesians in general were not using all the means at their disposal toward the great end of regional development. This is made evident in Chris's statement as she suggests turning the negative into the positive; like using the internet and media to create and promote a favorable image of the Gaspe. Chris's statement also points to the importance of citizen participation. The youths felt that there was a lack of third sector activity and a lack of support and participation for activities and initiatives that were already in place. They

were unsure about the causes of this reluctance to participate but they were critical of the growing sense of individualism that had been taken on by the people. These youths did feel that this division of the people had led to a lack of cooperation and collaboration in the development of ideas and the use of local potential.

> *There is plenty of potential for growth the problem remains that no one knows exactly how to go about attaining it. As well, there is much talent, which lies within the people of the town, but for some reason, these talents aren't being explored. Instead they are being hidden perhaps because people do not feel that they are worth sharing. On the contrary, the very smallest things could be the start of the development of our little town.* **(Andrea)**

An important point that surfaced in relation to this topic was the fact that tourism was well established as a summer activity but that no one had broken the trend and developed a year round means of attracting tourist. This was seen as an avenue high in potential both for the economy and rebuilding confidence in the people.

> *We have to focus on our tourism, make it inviting.. Continually, I would advertise more. We could promote everything good about Gaspe. The beautiful weather, the parks, the healthy environment. Personally I think we should build spas and advertise in big centers. We need to show that even though we are not a big city we have just as much to offer. In this way, hopefully more people will come and in turn this will create jobs.* **(Kirsten)**

> *We seem to be creative in finding ways to attract people here in the summer for tourism, but in the winter, this part of our economy is shut down. But why not find new ways to run this industry all year round. Quebec City attracts people to its Winter Carnival. We could do something similar. When profit begin to rise, further development can begin and bigger things can then start to happen. People will then, I expect have more reason to either stay, or come back.* **(Andrea)**

Creativity is a factor that is missing in the formula of development in the Gaspe. The youths thought that there was a lack of support for local ideas. Going a step further, they

suggested that both scepticism and criticality was putting great limits on the range of ideas that were even revealed.

The youths also expressed lingering notions that the Gaspe is in desperate need of diversifying its industrial base to include more manufacturing. They expressed a need to export not only raw materials but also products that would bring in business and capital returns. There was a feeling that Gaspesians had been reduced to consumers and that one route to change was to begin producing competitive products that could be marketed and sold in the global market. Again this was seen as an area high in potential that was under exploited. Mike's creates an interesting metaphor to highlight this point.

> *The main problem that arises is cost. We have to produce an item that the consumer wants or needs at a price that is competitive. This sounds very simple yet it is not. An allegory, which I think, will explain this situation very well is this. It is like having a car full of gas and oil but we just have not started to drive. We have gas and oil now its time to put the car in gear.* **(Mike)**

Local youths assert that, conservative attitudes, and an atmosphere of negativity have resulted in a region of stagnating communities, which demonstrate low levels of adaptability and capacity.

Limitations of Tourism

These youths felt that too much in the way of raw resources were being exported from the Gaspe and that not enough was being done to develop ways to use these resources to create manufacturing.

> *Rather than creating something for the people of the town of Gaspe to buy, in turn not bringing in any new money, an effort has to be made to create things for other people, from the outside to purchase, i.e. Bringing in new money.* **(Andrea)**

These discussions of manufacturing and industrialization of the Gaspe have always brought about debate as this type of development comes into direct conflict with the image of tourist based development that dominate local discussions of development. The narratives of Andrea and Blair represent both sides of this complex debate.

> *When we think development, most people think, bring in more businesses and that is fine for a few choice people, but what good does it really do? Let's take for example if Canadian Tire were to actually come to Gaspe. A few people would be employed for a while to help build it, and once completed their job is done. The workers; cashiers, managers etc. would hold their jobs true, so that would employ maybe 20-30 people more so than before. Whose money will go towards paying for these workers? Of course we will. After all, we are the people buying from the store, then where does the profit go... to the pocket of an already wealthy businessman from the city of course. This is where people go wrong. Trying to start big in a small town is not the way to go. You must work your way up.* **(Andrea)**

Andrea's statement represents the view of a substantial section of the Gaspesian people who believe in a highly controlled and monitored version of capitalistic expansion for the Gaspe, where business and business initiatives are judged and accepted on their ability to fit within the existing framework of Gaspesian society. The following narrative represents the other side of the debate between tourism and industrialization.

> *People would need to open their minds a little bit and accept that we are evolving and stop blocking projects like Spielo (game factory that was established in Ste Anne des Monts) after being turned down by Gaspe) and Canadian tire, which people said would destroy our landscape and crush local business (this went to Paspebiac)... If we want to put Gaspe on the map and stop the population from exiting we would have to start by making the people understand that in order to create jobs you need entrepreneurs and they need land... there is plenty of room around here I'm sure we could find them a place that wouldn't destroy the landscape. As for the competition aspect, well that is a part of business, stores close and new ones open every day and life goes on.* **(Blair)**

Youths have been critical of the fact that development on the Gaspe Peninsula has always maintained a one-dimensional nature. Tourism is now the "golden child" of

business people, developers and politicians, rightfully so, as the advance of the tourism industry has stepped in to help relieve the struggling economy as other resource industries have slumped. The development of tourism is a slow process but it is changing the appeal and appearance of most towns throughout the Gaspe. The object of tourist based development is to create attractive, serene locations that will attract the attention of tourists and convince them that there is a benefit and appeal to visiting and staying in that the location. In many cases, this involves a high level of investment and although it does create jobs, the jobs that it produces are, for the most part construction jobs that last only as long as the project takes to transform the area. Tourist development as Andrea and Blair's narratives suggest, have brought the topic of development to an interesting point where choices have to be made.

When I returned to Gaspe at one point in the past ten years one of the newest and most apparent changes that had taken place while I was away, was the addition of a McDonald's restaurant. For me, at that stage of life, living in Montreal, this change didn't represent anything very significant. McDonald's was now a regular part of my consciousness and perhaps, if anything, it represented an eyesore, a fixture of modernization that would not disappear but only grow; golden arches reflecting on the natural beauty of Gaspe's tranquil harbor.

As I began to interact with the new generation of youths, I realized that the McDonald's and the Tim Hortons and the appearance of other franchise chains in Gaspe represented many things to them. These were not simply modern restaurants with quick ready made meals that fit their image of "cool' food, they also represented a signal, a sign of possibility, a breeze of potential that blew in with the promise that more would follow.

153

It also represented a more reliable place of youth employment, a possibility to prove their worth in the world of work as well as gain some financial independence and employment experience, a place not only to work but a place in which they could comfortably interact with their peers, in an environment that they recognized and felt like they could be themselves. They associated this type of development with improvement.

The advent of McDonald's along the Gaspe coast, much like the issues surrounding the establishment of other modern chains and franchises have not come without conflict. The population of the Gaspe Coast has defined the advent of such acts of modernization as both helpful and hurtful to their communities.

On one hand there is a willingness to embrace technology and other facets of modernization such as McDonalds because of what they represent, and more importantly the promises that they offer for the future and change. On the other hand there exists a population who lobby strongly against the installment of such institutions. For these people, these franchises represent a depletion of the town owned and operated restaurants and business. It represents local money that will not be collected locally, it represents jobs and business that will be taken from local employees and entrepreneurs, and it represents a level of development that for the most part they are not willing to accept in their environmentally and ascetically pleasing environment.

This brings forth the case and the ongoing debate surrounding the establishment of Canadian Tire in the town of Gaspe. The story of Canadian Tire and Gaspe represents a thrice-told tale in the developmental history of the Peninsula. Gaspe in its position of developmental need and its small town nature, with regard to susceptibility to rumor and gossip, has had a long history with the "much talked about" but "nothing doing"

proposals for development. Proposed development ideas come and go with the weeks with very little materialization of actual development. The debate around Canadian Tire however was much more substantial, for it was much more than a rumor. In the end there was nothing but two sides of a debate and no real development.

At first, people concluded that this was indeed just another rumor. At this point Gaspesians have become very skeptical of any ideas of development due to the fact that, in this particular case, talks of the emergence of a Canadian Tire had been circulating for a decade. But the establishment of a Canadian Tire in the town of Paspebiac (a town Southwest of Gaspe) added some certainty and truth to this particular possibility. Sue explains the excitement associated with the potential of this development.

> *Presently, there are speculations that a Canadian Tire will be built in our town. This would create many jobs for the residents of Gaspe. People are saying that Canadian Tire would not be able to survive in the town of Gaspe. The people are still awaiting further information on this possible project. This happens often. There are always rumors circulating about possible projects in the Gaspe area. Rumors stir up a lot of emotions in the people. These rumors are big news when they happen. People want something productive to happen in Gaspe that rumors of something possibly happening is very exciting.* **(Sue)**

This story surfaced once again in public circles as talks of another movement to establish a large franchise retailer was confirmed. The municipal government of Gaspe was well aware of the problematic nature of such development in Gaspe, so the name of the business negotiating with the town for establishment was kept under wraps. In the end, the negotiations stopped as a strong faction of the town had rallied support and voted against the idea due to its potential for damage at both the aesthetic and the local business level.

This decision was taken as a successful step by those who believe that the establishment of such businesses as Canadian Tire and Wal-Mart would bring more harm to the sustainable development of Gaspe and the surrounding environment than benefit. To the remaining section of the population, this news was taken as yet another sign of the Gaspe's inability to develop new and potential business opportunities. It was also a sign that Gaspe could not absorb the possibilities and opportunities that other similar regions could integrate into their communities. This and similar events stand as a clear signs that Gaspe is not able to diversify its directions of development.

Although this was only one event of failed development, the accumulation of these failed attempts symbolizes the difficulty of establishing businesses in the Gaspe. A similar example took place with the Spellio Games company. Ironically this company produced VLT's (video lottery terminals) for the Quebec government. Local government again nullified this opportunity as they felt this was ethically wrong as poverty and unemployment in Gaspe has led to an abusive situation with regard to the use of these gambling machines. Blair explains,

> *A relatively big company, Spielo games, wanted to implant a branch here and the city council decided it was not worth it. So, the company established itself in Ste Anne des Monts. Now, Spielo had to expand their buildings because they could not respond to the demand. That is only one concrete example among so many others.* **(Blair)**

Another interesting example of this notion of failed development occurred with the closure of the Zellers store in the town of Gaspe. Zellers was a local landmark and in fact the only large retail chain available. When it closed the people expected that another similar chain would establish itself in the location but what they found was that the corporation that owned Zellers was simply closing their main chain and reducing stock to

reopen a bargain franchise called Sure Value. The people took this as a very insulting

step down from the Zellers. It again was a symbol reinforcing Gaspe's inability to sustain

business. Sue elaborates,

> *An example of this may be the former Zellers. Zellers is a popular store*
> *and there are many branches across the province. Zellers could not*
> *survive in Gaspe because of the economy. Apparently, the prices at Zellers*
> *were too high for the average income that the people in Gaspe were*
> *earning. There are many projects the town would like to try but again, the*
> *economy and the small population in the Gaspe area prevents them from*
> *doing so.* **(Sue)**

These stories of development are numerous and have not only occurred in the

retail and service industries but in all sectors of the economy. As I have stated local

people now interpret such talks of development with suspicion and pessimism as to the

chance of talk becoming a reality.

Development dollars are not only being focussed on tourism, but the development

of a tourist locations often mean that the geographic spaces that are selected for tourist

sites, will transform the social meaning and use of the space by local people. The youths

have negative experience with this as many places of youth semblance have been

transformed and converted into tourist locations. Local youths take offence to this as it

provides direct evidence of their powerlessness within town politics and their inability to

control social space. A second aspect of offence, which occurs with regard to tourism, is

the fact that local opinions or ideas are never requested or used in the formation of such

plans and more importantly, the local people are rarely aware of development plans until

they are well into effect.

An example of this nature, took place in one community where the local dock or

wharf, a long-standing youth hang out, was slowly converted to a bird watch/sanctuary.

157

The youths of this community took direct offence to this and although the location was ascetically more appealing the youth expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the change. In fact on many occasions these youth expressed a strong inclination to burn the structure, which they were now calling a bird feeder. I witnessed these discussions and tried to understand why the youth would be so opposed to this form of development. In thinking and listening, it became obvious that this was seen by the youth as a competition over power and property and that the development of such projects was aimed not only at creating a tourist space but it also functioned to move the youth out of what they considered their social space.

As the youth population has continued to decrease less money and investment have been placed into the development and maintenance of youth spaces. This has been reflected in the attitude of youths as they overwhelmingly express that they have no where to go, nothing to do and no place to call their own. To the youths it is a clear sign that they hold very little influence and the disappearance of locations that they can shape and call their own, further removes them from the circle of social life, lowers their quality of life and weakening the bonds and attachment to place.

The Case of Newport

This notion of an attitudinal shift being the initiating step in the rebuilding process has also been reinforced by the results of a pilot study conducted by the HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada) in Newport, a Francophone community on the Gaspe Coast. This example is an excellent representation of the problem inherent throughout the Gaspe Peninsula.

Newport is a small town located on the southern shore of the Gaspe Coast. It is a

case in point for the situation of most communities on the Coast as the people have been

struggling to find alternative employment since the closure of the fish processing plant in

the wake of the cod fishery moratorium. In 2000, Human Resources Development

Canada dispatched a community development officer to the region to act as a

"facilitator," whose role it was to encourage the community to explore its potential for

development and building community capacity.

> *In January, when Douglas Hunt arrived in the small village of Newport on*
> *the Gaspe coast, most people were disheartened. Of the 2,000 residents,*
> *about 500 had worked in a fish plant and another 200 had worked on the*
> *sea. The moratorium on cod fishing had thrown them all out of work. .*
> (Government of Canada 2000).

The aim of the project was to explore the possibility of developing a greater

degree of community capacity building by encouraging community participation and

collaboration in the search for developmental directions for the community. The

objectives of the project were; to transform the contentious climate of the community into

a more constructive environment, to encourage people to take advantage of the federal

government's Fishery Restructuring and Adjustment Measures (FRAM), and finally to

develop ideas for potential project funding.

> *The initial response of the community was mixed and filled with*
> *suspicion as Mr. Hunt, the development officer working in the town*
> *suggests; "Three months ago you would have asked someone, 'what*
> *here?' And they would have said, 'Nothing. The sea's got no more fish in*
> *it, forests have no more trees, and you can't grow anything in the land.'*
> *With Mr. Hunt's help, who works for the Human Resources Development*
> *Canada (HRDC). They can see a way out* (Calhoun, 2001).

This example proves that with some initial efforts to reorganize and change

thinking patterns, change can occur and that divided individuals can be transferred into

cooperative actors and innovators. This stands as an active example of a community

finding its capacity and tapping into its local potential.

> *Much of the potential for economic growth was always there, but no one*
> *had thought to exploit it. With a thriving cod industry, for example, it*
> *never occurred to Newport residents to process their lobster or crab. Nor*
> *did the community think about catching sea urchin and turning the eggs*
> *into caviar for export. They are also exploring agriculture, fish farming,*
> *crafts and tourism.* (Government of Canada 2000).

Although the indicators of change came slowly, the Newport project was hailed a

success by the HRDC. The project evaluation concluded,

> *No one questions the quality of the work that has been done in Newport.*
> *The changes between the situation a year ago and the situation now is*
> *palpable... There has been an obvious change in the people's attitudes.*
> *They have shown that they want to take charge of their own futures and*
> *they have engaged in activities that prove their genuine commitment.*
> *Capacities and competencies that the community definitely had before it*
> *went through its crisis have now re-emerged. Furthermore, people agree*
> *that in retrospect, they wish they had been more involved in planning*
> *project activities... Both in Newport and in the region surrounding it,*
> *there is now an impressive sense of determination on the part of all of the*
> *players in the community – a determination that probably did not exist a*
> *year ago* (Calhoun, 2001: 14).

The example of Newport is an interesting case in point for the testing of these

ideas and an example of how change can be established. It reflects the potential for

change and the possibility of resemblance of community spirit and developmental

exploration. It demonstrates the possibility available when power is given to people. It

also demonstrates how individuals can use their ability to connect and collaborate on a

greater level, and to participate in the long-term goal of sustainable development through

the use of local initiatives and entrepreneurship.

In a paper entitled "De-mythologizing Rural Youth Exodus", Hajesz and Dawe

and Hajaz (1997) report on data collected in Newfoundland that concludes that rural

youths in Labrador are attached and dedicated to their home communities and are not leaving in large numbers. Rather, Hajesz and Dawe suggest that the youth are excited about entrepreneurship and creating opportunities in their home communities. This data corresponds with census data that suggests that between 1991 and 2001 there has been a resurgence of rural youth in-migration to Canadian rural communities. These refreshing results prove that there is potential for rural communities to create opportunities that attract youths.

The problem that the Gaspe Peninsula and all lagging rural communities face is overcoming the cycle of limited opportunity → low perceptions → exodus that has typically hampered rural communities from retaining and attracting youth (Hajesz and Dawe 1997). Overcoming this cycle has proven difficult for communities with stagnating economies as, "rural stay in place decisions are often associated with lack of initiative or low achievement" (Hajesz and Dawe, 1997: 115). Therefore, as this research has suggested, youths are socialized to migrate. Entrepreneurship is rarely encouraged and the unstable economic background of the region discourages anyone with entrepreneurship initiative.

As the local youths have explained, and the Newport case study have proven, the initial steps for community rebuilding lie in the transition of attitudes and the process of establishing positive thinking, which in turn leads to a more inviting and supportive climate for the establishment of possibilities which eventually leads to growing levels of community capacity. It is however a building process that must begin at the local level.

Breaking the Patterns

> *People constantly state that jobs are needed. But there has to be more*
> *than that. There are many causes for the exodus – not just job loss.*
> **(Chris)**

Chris' statement above is an accurate summation of how Gaspesian youths account for the high levels of youth out-migration and the subsequent developmental lag of the Gaspe Peninsula. Youths construct a multi-dimensional picture of the problems inherent in the Gaspe. As this thesis has proven, Gaspesian youths are critical interpreters of their environment. They point out many areas that need change in order for the socioeconomic conditions of the Gaspe to take on more positive growth. These youths are also capable of being constructive critics in an effort to offer suggestions for future development and suggestion to the problem of youth migration.

> *What Gaspe really needs is for someone to cut the loop and create an*
> *ongoing chain. But how can this be done? Where is the out from the*
> *circle? Is there any other alternative than to leave Gaspe?* **(Andrea)**

The youths conveyed a positive attitude about the potential of the Gaspe perhaps because there was a strong sense that many of the possibilities and assets of the region had not been taken full advantage of. Local development leaders have long been critical of Gaspesians lack of entrepreneurial spirit. With low level of human capital, moving from ideas to possibility to action is often a difficult hurdle to overcome but it is a hurdle that must be over come if really change, substantial change is to occur in the Gaspe.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the social worlds of Gaspesian youths with the broad aim of providing a youth centered perspective on the topic of rural youth migration. The out-migration of youths from the rural and small towns of Canada is an important social problem, which threatens the levels of community capacity of all rural communities. It is also an area in which more detailed information is needed and the problem continues to grow.

In the grand scheme of things, this out-migration can be explained as a perpetual cycle, where limited opportunity, leads youths to hold low perceptions and expectations of their communities, this in turn, leads to the departure of many youths from small communities as they believe that these communities have little to offer them.

Thorough the use of youth narrative I have depicted how young Gaspesians view, or construct 'the rural' and 'the urban' from their knowledge and experience. These narratives have provided us with a window into the process and working of this perpetual cycle of migration. On one hand, this cycle is a community phenomenon, but on the other hand, it is a very individual process of decision making. This probing youth perspective has allowed for a very human and personal view of this problem and in the process has exposed some of the root causes and motivational factors of rural youth migration.

I have also explored how the long-term presence of this social cycle (migration), have produced a culture or institution of migration within the Gaspe. This creates an accepted norm of migration which contributes to a constant in and out flow of people from the Gaspe. The presence of this culture of migration has led to the establishment of deep-rooted migration networks, which the youths use as a form of influence, motivation,

knowledge, and connection to broader social links and opportunities. These networks help to relieve the stress and uncertainty of a long distance move as well as provide support for the migrant.

Migration is a coping strategy for dealing with the high levels of unemployment and poverty in the Gaspe. Decades of youth out-migration have eroded levels human capital in the region and correspondingly, the levels of community initiative and capacity. This out-flow of youth has created a population imbalance in the region, which in the end has placed great limits on the potential and capacity of rural and small-town communities to establish sustainable development.

Youths represent the most vital link in the rural rebuilding process. Thus, convincing youths so stay or to return to rural communities is perhaps the most important step toward this end. I have concluded by exploring the thoughts and ideas of Gaspesian youths in an attempt to pool the knowledge and experience of a very insightful population with I believe are not used wisely in the search for a solution to this problem.

Given that rural youth migration is a multifaceted problem that does occur for a number of reasons, it is difficult to point to a specific hierarchy of causes. One aspects which rings through all aspects of rural migration is the notion of an inadequacy or imbalance (economic, cultural etc.) between the rural area of departure and the urban destination. Thus, a central policy issue would concern the question of creating a more equitable balance between the urban center, and the small town and rural community. Furthermore, a list of broad aims of rural restructuring policy, which could help to balance these rural-urban inequalities and by extension help to maintain a more vibrant and balanced rural youth population can be highlighted.

- These communities must establish services, activities and above all, inviting, interesting and non-threatening spaces where youths can assemble.

- The communities of the Gaspe Peninsula in association with local media and educators have to do a better job of exposing more positive role models within the Gaspe. Ideally this would be youths who have successfully established themselves in the Gaspe.

- Create links in area of employment in the Gaspe.

- Create networks of information and resources for youth interested in-migrating to an urban area or a urban youths migrating to rural areas.

- The CEGEP is one means of attracting youth in-migration, this potential should continue to be developed.

- Encourage leadership training and community participation through the promotion volunteer activities and by identifying areas of need of local volunteer organizations. Perhaps this could be made a requirement of a high school leadership class.

- Encourage peer tutoring programs at all education levels for special needs students.

- Encourage French/English integration by setting up and encouraging bilingual youth clubs and sports teams. This could also be done at the high school level.

This research has also exposed areas which are in need of more detailed

investigation and research, these include;

- This research has exposed areas of need in the area of rural society, rural youth culture and rural youth migration. Research is needed in the area of transportation, in particular the role that the automobile plays in rural society and rural social mobility. I have address the role and of the automobile in personal and professional mobility but additional development and detailed could be added to this area.

- Research in media analysis is needed to determine the role local media play in transmitting information and opportunities. This could take the form of a content analysis of local newspapers to determine the quality and quantity of news issues. It could also determine the type of news story that gets covered by the local media and how these stories are covered. A content analysis of local media could also determine the role media plays in influencing public opinion.

- This study has focused on youth education migration from the Gaspe Peninsula but additional research is need in the area of youth employment migration. This would

provide details on a very different population of young Gaspesians and possibly offer a very different view of the migration process.

- The area of study of youths and the quantity and type of college and university degrees that they attain might be useful research, as this data could give insight in the specific areas of training and qualification of Gaspesian youth migrants. This research is needed to determine the human capital potential of young Gaspesians and how it could be used in the communities of the Gaspe.

- More detailed knowledge of the function and influence of rural to urban migration system is needed to see and how rural youth use these systems to inform their migration decisions.

- This research has exposed great areas of social exclusion, which occur in rural communities. Further research is required to expose the types and levels of exclusion that are experiences by rural youths, and how social exclusion influences out-migration.

Before these implications can be established and functionally successful, it is imperative that government, industry and communities collaborate to insure adequate rural development occurs; first, through the satisfaction of the basic needs of the rural population, and secondly, by the development of an adequate rural infrastructure, and the restructuring of rural institutions, as a means of not only encouraging but inducing further development and reduced and return migration to the countryside.

Finally it is important to note that despite the somewhat negative tone of this paper, one should not ignore the positive aspects of migratory movements which have not been mentioned in this thesis. These include: broadening the horizons of people, providing change and exposure to new people and environments, providing a space and place for those who feel they do not belong or have trouble being accepted in rural society and finally, the cultural interchange and exchange that migration brings about helps to build cultural links as broader perspectives in all individuals.

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