

**CULTURE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE: A STUDY OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN PRINCE EDWARD
COUNTY, ONTARIO**

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Rural Development Problem

In 1951, over 38 percent of Canada's population was classified as 'rural.' During the next 50 years, however, that figure had fallen to 16 percent (Bryant and Joseph, 2001, 132), so Rural Canada has moved from a position of national centrality to one of marginality. Today, many rural communities are experiencing economic and social hardships caused by restructuring, the decline of rural industries and the flight of capital. The rural development problem is a byproduct of these hardships and involves aging populations, the outflow of young people and agricultural restructuring with adjustments including a decline in the number of farms and farmers, but not, however, the overall productiveness of the agricultural sector. These problems have led to the loss in many rural communities of critical services like schools, churches and medical clinics, along with a shrinking tax base. To mitigate these negative effects municipalities are turning to a variety of community economic development (CED) initiatives including culturally driven strategies to attract capital and create a new economic base.

1.2 Cultural examples of community economic development

There are a number of instances where rural communities have promoted cultural activities to rejuvenate their stagnating economies and reverse population decline. For instance, in 1983 the sawmill in the single-industry town of Chemainus on Vancouver Island was closed down and over 650 workers were laid off (Barnes and Hayter, 1992, 647). When the sawmill re-opened two years later computerized sawmill technology had been installed and only 145 workers were re-hired, but the town had reversed its fortunes by becoming an internationally acclaimed tourist destination. The

town had created the ‘Festival of Murals’ (www.chemainus.bc.ca) with thirty-four larger than life murals depicting the town’s heritage and history in forestry and nature. The murals provided the initial draw to attract tourists but soon other cultural amenities and complementary businesses blossomed as well. The Chemainus Theatre, for example, a 270 seat facility that offers fine dining and performances now anchors a vibrant arts and shopping area which boasts over three-hundred businesses. Chemainus, therefore, is an example of how one cultural activity like murals can generate growth in a small community.

Plum Coulee, a rural community near Winnipeg was suffering from severe economic and population decline until 2001 when key actors launched a culturally driven renaissance initiative. Avery Schulz, who serves as the community economic development officer, discovered while planning some cultural festivals that Saidye Rosner of Plum Coulee had married Samuel Bronfman, moved to Montréal and helped to turn the Seagrams Company into an empire (CBC News, December 11th, 2003). Schulz decided to contact the Bronfman Family Foundation and invited Phyllis Lambert the daughter of Saidye and Samuel to the original home of the Seagrams company in Plum Coulee. Lambert, a philanthropist and an architect herself became involved in the town’s plans and with her help and funding from the foundation the town initiated an ambitious redevelopment plan based around heritage and culture. The focal point of the town’s efforts was a well preserved wooden grain elevator: “the idea was to give tourists the rare opportunity to see the prairies at high altitude and plans were even made to put a restaurant on top of the elevator” (CBC News, December 11th, 2003).

The plans for the wooden grain elevator, combined with the interest of key actors like Phyllis Lambert generated a renewed sense of confidence and pride in the community of Plum Coulee which spilled over into other projects. The citizens of Plum Coulee raised over \$1 million, built a

band shell, amphitheatre and started the “Plum Festival” featuring locally grown plums. This example illustrates how a rural community can harness elements of heritage and culture to revitalize its physical, economic and social wellbeing (CBC News, December 11th, 2003).

Despite a population of less than one hundred residents, the hamlet of Rosebud, Alberta has resisted the economic and social collapse that many similar neighboring rural communities have suffered. In fact, Rosebud has a vibrant economic base which sustains a community without a gas station or convenience store. Rosebud has a year round theatre and acting school which combines with various other cultural and recreational amenities to attract over 40,000 visitors per year from places like Calgary and Drumheller. Rosebud uses its theater as the catalyst for tourism but blends a picturesque setting with rural charm to keep tourists coming to the community.

Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan has capitalized on its history and close proximity to the US border (175 km) through the promotion of heritage tourism and cultural activities. The town of 32,000 offers art galleries, museums, murals and even a casino to attract tourists to visit and spend money in the town. As with most success stories there is a unique activity that is spearheading the cultural renaissance and economic resurgence in the town. Moose Jaw has taken the common walking tour concept of London, England, and created two guided tours of the town’s underground tunnels. In a tour called the ‘Chicago Connection’ visitors re-live the shady times of Al Capone. In the other tour ‘Passage to Fortune’ the experience of Chinese immigrants who helped build the town is presented, both tours use multimedia, costumes and themes to sell the experience (www.tunnelsofmoosejaw.com/tours.asp).

1.3 Defining Key Terms

Economic development can be defined as action to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions; the goal is to create good quality jobs for the population that will provide a sustainable economy for the community. Traditional economic bases relied on basic and non-basic labor relationships, whereby some individuals were employed by a basic industry such as manufacturing and the remainder worked in the non-basic sector which serviced them. This model generated synergies as basic laborers supported the service sector in a community. Recently, however, with the decline of manufacturing and loss of well paying basic jobs the results vary. The tourism industry is still considered a basic industry because it draws revenue from outside a community, but tourism related jobs are often seasonal, require low-skills and pay low-wages and, therefore, are poor cornerstones for any economic base.

In *Keywords* (1983, 87) Williams asserts that culture is one of the two or three most complex words in the English language. Moreover, *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (2000) dedicates fourteen pages to the discussion of culture. In the context of my study, culture, cultural activities and cultural initiatives are found in plans, policies and strategies that deal not only with traditional high-art represented by museums, art galleries, operas and theatres, but also by pop culture involving pop art, festivals and live music. Some of the strategies I am studying also include complementary amenities such as restaurants, bookstores, heritage sites, murals and wineries. Table 1.1 which shows a typology of cultural activities demonstrates the wide range of cultural activities currently being promoted in small towns.

Table 1.1 Typology of Cultural Activities

Live Theatre
Murals
Museums
Art Galleries
Pottery Studios
Photography Studios
Craft Shops
Live Music
Glass Blowing

As Brown and Baldwin (2003) point out, the countryside and urban fringe have historically been a difficult geographic area to classify and compare economically and socially over time. In an effort to accurately compare census areas they devised a classification chart which is shown in Table 1.2.

In this study the countryside refers to small towns and surrounding rural communities in Southern Ontario which are located outside of the Greater Toronto Area's (GTA) daily commuter belt, but within the range of occasional visits. Using the aforementioned classification scheme these communities are classified as nonmetro-adjacent or nonmetro-nonadjacent – categories 5 and 6 in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Classification of Canadian Communities (Brown and Baldwin, 2003, 121)

	Name	Description
1	Large Metro	Central and most populous census division of a CMA with a population greater than one million
2	Large Metro fringe	Remaining census division(s) within or partially within a CMA with a population greater than one million
3	Medium Metro	Census division(s) containing, partially within a CMA with a population between 250,000 and 999,999
4	Small Metro	Census division(s) containing, within or partially within a CMA/CA with a population between 50,000 and 249,999
5	Nonmetro-Adjacent	Census divisions that share a boundary with a CMA/CA that has a population greater than 50,000
6	Nonmetro-Nonadjacent	Census divisions that do not share a boundary with a CMA/CA that has a population greater than 50,000

1.4 Culture as an agent of Economic Development

Small communities may have one or more cultural industries, ideally working together to create economic synergies that generate further growth for that community. With one or a small number of cultural industries, a community might attract tourists and support a small complementary hospitality industry including bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and various other tourist attractions. This scenario may be sufficient to stabilize a declining population and stagnating economy but in order to grow, communities need a well integrated multi-sector economic base which attracts tourists and new residents whose collective spending power can develop a service sector and attract new businesses and industries.

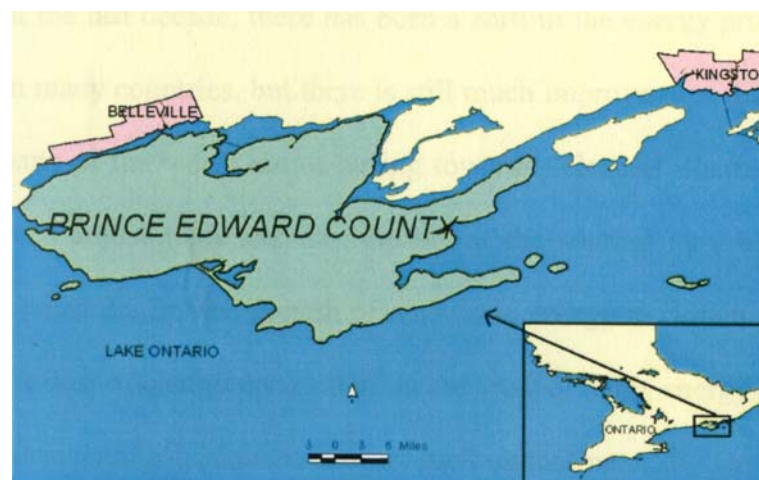
Three authors (Ullman, 1954: Kotkin, 2000: and Florida, 2002, 2005) help to explain how economic development is predicated on attracting mobile productive workers. At a time when new transportation technologies and suburbanization was providing increased mobility and, therefore, greater residential and employment choice Ullman explained that such choices were becoming more dependent on quality of life factors. For Ullman, climate was the amenity that was luring productive workers from the traditional but cold industrial centers in the north east to the south and western United States. Kotkin, has more recently rejected the notion of placelessness whereby the standardized suburban landscapes stifle uniqueness; he states that it is the uniqueness of place that productive workers are looking for. He claims that banal communities are losing their talent while interesting and exciting places with cultural amenities will grow and prosper. Florida, takes this argument one step further and suggests that there is an emerging creative class which is attracted to places that offer high quality of life amenities like vibrant arts and cultural activities and, in many instances, a Bohemian lifestyle. Moreover, unlike traditional firm-first models of economic development Florida explains that places must attract talented individuals who will subsequently

attract firms and create new ones. These ideas will be elaborated in chapter 2 but the salient point is that today, places need an attraction to get talented and productive individuals into their towns and cities. Whether the catalyst for migration is environmental or cultural, economic development strategies are increasingly geared toward attracting, retaining, and incubating talent by offering high standards of quality of life.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The goal of this research is to examine whether culturally based CED, practiced in larger cities is transferable to rural municipalities, and to analyze the potential of a culturally driven strategy for rural economic development. To do this I will present a case study of Prince Edward County (PEC), Ontario (see figure 1.1) a rural community within a two hour drive of Toronto that is having some success reversing its recent economic downturn by promoting culture and cultural industries.

Figure 1.1 Prince Edward County, Ontario (Lopez, 2004)



Chapter 2 will review selected literature on the transition from an industrial to an information economy and the development strategies which involve the use of culture and cultural industries currently being employed in cities and rural communities. Chapter 3 will introduce Prince Edward County as my study area and present and explain the data collection methods that were used during my fieldwork.

Chapter 4 will examine Prince Edward County's economic base and recent strategies for economic development. Chapter 5 depicts Prince Edward County's spaces of economic and social contestation. Chapter 6 provides some conclusions and suggests some avenues for further research.

Chapter 2: Cultural Strategies for Economic Development:

A Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the strategies that cities and, now, rural communities are employing to bolster their economies. The reasoning behind the adoption and use of these strategies in urban and rural areas will be presented. Some critical discussion about the merits and effectiveness of these strategies in the urban and rural continuum will be given as well as a concluding section that reviews the gaps in the literature and raises questions that will be answered in chapter 4 and chapter 5.

2.2 Issue of Place

In the post-industrial age many small towns in North America and some industrial cities are experiencing economic stagnation and restructuring. Coffey (2000, 121-123) suggests that the current economic transformation of Canadian cities consists of seven elements. “First, urban economies are being increasingly tertiarized” which means that the economic bases of Canadian cities are shifting from manufacturing to service industries. “Second, urban economies are becoming increasingly professionalized.” In the new economy a higher proportion of workers now find themselves working in white-collar occupations. “Over the period 1961-1991, for example, the proportion of white-collar workers approximately doubled attaining 28 percent in 1991.” “Third, urban economies are increasingly composed of non-standard forms of employment,” the current nature of work has deviated from traditional and steady nine to five jobs and now involves more part time work, contractual work and work that is flexibly located,

home based business for example. “Fourth, urban economies are experiencing changes in the manner in which work is performed. To begin with, even in the case of manufactured goods, manual labor is increasingly being replaced by inputs of capital equipment and technology.” Better education and social skills are becoming even more important as this ‘up-skilling’ of the labor force takes place. “Fifth, from the viewpoint of the firms themselves, the production process is being organized in innovative ways,” new flexible methods of production are being utilized, including the use of computers, machines and the constant adjustment of labor inputs through the practice of outsourcing and subcontracting. “Sixth, important changes have been occurring in the location of economic activity.” As the economy shifts from heavy manufacturing to service and information based business more work now occurs in offices than in factories. Similarly, more work is being done in urban areas and the increased use of technology including telecommunications has enabled work to be done at home and in other places such as rural areas. “Finally, all levels of the urban hierarchy are becoming increasingly integrated into the newly emerging global economy.” A small number of major global cities, including New York, London and Tokyo have emerged, while second tier cities like Toronto have become relay points that link their nation or region to the larger global economy, often via these major centers of global control.

As the agents of globalization including world-wide telecommunications and transportation create interconnectedness and uniformity among regions and business practices, there is a vein of thinking that questions the importance of place in the new global economy. Kevin Kelly (1998, 94) in his book *New Rules for the New Economy* explains that “the New Economy operates in a *space* rather than a place, and over time more and more economic transactions will migrate to this new space.” It is suggested that the role of urban places will be

reduced to a residential function while the economic activities scatter rapidly across global networks of production and consumption.

Countering the notion being described as the perceived death of geography are strong arguments from Kotkin (2000) Sunley (2003), and a great number of geographers, who believe that sense of place and the distinctiveness of place is actually becoming more important as the world becomes seemingly more similar. Kotkin (2000, 6) explains that "...the importance of geography is not dwindling to nothing in the digital era; in fact, quite the opposite. In reality, place-geography matters now more than ever before. If people, companies, or industries can truly live anywhere, or at least choose from a multiplicity of places, the question of where to locate becomes increasingly contingent on the particular attributes of any given location."

Sunley (2003, 187) uses a case study of Edinburgh and the surrounding Scottish region to suggest that "one of the key themes of recent economic geography is that despite the ever-increasing integration of local economies into global flows of trade and capital, such local economic differentiation remains endemic to capitalism, and may even be intensifying as transport and communication costs fall. Despite the numerous glossy predictions of the death of distance and the end of geography, local and regional differences in growth may be intensifying across the industrialized world." Sunley goes on to assert that understanding the processes that cause regional growth and decline is more important than ever as urban inequalities have reached unprecedented levels as some areas continue to decline while others have found ways to develop and revive their cities.

2.3 Economic Development Strategies in Cities

While the global economy, through the reduction of transportation costs and improved telecommunications, creates uniformity of production methods across space, the backlash of standard production and static lifestyles from place to place has been glocalization. According to Swyngedouw (2004, 25) “ 'Glocalization' refers to the twin process whereby, firstly, institutional/regulatory arrangements shift from the national scale both upwards to supra-national or global scales and downwards to the scale of the individual body or to local, urban or regional configurations and, secondly, economic activities and inter-firm networks are becoming simultaneously more localized/regionalized and transnational.” There is a belief that as the processes of globalization seek to produce a melting pot of global cultural diversity, authenticity and uniqueness is what people are attracted to. People want to live in diverse, vibrant and exciting cities and consume cultural goods and experiences that are different from the mainstream offerings. As early as 1961 Jane Jacobs in her landmark book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* outlined the importance of diversity, face-to-face interaction, mixed land use and unique cultural experiences to the vitality of a city and hence its economic viability.

More recently, Zukin (1989, 1995, 1998, 2004) has examined the role of culture and consumption in cities and suggests during in the “1970s and 1980s, the symbolic economy rose to prominence against a background of industrial decline and financial speculation” (Zukin, 1995, 8). Zukin's symbolic economy is defined as the complex of economic activities related to real estate investment, entertainment, media, and culture and helps to propagate and enhance urban lifestyles and promote urban boosterism. Consequently, Zukin (1998, 7) adds that “almost every city has decided to promote its art museums, and convert old railroad terminals and power stations to cultural complexes” in an attempt to revitalize their consumption spaces and capitalize

on cultural amenities in order to promote tourism, and attract mobile workers and businesses. “Cities hit hard by a long-term decline in middle class residents and the erosion of commitment by business elites have gradually begun to view the diversity of ‘urban lifestyles’ as a source of cultural vitality and economic renewal” (Zukin, 1998, 9). Thinking critically about the nature of this economic renewal Zukin cautions that while the new cultural sector is creating new jobs and new spaces of consumption “many of these jobs are low-paying jobs in stores, restaurants, hotels, and domestic and personal services” (1998, 8).

Writing about the transition between the old industrial and new information economies, Short (1999) describes historical examples of the imagining of place and cities such as the European powers selling the idea of settling North America, and explains that the culture and branding of today’s cities is evolving. There is now a mixture of high culture amenities like art galleries, operas and theatres, and of pop culture offerings, “urban cultural capital includes more than just traditional elements of so called high culture. Popular culture in a variety of guises is also important. There is the culture of leisure; cities now represent themselves as fun places, places where the good life is increasingly defined as not only lucrative employment but ample time for leisure. The marketing of the city as a center for play has been tied to dining, shopping, nightclubbing and outdoor pursuits” (Short, 1999, 52).

In terms of reimagining modern cities, Short suggests that cities must present themselves as clean and vibrant places to live and work if they are to be successful in the new economy. Furthermore, city’s like Pittsburg that developed at the height of the industrial era must do away with the negative externalities of their industrial past like pollution and traffic while preserving nostalgic imagery as part of a heritage industry if they are to reverse their declining economic fortunes. Short (1999, 51) contends that cultural strategies for economic development that can be

“identified as attempts to identify, mobilize, market, and commodify a city’s cultural assets, are now a major element in urban regeneration and the stimulation of a city’s economy.” Moreover, he argues that culture is now big business and that “art shows and galleries, opera halls, museums, festivals, and symphony halls are a vital part of the reimagining of cities. They intimate world city status, a city that can attract and retain the executive classes and skilled workers of the high-tech industries of the present and the future. The cultural attributes are also a source of revenue in their own right” (Short, 1999, 51). The poignant example of the Art Institute of Chicago is also given where in 1995 a very successful exhibition of Claude Monet’s paintings was held. “The exhibition ran from July 22 to November 26 and generated \$ 389 million in economic benefit to the city’s economy and a \$5 million profit for the Institute” (Short, 1999, 51).

Scott (2000) explains that place and culture are persistently intertwined with one another and suggests that the face-to-face interaction found in bustling cities can create rich cultural activities. Looking at emerging trends in the twenty-first century, Scott (2000, 3-4) describes the emergence of “a deepening tension between culture as something that is narrowly place-bound, and culture as a pattern of non-place globalized events and experiences. Thus, on the one hand, and even in a world where the ease and rapidity of communication have become watchwords, place is still uncontestably a repository of distinctive cultural conventions and traditions. On the other hand, certain privileged places represent points from which cultural artifacts and images are broadcast across the world and this same process has deeply erosive or at least transformative effects on many local cultures.” Scott goes on to explain that the uniqueness of place produces distinctive cultural experiences, and attract groups of creative people such as painters, actors or writers. Moreover, these places are “magnets for talented individuals from other places who

migrate to these centers in search of professional fulfillment and who in turn help to maintain local cultural energies” (Scott, 2000, 33).

2.4 Richard Florida’s Creative Class

As the information economy emerges, the question of regional growth and decline still figures prominently. One of the most influential and controversial authors on this topic in recent years has been Richard Florida. In the 1990’s Florida researched the growth and makeup of high-tech clusters in the United States such as Silicon Valley. In 2002 Florida decided to go mainstream by releasing his best selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, conducting a world tour of speaking engagements, and creating a popular website (www.creativeclass.org). Like Jane Jacobs, he tries to bridge the gap between academia and pop culture to become a somewhat accessible popular academic. This attempt, along with his theories about development which will be discussed below, have made Florida a contentious figure in the realm of economic development literature as urban managers enthusiastically adopt his strategies while more reserved academics shower him with criticism. This section will outline Florida’s main ideas about the creative class and culturally driven strategies for economic development in cities and suggest some problems with his theories.

Florida’s main research question is why some cities are prospering while others are not. He explains that, as the new economy evolves the strategies for economic development that were used in the industrial period simply become outdated. Florida suggests that there has been a shift in which the importance of the firm or industry is being replaced by talent in the form of creative individuals. “In the creative economy, the ability to attract talent creates regional advantage. Contrast this with the old economy, where regional competition revolved around the competition

for firms. The location decisions of firms drove regional economies, and the location decisions of people followed from the location of firms, who in turn based their decisions on natural resource endowments, transportation systems, and labor costs” (Florida, 2005, 68).

This shift requires cities to adjust their economic development strategies because offering tax breaks and subsidies to attract industry or firms no longer guarantees development. It is talented individuals, creativity and innovation that drive the new economy according to Florida and, therefore, cities must attract and retain talent to develop and prosper.

Florida states that the “distinguishing characteristic of the Creative Class is that its members engage in work whose function is to create meaningful new forms” (Florida, 2005, 34). This creative class is made up of two groups; the super-creative core which includes “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers, and architects, as well as the thought leadership of modern society: nonfiction, writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion makers,” (Florida, 2005, 34) and a more peripheral group including creative professionals who work in a wide range of knowledge-intensive industries such as high-tech sectors, financial services, the legal and healthcare professions, and business management” (Florida, 2005, 34). Although Florida accepts that all human beings are creative by nature, he estimates that the creative class includes some 38.3 million Americans or roughly 30 percent of the entire U.S. workforce, and notes that the proportion of workers fortunate enough to be paid to use their creativity regularly in their work has risen from 20 percent in 1980 (Florida, 2005, 34-35).

Florida instructs cities to harness this creative class to develop: “today, it is the ability to attract human capital or talent that creates regional advantage; those that have the talent win, those that do not lose. In this regard, the quality of place, a city or region, has replaced access as

the pivot point of competitive advantage” (Florida, 2005, 50). Once cities understand that “talent is a key element of regional competitiveness in the creative economy,” (Florida, 2005, 82) it becomes vitally important to understand what highly mobile members of the creative class look for in a place to live and work. To address this question Florida conducted surveys with over 1200 high-tech workers. To briefly summarize his findings, talent is increasingly concerned with quality of life amenities, and the atmosphere of community in addition to salaries when making residential and employment choices. Focus groups were held to supplement this data while enabling Florida and his team to “zero in more precisely on the factors that affect the location choices of creative workers” (Florida, 2005, 83). The results suggest that talent typically tries to balance economic opportunity and lifestyle considerations when selecting a place to live. Moreover, young creative workers are attracted to places that include the following;

- Large numbers of visibly active people
- Easy access to a wide range of outdoor activities
- A vibrant music and performance scene with a wide range of live-music opportunities
- A wide range of night-life experiences, including many options without alcohol
- A clean, healthy environment and commitment to preserving natural resources for enjoyment and recreation
- A lifestyle that is youth-friendly and supportive of diversity

(Florida, 2005, 84)

Florida goes on to argue that because members of the creative class desire a set of lifestyle amenities different from the members of traditional working or service classes, cities must recognize this shift and provide the amenities, community atmosphere and cultural experiences that will attract talent. “There is a considerable difference between the amenities of industrial and creative economies. The industrial economy emphasized *big ticket* amenities like professional sports, the fine arts (e.g. opera, classical music, and the theatre), and cultural destinations (e.g. museums, and art exhibits). Creative amenities typically revolve around

outdoor recreational activities and lifestyle amenities” (Florida, 2005, 70-71). Florida elaborates on this difference by explaining that creative individuals prefer casual, inclusive and flexible amenities over traditional high culture amenities such as “the symphony, opera, theater (and) ballet and big-ticket items like national chain restaurants, nightspots, and major league sports venues,” (Florida, 2005,84) because creative individuals favor participatory cultural experiences and recreational activities. These individuals want to engage in such activities whenever they have free time and to gain intellectual stimulation. This contrasts with factory workers who in general want to relax and be entertained with passive activities after a hard day of physical labor. “Focus group participants expressed a preference for a diverse range of such activities, including outdoor amenities (e.g., rowing, cycling, and rock climbing) and other lifestyle activities (e.g., vibrant music scene, outdoor restaurants, organic supermarkets, and juice bars). They also preferred a wider range of nightlife activities not revolving exclusively around bars and drinking. Participants were looking for a wide range of experiences that are diverse, open, and inclusive of other young people, and drew a sharp distinction between these sorts of activities and more expensive and exclusive amenities like the symphony or even professional sports” (Florida, 2005, 84-85).

As mentioned, it is not only the range and offering of amenities that attracts talent but the atmosphere of the community as well. One of Florida’s “three T’s” of economic development is “Tolerance” which he defines as “openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and walks of life” (Florida, 2005, 37). He explains that as creativity is not bound to any one race, ethnic group, sexual orientation or gender many creative firms and especially high-tech firms are very diverse places to work. Therefore, creative individuals seek out cities and communities that are diverse and open to a multiplicity of preferences.

2.5 Thinking Critically about the Creative Class

Florida's theories of economic development and the creative class have been extensively criticized in the recent literature. While the effectiveness and nature of Florida's development strategies are debatable, their widespread implementation is not. Florida's ideas have been adopted by countless cities and regions seeking to develop according to his edict that talent must be attracted and retained. To demonstrate the permeation of such strategies into the planning mainstream I will use the example of *Canada's Urban Strategy* (2002), the City of Toronto's *Culture Plan for the Creative City* (2003) and Cincinnati's 'Creative City' Plan (2003).

Canada's Urban Strategy (2002) reflects traditional planning ideals with its standard call for improvements to healthcare, transportation and education, but new ideas have been injected into the framework as well. Florida's work is cited as the report acknowledges his main findings that "cities and regions have much to gain from making centers attractive to knowledge-based workers who prefer places with a readily accessible range of recreational and cultural activities" (Task Force, 2002, 4). In a direct critique of *Canada's Urban Strategy* (2002) Jeanne Wolfe blasts the report for failing to address the issue of income disparity and exacerbating this problem by promoting Florida's strategies to cater to the creative class at the expense of lower class Canadians. She calls the move to pour funds into cultural facilities in Toronto in an effort to make Toronto a "competitive" city in the global market for talent a mistake as those funds should be allocated to help cities with more pressing social and economic needs. "The report is written as though it is based on the analysis of big cities given to boosterism. However, the problems of Toronto (population 2.5 million, growing at 4.0% per five years) are not the problems of Biggar, Saskatchewan (population 2,243, declining at 4.6% per five years)" (Wolfe, 2003, 11).

As we look at the report produced by the City of Toronto entitled *Culture Plan for the Creative City* (2003), we can see the influence of Florida's work strewn throughout: "the Culture Plan recognizes that great cities of the world are all Creative Cities whose citizens work with ideas, are intensely mobile and insist on a high quality of life wherever they choose to live. Such cities, and their citizens, have an overwhelming impact on the economies of their countries and compete with one another directly for trade, for investment and, most important of all, for talent" (City of Toronto 2003, 3). The report is a plea for increased funding to refurbish and develop cultural assets, and to improve the economy and quality of life of Toronto by using Florida's findings to prove that investment in culture produces economic returns. "The American economist Richard Florida and his colleagues have found a correlation between a city's creative sphere and its economic competitiveness; they call it the Creativity Index. Cities that offer a high quality of life and accommodate diversity enjoy the greatest success in attracting talent and holding onto it, as well as seeing the greatest growth of their technology sectors" (City of Toronto 2003, 8). The problem with these calls to divert large amounts of the provincial or municipal purse to cultural facilities in an attempt to attract talent is that it comes at the expense of amenities and services that benefit all citizens, not a smaller group. Things like healthcare and education. In *Economic Competitiveness and Quality of Life in City Regions* (2001), Betsy Donald examines Florida's earlier work which dealt more with high-tech workers specifically, and asks "how transferable are these ideas to non-high-technology places and to people in different occupations" (Donald 2001, 269). Florida has subsequently expanded his definition of the creative class but the question of inequality among groups in Western society and who these development strategies benefit is quite applicable. The economic development strategies of the past that relied on 'trickle down' policies were seen to be unfair to the lower classes; is catering to

the creative class at the expense of the service class not that same unfair principle? Florida admits that his strategies produce income disparity and inequality and states that there is a growing service class growing along side the creative class whose primary function is to make life easier for the members of the creative class.

Peck, in a recent (2005) paper and presentation about Florida's argument for creative development attacked this 'inequality by design' saying that Florida acknowledges this inequality but passes it off as a problem that the creative class itself would have to 'grow up' and deal with. Moreover, Peck points out that the creative class, for all of its influence, is smaller than the working and service classes it subjugates and that the 'creative have-nots' deserve policies that benefit them directly, and not just in the form of a creative, elite 'trickle' down. "Florida concedes that the crowding of creatives into gentrifying neighborhoods might generate inflationary housing-market pressures that not only run the risk of eroding the diversity that the creative class craves but, worse still, could smother the fragile ecology of creativity itself. He reminds his readers that they depend on an army of service workers trapped in 'low-end jobs that pay poorly because they are not creative jobs' (2002: 322), while pointing soberly to the fact that the most creative places tend also to exhibit the most extensive forms of socioeconomic inequality" (Peck, 2005, 6). Peck (2005, 10) also takes exception with civic leaders like the Governor of Michigan who, despite having recently enacted the largest spending cuts in state history, "twisting the wet towel of government tight, to wring out ounce after ounce of inefficiency" (including limiting cell-phone usage and out-of-state travel, turning off lights, and canceling subscriptions), was nevertheless able to eke out funds to support the state's new 'Cool Cities' program for economic development which is based on Florida's creative argument.

As Florida advocates yoking the market synergies which are generated by the consumption of the creative class, he contributes to the exclusion of other groups from the planning process and ultimately service provision. Cincinnati's recently released 'Creative City' plan is a good example of Florida's theories in practice. The plan, which draws heavily on Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), blames the city's post-industrial economic struggles squarely on the "inability to attract and retain a creative class of talent workers" (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003, 3), and heeds Florida's call to develop by trying to "aggressively attract young creatives" by making them the primary focus of its tourism and media efforts (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003, 4). "To aggressively attract young creatives, Cincinnati must make them a primary focus of its tourism and media efforts" (Cincinnati Tomorrow, 2003, 4). One problematic element of this approach to economic development is that it marginalizes lower income groups and seniors. Bringing members of the creative class into the downtowns of cities to live, work and play might generate market synergy, but it also prices out marginalized groups from housing and consumer markets. Toronto's recent redevelopment of the distillery district is a good example of this phenomenon. When Toronto used culture to redevelop a derelict industrial quarter of its waterfront, it simultaneously provided the prerequisite environment for gentrification in the surrounding neighborhoods and priced many Torontonians out of the local housing market. Today, this previously unwanted area is the site of expensive condominiums and caters to the business class with high priced entertainment and cultural amenities too expensive for low or even middle income groups. These inflated prices can serve as invisible barriers to keep certain groups out, while isolating the elites.

As Florida and his ideas are also being adopted by countries and cities where English is not the first language and the cultural ideals of the west do not prevail, it is also important to

examine the impact of his theories in international contexts. In *Renaissance City Singapore* (2003) T. C. Chang and W. K Lee conduct a case study of Singapore as it strives to become a “Global City of the Arts” through a government sponsored cultural renaissance. It demonstrates that having adequately funded artistic and cultural amenities does not automatically create a love for the arts, nor does their mere existence generate economic development. They argue that no amount of funding and subsequent development of cultural facilities will successfully attract talent until there is a civic engagement and appreciation for the arts. “Although arts development and urban regeneration complement each other in many Western cities, the scenario is different in Singapore” (Chang and Lee 2003, 134). In Singapore, the arts are seen as elitist and intimidating by many citizens, and this manifests itself in low levels of civic participation in art activities. Moreover, it is suggested that the lack of “Arts Culture” by Singaporeans will continue to hamper development efforts predicated on culture and the arts. This research should not only serve as a warning to cities around the world that are considering such strategies, but also to many cities in North America that do not possess the requisite appreciation of the arts and culture to make Florida’s development strategies work.

It should also be noted that despite the widespread use and hype over Florida’s strategies, their impacts even in early adopters like Austin, Texas, are not fully understood. As Peck reveals, Florida’s argument for creative development is a ‘toolkit’ for cities that is being distributed by a new wave of consulting firms touting the merits of talent and creativity, including Florida’s own Catalytix and Richard Florida Creativity Group. Cities with some talent are encouraged to top the various tables and indices Florida produces, those with less or no talent are encouraged to raise their fortunes to a realistic level. Cities that succeed to make the grade by way of Florida’s lead tables are celebrated and those who fail are ‘squelchers’ who simply ‘don’t

get it' which produces a zero accountability atmosphere in which such development strategies are sold to and adopted by city after city without any guarantees of success.

More research on the effectiveness and ramifications of economic development strategies that use culture and cultural industries in North America and elsewhere is warranted and needed. Furthermore, as these strategies are adopted and modified for use in rural communities, research on this process is also required.

2.6 Shifting to the Rural: Change and Struggle in Canada's Rural Hinterland

When examining literature on rural areas in general, and specifically rural areas in Canada, it becomes clear that there are changes occurring in these communities. Unfortunately, many of these changes such as the decline of industry and agriculture, encroachment on the environment by sprawling suburban development, and the out-migration of young people have negative consequences for rural communities. This section of the chapter will review the changes occurring in rural communities in Canada. It will outline some of the problems associated with these changes and examine the strategies being used in rural communities to bring about economic development and social restructuring. It will be demonstrated that new technology and attitudes toward rural hinterlands in southern Ontario help to level the playing field for rural communities so that they can compete with urban areas. Examples will be given of culturally driven strategies for economic development that rural communities have adapted from the urban literature and implemented in rural settings.

2.7 Rural Communities in Transition

The process of adjusting to the new economy has proven to be a painful endeavor for many rural communities. Rural communities centered around industry or resource extraction have experienced declining populations according to an analysis of Canadian Census data (Beshiri, R., R. Bollman, et al. 2004).

According to Troughton, central Canada's rural system has lost 75 percent of its farms, a corresponding proportion of its farming population and witnessed "the virtual elimination of all rural farm input manufacturing and most output processing establishments, including thousands of saw, grist, and woolen mills, hundreds of small farm implement manufacturers, several thousand cheese factories, and dozens of small meat, and fruit and vegetable processing plants, together with the employment they represented (Troughton, 2003, 28). Moreover, the closure of schools, churches and the reduction of the administrative and institutional fabric of rural municipalities through forced amalgamation has further weakened the sense of community among many rural residents. The result of this decline has been an emptying of a once full landscape which has left many communities existing only as shells (Troughton, 2003, 29).

Writing the introduction to a book about rural change Ramsey (2004) gives the example of 'The Village of Benito, Manitoba' to demonstrate the struggles facing rural territories.

"Benito has an aging population of approximately 400 people located on the western border of Manitoba in the vernacular region known as Parkland. While the community owns a home for a resident medical doctor, and has a modern health and retirement centre, it has been unable to attract one. In the past year, the last of what were once four grain elevators and the two-story, turn-of-the-century brick school house were torn down. These were arguably the last two remaining cultural heritage structures in Benito. Benito is dependent on agriculture and forestry, both sectors facing forces of restructuring. Benito is located too far from a major center to be a residential attraction. It is also just off the beaten path leading to a major provincial park and forestry reserve to secure the benefits of tourism. In fact, Benito no longer has operational motels and is not even listed in the most recent provincial tourism booklets. This example is illustrative of how rural territories are changing. For some, like Benito, the struggle may be greater. However, all

territories face change, whether it is the encroachment of rural resources, or the general processes of restructuring of rural resources in more remote locations” (Ramsey, 2004, 3-4).

2.8 The Struggle to Survive: Redevelopment on a Level Playing Field?

With rural communities struggling to overcome the inherent limitations of their location, size, resource and population bases, there have been many studies assessing their successes and failures. Sifting through this literature two things become clear; first, in some ways the technological and economic shifts that have debilitated rural communities in the new economic system have also leveled the playing field to allow forward thinking and innovative communities to compete. Second, many rural communities faced with extinction refuse to fold and have harnessed different elements such as heritage, the arts, culture, countryside lifestyles, the rural ideal and the environment to reverse their fortunes and actually compete with larger cities in the global economy.

Writing about the ‘search for a vibrant rural America’ Freshwater (2004, 31) suggests that some rural areas [those in Brown and Baldwin’s “non-metro-adjacent” (see Table 1.2)] are encouraging urban residential expansion as outer suburbs to supplement their dwindling populations in an effort to sustain their tax bases and social and economic services. These communities promote themselves as high amenity areas where retirees and commuters can now live without the penalty of distance because of the availability of telecommunications. The extension of highways and high-speed internet into rural areas reduces the penalty of distance and does serve along with other factors to level the playing field, allowing rural communities to compete with urban areas more effectively. To illustrate this shift from the old rural environment

to the new one I have developed table 2.1 which has been adapted from Freshwater (2004, 37) to summarize the changes.

Table 2.1 The Old and New Rural Environment

The Old Rural Environment	The New Rural Environment
Place specific natural resources endowments are important in the local and global economy and dictate economic function – arable land, mineral deposits, etc...	Place specific natural resource endowments are not very important to the global economy, while knowledge and skills are the main determinants of success.
Transport costs are high, decreasing the size of markets and limiting trade.	Transport costs are low, allowing a single plant to serve continental or global markets and expanding trade.
Capital markets are segmented making rural places reliant upon their internal pool of capital.	Capital markets are considerably less segmented so rural areas have to compete within a global pool of capital.
Communication is expensive and relatively slow, limiting coordination.	Communications is cheap and fast, making coordination easy.
Rural areas within a nation compete with each other.	Rural areas within a nation compete amongst each other and with rural areas in other developed nations and the less developed world.

(Freshwater, 2004, 37)

Building on the strength of agriculture and pristine environments many rural communities are promoting development through agritourism. Writing about the development of Niagara's wine industry in *Agritourism Developments in the Rural-Urban Fringe* Gayler (2003) explains that despite its slow start and low priority in global wine making "more new grape acreage was recently planted in southern Australia in one year (15,000 acres) than the total acreage in quality grapes in Niagara, (Gayler, 2003, 183) Ontario's wine industry has been expanding recently. Gayler attributes the success of agritourism to a number of factors including the boosterism of the Ontario government and the rising wine quality coming out of the Niagara Region. Two other factors are important not only in Niagara but in many rural communities; the

first is the realization that unique products for niche markets can be more profitable than going head to head with the industry leaders. “A particular success story has been the introduction of ice wines in Niagara, where grapes are harvested as late as December when frozen and at a critical point in terms of sugar level. The resulting syrupy-sweet concoction is perhaps an acquired taste, but its popularity in certain foreign markets, coupled with the very limited crop available, has resulted in high prices being realized” (Gayler, 2003, 184). The second is that, as we have seen, catering to the creative class can bring about economic development. In Niagara and other rural areas this comes in the form of attracting creative class members for tourism primarily and then yoking their consumption to generate spin off revenue for the community.

Agritourism in the Niagara region is a good example of this as cultured middle class tourists from Toronto and the ‘Golden Horseshoe’ venture into the urban-rural fringe to consume the offerings of rural communities. In this case they may visit a vineyard, stay for lunch or dinner, and taste and purchase some wines. This is the primary focus of the visit, but these people will probably engage in other spending activities such as eating at country restaurants, visiting arts and crafts oriented shops and perhaps even staying for a few nights at a bed and breakfast. Gayler traces this interwoven hospitality industry that forms around the initial draw of the wine tours and vineyards. “Three (wineries) now have superior dining facilities with prices clearly aimed at the tourist rather than the local market...(promotion of the industry also) include various wine-related specialties (such as barrel-making, labeling, ageing of wines, and making of ice wines and ports), music (Jazz, Classical, Creole, and Rock concerts), plays (Shakespeare in the vineyard attracts audiences of over a thousand), art exhibits, antique and sports car shows, recreation (such as hiking, cycling, horseback riding, and golf), haute cuisine, wine-food pairings (for example, wine and cheddar cheeses), ethnic foods and customs

(reflecting many vintners coming from Europe), and Canadian and American historical events. Wineries are open year-round, reflecting as much a manufacturing and distribution centre as a tourist and retail destination, and many of the summer events now take place at other times of the year” (Gayler, 2003, 186).

In a chapter about creating competitive advantage in peripheral rural areas Dawe (2004) uses examples from the Orkney Islands in Scotland to tackle the question of why some rural places have been more successful than others at competing in the global economy. Dawe explains that “despite the familiar chant that place has become irrelevant in the information society or the new knowledge-based economy, evidence from most quarters suggests that physical location, or place, is, in fact, of extreme importance in determining economic or social outcomes” (Dawe, 2004, 232). Subsequently, it is argued that successful rural areas are the ones that identify unique or attractive place-based elements in their community and market and harness those elements. Dawe’s example of the Orkney Islands of Scotland is a great illustration of how tourism can be successful in rural areas. In 1998, the Orkney Tourist Board, along with the Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Enterprise, produced a common tourism strategy. Its mission statement is “[t]o establish and develop Orkney as a high quality tourism destination, by building on its history, culture, environment and the hospitality of its people”. In the strategy, the potential of 'Orkney as a brand' is identified, similar to the foci of the Orkney Quality Food and Drink Group and the craft sector. This would have the potential of raising awareness of Orkney and its high quality products and services and, in turn, its brand values (Dawe, 2004, 239).

Some of the specific facets of the Orkney strategy are important to examine as similar marketing schemes present in Prince Edward County will be outlined and analyzed in chapter 4.

‘Taste of Orkney’ is a promotional slogan that tries to raise the profile and increase the consumption of local produce within Orkney itself (Dawe, 2004, 236). It was initially run as a pilot project but has run as an annual event since 1996 and promotes visiting local restaurants, hotels and shops. In addition, an ‘Orkney Craft Trail’ was established to help familiarize tourists and local residents with the wide range of products made locally. A brochure featuring local artists and craftspeople was produced along with maps and corresponding local signposting. “This leads visitors to the studios and workshops around the main island and, in addition to boosting sales, offers an opportunity to see how local crafts are produced, meet the craftspeople, and learn how the crafts are reflections of the islands' history, culture, and/or beauty.” (Dawe, 2004, 236).

Others writing about rural tourism such as Hopkins (1998) and Kneafsey (2003) show how additional elements of the countryside can be commodified and sold to tourists. Hopkins elucidates that because of the relative ease of day or overnight trips into the adjacent countryside, the demand for leisure and tourist consumption by urbanites or ‘place consumers’ has increased and become a vital part of the survival strategies of rural communities (Hopkins, 1998, 66-67). “Post-industrial restructuring has compelled others to exploit and promote local tourist attractions, especially natural amenities, in an attempt to minimize, halt or reverse economic decline induced by collapse or contraction in more conventional, manufacture-based sectors” (Hopkins, 1998, 66).

Kneafsey (2003, 158) explains how heritage can be commodified as ‘preindustrial landscapes’ that offer the promise of retreating back to a simpler time with a slower pace of life. This retreat is very attractive to middle class tourists who struggle to keep up in today’s fast paced world and provides one more reason why rural communities can be successful in attracting

tourists and generating synergies and spin-off revenues for complementary industries. Attracting tourists with images of the rural idyll and cultural industries is a direct economic base which is less complicated than Florida's approach because it does not create new industries or attempt to attract permanent residents.

2.9 Conflict in the Countryside: The Danger of Over-Commodification

The literature offers several warnings against the over commodification of rural resources for the sake of tourism and economic development. Hopkins cautions that “the rural as a pastoral retreat from the urban and everyday rings hollow when congested roads, parking problems, line-ups, entrance fees, environmental degradation and blatant commercialism persist” (Hopkins, 1998, 77). Moreover, the danger of a rapid influx of new and part time residents is that it unravels the ‘knitted warmth’ and social cohesiveness of rural communities which according to Dayton-Johnson (2004) threatens the economic competitiveness of Canadian communities. This unraveling also comes at the expense of successful tourism because “the ideal community, where friendship, belonging and family values prevail, wanes with the realization that many of the people whom tourists observe and engage are, like themselves, transients from other places. The tourists’ countryside is a community of strangers where everyone is *not* welcome: one needs money and time to participate, thus excluding some classes” (Hopkins, 1998, 77).

2.10 A Rural Creative Class?

The diversity and range of amenities and offerings from the environment, culture, the arts, recreation, heritage and a slower pace of life have been credited with the ability to attract tourists, new residents and retirees to rural communities. It is important, however, to recognize

the difference between the target groups that urban and rural areas market to and try to attract, and the degrees of economic development different strategies attempt to generate. We have seen that the creative argument for development calls for cities to cater aggressively to the creative class and specifically, the young productive knowledge workers to develop economically. Many rural communities realize that they cannot offer employment opportunities in the high-tech sector or provide the funky street culture that appeal to young creatives and have subsequently adapted these urban strategies to exploit the assets and amenities which are present in rural areas in an effort to attract middle aged and retired members of the creative class to visit, relocate and ultimately consume in their communities.

Although Florida's description of educated and young knowledge workers enjoying unique cultural experiences and driving high-tech economic production in 'urban' areas is the most articulated and recognized example of the creative class, there is a distinctive 'rural' creative class developing as well. The rural creative class is made up of older and more established individuals who would rather enjoy a creative lifestyle than drive the new economy. These middle aged and retired individuals have higher levels of disposable income and are more interested in consumption than production. Rural settings, therefore, are ideally suited for this creative lifestyle because they offer a slower pace of life, natural landscapes, and cultural amenities and offerings such as wineries and fine arts which cater to the older members of the creative class. One of the major research goals of this thesis is to determine whether or not there is a 'rural' creative class which is distinctive from Florida's 'urban' creative class, and if so to examine the economic and social differences between the two groups and the development strategies being used in urban and rural areas which are predicated on attracting its members. Establishing the existence of a 'rural' creative class and understanding the fundamental

differences between Florida's 'urban' counterparts is valuable given that research on such topics in the Canadian hinterland has largely been overshadowed by work on Canada's exploding metropolises.

For everything that is known about the struggles in rural communities, there is a need to learn more about how and why some rural communities are reversing their declining fortunes and specifically how the culturally driven strategies for economic development that are being promoted for use in urban areas can be tailored and adapted for successful use in rural communities. "Different rural communities in Canada have had relative success in development. Some communities have experienced growth, others decline. Some have rebounded from the loss of major employers, while others have not. What differentiates these communities? Are there particular characteristics which might suggest a greater likelihood of successful development" (Bruce and Halseth, 2004, 196)?

To further justify the need for this research, the OECD definition of rural communities "captures approximately 38% or 10.8 million people" (du Plessis and Beshiri, et al. 2004, 61). While this is acknowledged to be on the high end of the spectrum even a slightly lower percentage still represents a sizable portion of the Canadian population, certainly not an insignificant group that should be left underrepresented by academics and policy makers.

Chapter 3: Research Design

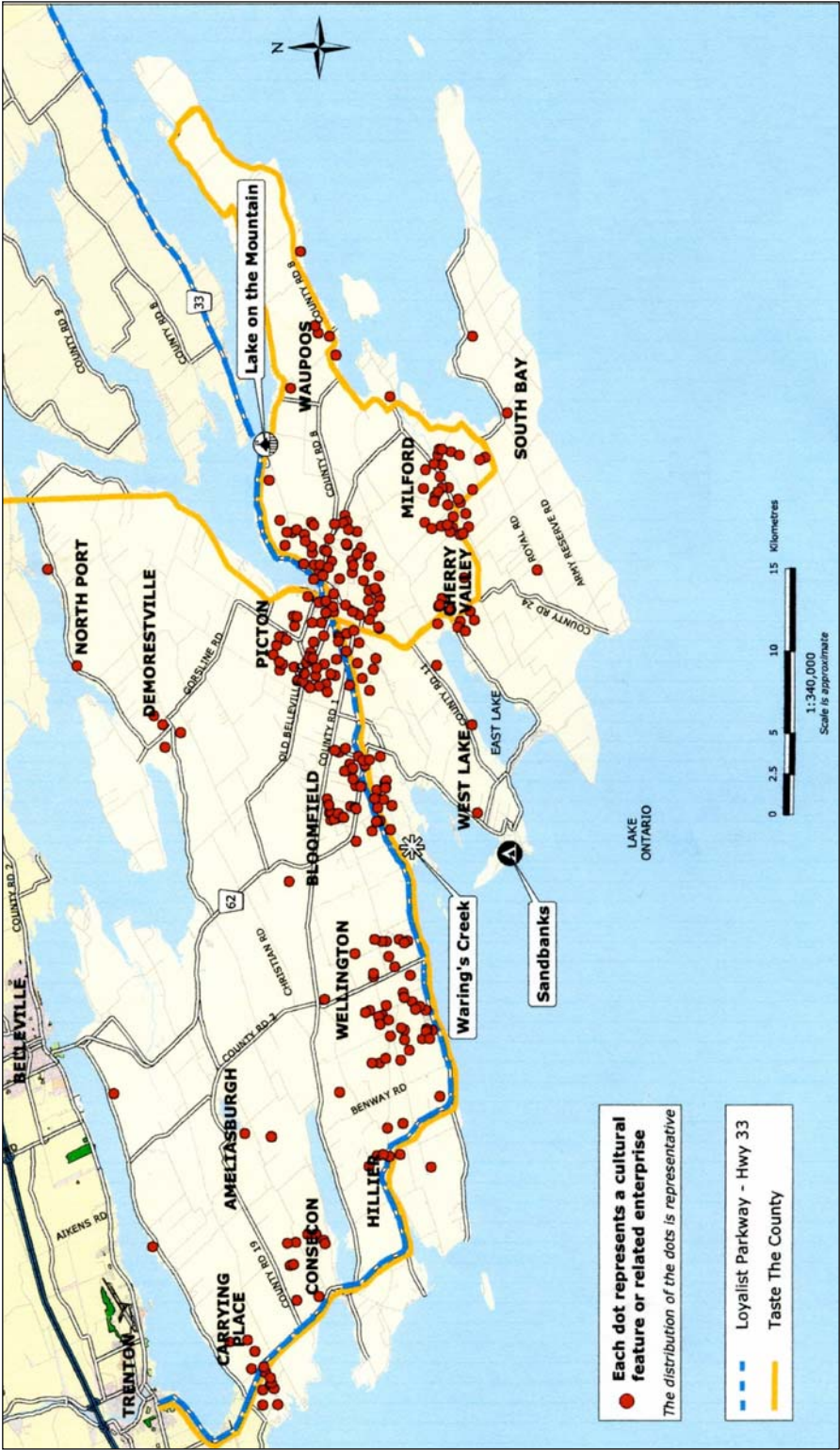
3.1 Prince Edward County, Ontario: An introduction

This chapter begins by introducing Prince Edward County (PEC), the field study site where the research was conducted, and then outlines the methods of data collection that were used during the field work in PEC. Figure 3.1 which has been adapted from a map originally produced by The Corporate Research Group shows Prince Edward County's geographical layout, including its extensive coastline and main towns and villages. Figure 3.1 also indicates the location of the County's more than three-hundred cultural facilities and activities which will be reviewed in greater detail in chapter 4.

Picton is the main administrative center, main town and the target of many cultural policies, but other communities within the County including Wellington, Bloomfield, Cherry Valley, Waupoos and Milford were visited during the field work. A brief historical review of the County paints the picture of a long established proud loyalist community with a history of boom and bust economic cycles. The economy, which has always been based around resource extraction like logging and agriculture and related manufacturing like mills, is now facing some serious threats. Agricultural restructuring has hit the County hard as many of the family farms have been amalgamated leaving unemployment and a lack of opportunities for the County's youth. This has resulted in an outflow of young people from the County, and until recently when new residents and retirees from urban centers such as Toronto bolstered the population, a dwindling tax base. The outflow of people has also resulted in the loss of services like schools and medical clinics.

Lacking a well developed manufacturing sector, the recent struggles in the County cannot be classified as post-industrial decline but rather due to out-migration caused by the restructuring of the agricultural sector. The County is currently attempting to leap-frog into the information economy while rejuvenating its community with a hybrid or adapted form of the economic development strategies being promoted for use in many cities. The County is selling itself as a rural haven within two hours of Toronto, a place with quality of life amenities like cultural facilities, a long and storied past, little traffic being a peninsula, and a beautiful rural environment that is the perfect place to visit, or relocate to permanently. In many communities the existence of telecommunications and good highway access has reduced the penalty of distance sufficiently to allow the migration of professional urbanites into rural areas. The County promotes itself as a rural community which is well positioned to welcome urban professionals and new technology based businesses. The County boasts newly installed High Speed internet access and good highway connections to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. The commodification of the County's amenities and resources along with the aggressive marketing to a middle age and retired creative class of urban dwellers has brought about many positive developments such as a boom in cultural, and eco-tourism, a population rebound and a renewed sense of confidence within the community.

Figure 3.1 Prince Edward County, Ontario



This cultural renaissance had also caused some negative impacts such as the encroachment of recent development on the environment, the intensification of a service sector which provides only seasonal and low paying jobs, and social and economic conflicts within the County between long-time and incoming residents and tourists. The positive and negative impacts of these economic and social developments in the County will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5 but the next section will present the goals of the research project and the methods that were used to conduct the fieldwork in Prince Edward County.

3.2 Research Design

As the literature review in Chapter 2 points out, there is a need to examine the applicability and effectiveness of culturally driven strategies for economic development and social restructuring intended for use in cities that are now being employed in rural communities such as PEC. The goal of this research is, therefore, to investigate this underrepresented area of study in a rural context while generating problems and questions for further research. To accomplish this while teasing out the salient themes, patterns and processes currently at work in PEC, I have used a mixed-methods research design.

This section will outline the methods of data collection that were used to gather the empirical data for this research project. The four sources of data are; an analysis of official PEC reports; interviews with key informants in PEC; a survey of the County's popular press including local newspapers and columns written by Janet Davies about economic development in the County; and a survey of Express Magazine which is a local publication about the arts and culture in the County. The collection methods will be described in successive subsections.

3.2.1 Official PEC Reports

Three official reports produced by or for PEC and preliminary results of an upcoming Cultural Plan were analyzed for this research project. The content analysis of the reports listed in table 3.1 was useful in understanding the vision of the County held and promoted by planners, administrators and councilors.

Table 3.1 Plans and Reports

Plan Name	Creator	Date Published
Economics of Agriculture	Walton and Hunter Planning Associates	September 2001
PEC Official Plan	PEC planning dept	September 2004
Market readiness Plan	WCM Consulting group	September 2004
Culture Plan	Euclid	Summer 2005

Analyzing these reports also allowed for triangulation between the data collected from interviews and the popular press which will be described later.

3.2.2 Qualitative Interviews

Given the exploratory nature of this research topic the use of qualitative interviews was appropriate as they can obtain large amounts of expansive and contextual data quickly. Engaging in face-to-face encounters with informants allowed me to obtain data on nonverbal behavior and communication including the use of facial expressions and hand gestures which I found useful in determining the respondent's opinions and views towards certain issues. This technique also facilitated the discovery of nuances in the local culture that I could not acquire from the analysis of reports and other written documents. Although a major limitation of qualitative interviews is the dependence on the honesty and cooperation of the respondents, the ability to triangulate and compare the results against other sources of data mitigates this drawback.

The literature review of cultural strategies for economic development and social restructuring presented in chapter 2 suggests that modern economic development strategies rely on attracting people rather than firms. This further justifies the use of qualitative interviews which allowed participants to express their opinions and feelings about policies, amenities and life-style choices. The literature review also helped to determine the nature of certain questions regarding the County's new wave of economic development and the difference between living in urban and rural settings for example.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nineteen members of the PEC community. The sampling strategy for the interviews had two components; an initial list of possible participants, and a provision in my questionnaire to identify additional participants by snowballing. During my preliminary research on PEC I targeted about five individuals for my first round of interviews in the County. These people were involved in some of the cultural industries which I wanted to learn more about. As part of my questionnaire I asked each respondent to provide the names of three other individuals who I could contact for additional interviews. From a list of those names I selected individuals who, by their position in or knowledge of the County, were deemed to be valuable participants in the research. Ultimately, participants were chosen because they had knowledge about a range of economic, social and political issues in the County. Each informant was asked to provide general opinions about the County which could be compared with the responses of others and information about a different industry; what it is like being an artist or business owner in the County for example. Although confidentiality and anonymity has been conferred on these participants, the roles within the community that these individuals play justifies their inclusion in the research. Table 3.2 is a list which shows the positionality of some of the respondents in the County.

Table 3.2 Positionality of Research Respondents

Position held in the County	Number
Artists involved with various cultural activities	4
People who own or operate cultural industries	5
People who own or operate restaurants	4
People who own or operate businesses	13
People who own or operate hospitality venues	3
People who work in the service sector	2
People involved with the operation of the Regent Theatre	8
Municipal employees	2
New residents	6
Long-time residents	7
Retirees	2

* some respondents fit into more than one category

The interviews themselves varied in duration and focus. I employed a semi-structured approach to each interview consisting of a structured section that focused on gathering data about the respondents that could be compared with the responses of others and a second conversation style component which allowed me as the facilitator of the interview to ask the respondents to clarify or elaborate on certain themes or to be directed into interesting or relevant avenues of discussion through the use of prompts and sub-questions. Appendix (A) contains the questionnaire instrument that was used for the majority of the interviews; exceptions and alterations were made for respondents who held unique positions within the community.

In addition to these interviews, I attended two ‘town hall’ meetings, one regarding the closure of the Regent Theatre, and the other regarding a cultural development plan that is being written by consultants for PEC. Both meetings were over two hours in length and afforded me the opportunity to witness and document the ideas and agendas of various groups within the County, and develop contacts in the County.

3.2.3 The Popular Press

To supplement the data collected from the aforementioned methods I conducted a survey of the popular press in PEC from June 27th 2003 to November 3rd 2004. I collected and analyzed over seventy articles from the County's three main newspapers: The Picton Gazette, The County Gazette and The County Weekly News. This survey of articles helped me to immerse myself as an outsider in the collective culture of the County and was very helpful in documenting the major events, crises and social conflicts which occurred during that time frame. This data was also easy to manipulate and categorize for the purposes of comparison and to tease out important themes and trends in the community.

Within the popular press a specific column about economic development in the County written by a local resident, Janet Davies, was collected and analyzed. These articles highlight the County's interesting and successful businesses and, therefore, aided in my analysis of the County's economic base which is described in chapter 4.

3.2.4 Express Magazine

Express magazine is a publication written and produced by residents in PEC. The magazine provides a local perspective and voice for the arts, entertainment and life in the County and as such proved to be a great source of local opinions and information about the arts and cultural activities and issues in the County. I surveyed over fifty articles which were published from September 2003 to September 2004 and the sampling of this one year span allowed me to identify trends in the day-to-day life of the County and was particularly important to my understanding of the on going situation at the Regent Theatre which will be discussed in chapter 5.

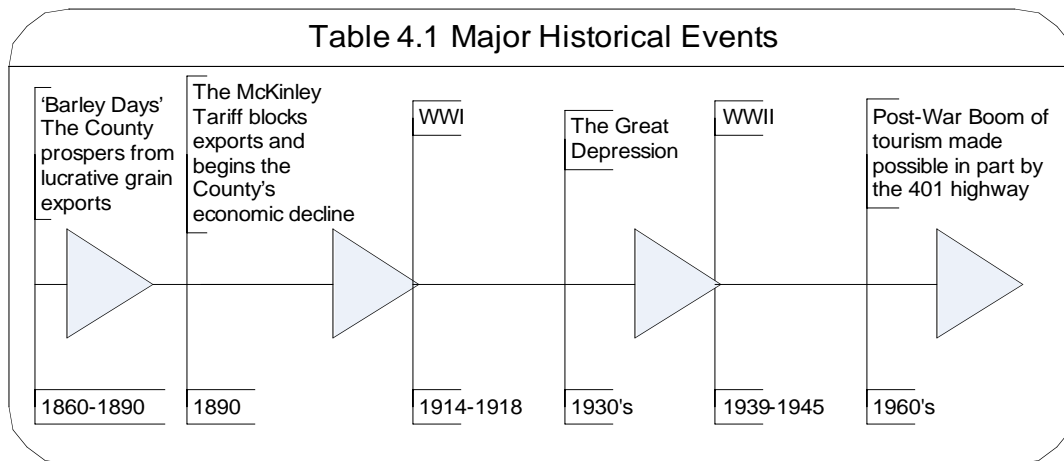
Chapter 4: Revisioning the Economic Base: The New Economy

4.1 Introduction

Healthy communities have sustainable economic bases and stable demographics. This chapter will review Prince Edward County's economy from its beginning as a booming agricultural hinterland to its current status as a magnet for artists, tourists and urban migrants seeking to escape the city in search of a better quality or quieter life, and new opportunities. The chapter begins with a brief economic history of the County, covering the period between 1860 and 1965. This is followed by an analysis of the County's current economic activities and development path. Finally, through an analysis of the data collected from my fieldwork, the County's economic base will be compared with the version outlined on the County's economic development website (www.thecounty.ca/cips/overview). In this chapter I include quotations from some of the interviewees. (These names are fictitious).

4.2 The Old Economic Base

Prince Edward County has had a long history of agricultural booms and busts that caused the County's economic fortunes and population to fluctuate. Table 4.1 shows a timeline which can be used to visualize the major events in the County's early economic and social history.



The historical facts and accounts provided in this section have been drawn from four main sources which document historical periods in the County; The County's website, *The Historical Atlas of Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Ontario Illustrated* by H. Belden & Co. (1878), *The County* by R. and J. Lunn (1967) and *The Settler's Dream: A Pictorial History of the Older Buildings of Prince Edward County* by T. Cruickshank and P. J. Stokes (1984).

In the 19th century the County was a major “producer of top quality barley to feed the insatiable North American brewing industry” (www.thecounty.ca/cips/agricultureb). Historians refer to the period between 1860 and 1890 as the ‘Barley Days’, since this was a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity in the County. “These were the years when barley meant money and money meant spacious farm houses, fine furniture, machinery for cultivating the land, sleek horses, and fat dairy herds. Barley also meant ships – scores of them, large and small – to carry the grain to market. Barley Days were the only days of real prosperity in the county: the golden days, when pioneer fathers, who had never been able to grow a surplus of anything, watched their sons and grandsons sell crops for cash in quantities they’d never dreamed of.” (R. and J. Lunn, 1967, 303). Figure 4.1 illustrates the County's waterside nature.

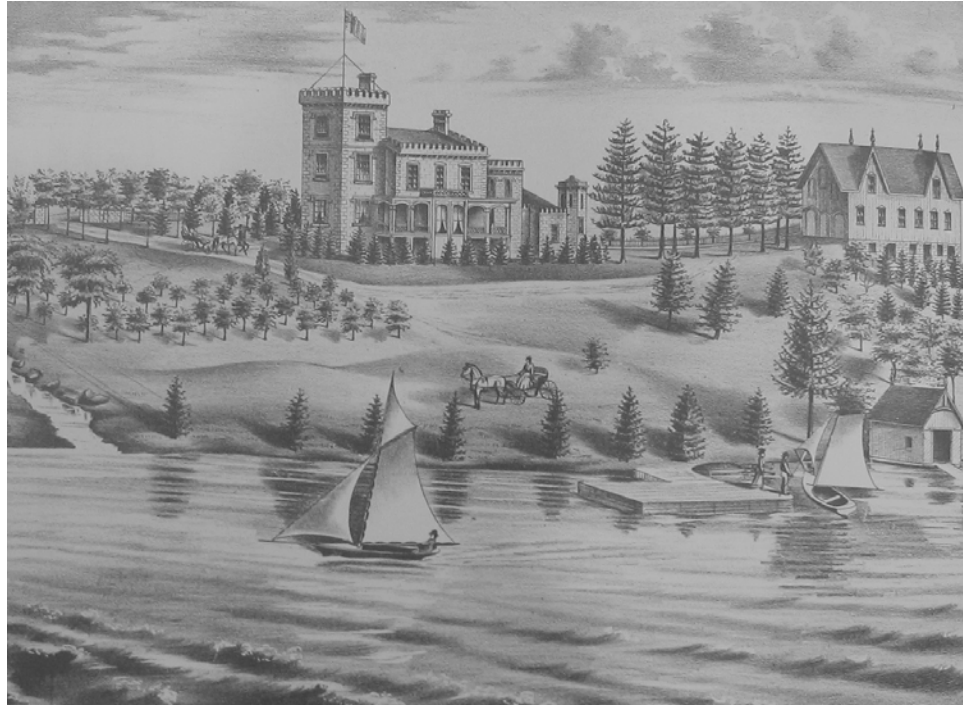


Figure 4.1 (H. Belden & Co. 1878, 16)

As a producer of barley and hops the County was well positioned to export grain via ships to American breweries in New York State. During the U.S. Civil War the County also helped to quench the intense demand for wheat. The grain exporting economy also created a vibrant ship building and shipping industry: “ships were needed to transport the enormous quantities of grain being produced in the county, and the county woodlots and boat yards provided the ships. Prince Edward County trade was on the water from the beginning and ships and water transport were a part of the way of life of the first settlers.” (R. and J. Lunn, 1967, 303).

Unfortunately, the barley exports which also fuelled a robust shipbuilding industry came crashing down in 1890 when the United States placed tariffs on the County’s most profitable export.

“Barley Days couldn’t last forever. Like any economy based on commodities which depended on foreign markets, barley was always a risk. American farmers were not content to see Canadian barley competing with theirs. In addition, the centre of the brewing industry had shifted from New York State into the Middle West, Chicago and the new and growing city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Western barley was easier for western brewers to buy and the days of Prince Edward barley (regardless of its quality) were numbered. By 1890, opposition from U.S. growers induced William McKinley, then chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, to frame and push through the House the protective tariff act (the McKinley Tariff) of 1890 which gave U.S. farmers protection from a broad range of imported commodities. Overnight, the price of barley fell in Prince Edward: ‘The night the tariff changed, barley dropped from a dollar to 70 cents a bushel. Two schooners were waiting to load at Big Island and before we got them loaded the price dropped below 50 cents a bushel. Wheat went to one cent a pound.’ Barley Days were over” (R. and J. Lunn, 1967, 345).

When the lucrative practice of exporting grain to the U.S. market collapsed the County slipped into economic decline as evidenced by the decline of the County’s population between 1881 and 1931. “Population growth ceased, declined, in fact: the 1881 census 21,044; 1891, 18,889; 1901, 17,865; 1911, 17,150; 1921, 16,806; 1931, 16,593 (R. and J. Lunn, 1967, 402).

Another agricultural boom in the County involved the industrial innovations of the late 1800’s used to produce cheese. After the ‘barley days,’ entrepreneurial County farmers explored different opportunities including more dairy farming. Their success was such that at its peak the dairy industry supported 20 cheese factories. That boom eventually fizzled as well and the County has been left with one remaining yet productive cheese factory. The Black River Cheese factory which was established in 1901 has survived over 100 years and now also draws visitors interested in heritage tourism. After its 100 year anniversary in June of 2001 it was completely destroyed in a fire in October of 2001 (www.pec.on.ca/blackrivercheese/about). With community support, however, it was rebuilt and remains a symbol of the County’s agricultural past.

For much of the 20th century, the County’s unique lime-rich soils and microclimates produced fruits and vegetables for the surrounding regions, and through the development of canning factories the rest of Canada. The County became at one time Canada’s second largest

canning region, supplying at its peak “43% of Canada's canned tomatoes and other produce,” and was named “Canada's Garden County” (www.thecounty.ca/cips/agricultureb).

During the ‘Barley Days’ the County’s industrialists pushed for and secured a railway connection to Toronto and Montreal in 1879. Although there was no real need for a railway given the size of the County and easy waterway access, the railway did serve to open the County to visitors from Toronto, for example, and helped establish the tourism industry. The ‘Lakeshore Lodge’ located right on the water with a great view of what is today the Sandbanks was one of the County’s first resorts which catered to wealthy visitors. Figure 4.2 shows the main building as photographed in 1908.

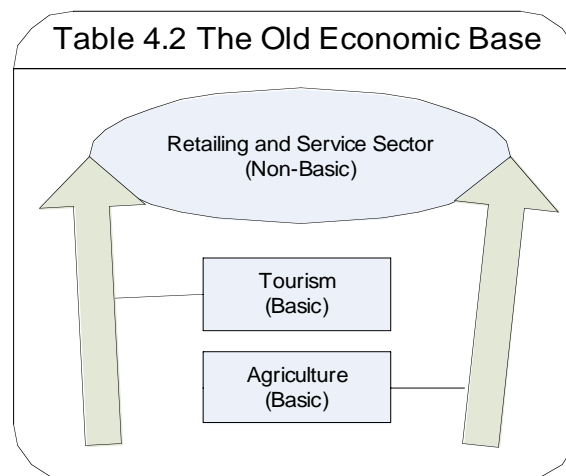


Figure 4.2 Source: Cruickshank and Stokes, 1984, 130

Two world wars and the Great Depression served to stall the development of the County but in the 1960’s Ontario’s Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, today’s Highway 401, make the County’s countryside much more accessible to visitors from cities, particularly Toronto and to a lesser extent Ottawa. This new access coupled with the post-war boom reinvigorated the

County's fledgling tourist industry which was originally developed on the railway access. Most tourists during this period came in the summer to fish and enjoy the Sandbanks Provincial Park; these visitors set up camps or stayed at cottages, cabins, and resorts.

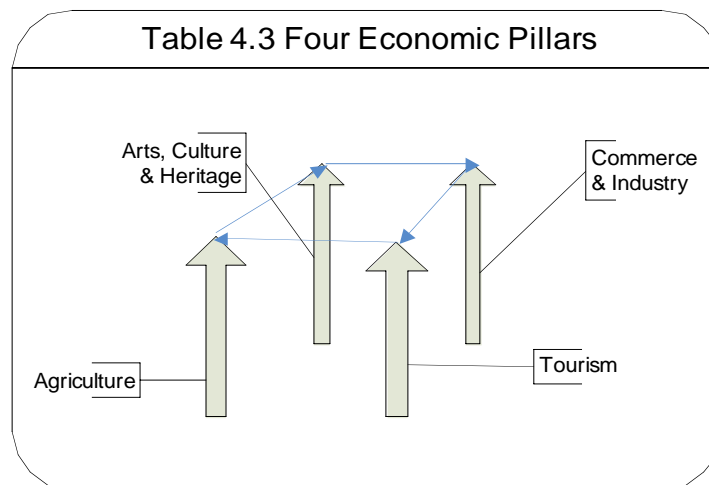
There was also a small retail and service sector which served the farmers, factory workers, local residents and tourists. In terms of basic and non-basic industries agriculture, agricultural-based manufacturing and tourism provided money from outside the County, and the retailing sector provided the spin-off or non-basic employment servicing local needs. The County's old economic base looked like a mushroom with agriculture, tourism, and some industry holding up a retail and service sector. It is important to note that there was limited interaction between the economic sectors. Table 4.2 presents a simplified version of the County's traditional economic base.



4.3 The New Economic Base

According to documents published by the Prince Edward County Economic Development office (www.thecounty.ca/cips/overview) there are now four economic pillars which support the

County's economy; Commerce and Industry, Tourism, Arts, Culture and Heritage, and Agriculture. (Table 4.3 shows this four pillar model). Three of the pillars appear to be holdovers from the traditional economic base described previously. In this section I will show that significant changes have occurred in the agricultural and tourism sectors in the last 20 years.



In addition to the changing nature of the sectors themselves, the increased interconnectedness of the new economic base will be examined and compared to the traditional model and to the four pillar model proposed recently by the economic development office of Prince Edward County in 2004. To do this, each one of the four pillars or sectors will first be presented with reference to the changes uncovered during my fieldwork, and then the linkages between each sector will be described in more detail.

4.3.1 Commerce and Industry

Commerce and Industry has never been strong in the County and while it is listed as a pillar its inclusion should not signify equal importance to the other three. I make this statement after interviewing some government employees, people formerly employed in the sector, and

long-time residents of the County. There are three major industrial employers in the County, the Essroc Cement Plant in Picton, Midtown Meats in Wellington and the Highline mushroom farm in Wellington. The cement plant employs 160 people according to their website and has been a steady fixture in the County's economy. The stability of Midtown Meats as a long term employer in the County has come into question after a heated 11 week strike in the summer of 2004 which decreased the number of jobs from 240 workers in 2003 to 210 in 2004.

Although I could not get employment figures on the mushroom farm in Wellington one former employee whom I interviewed told me that the low wages, seasonal employment and demanding physical requirements of the job makes employment there less than desirable.

The Canadian Census indicates that the County's total workforce in 2001 was 11,725 of which 1,220 worked in primary industries and 755 worked in manufacturing which together constituted 16.8% of the County's total employment for that year. Industry, therefore, represents a smaller proportion of the County's economic base than in Canada as a whole although recent municipal plans place emphasis on developing industry. It is also important to note that farming in PEC represents 11% of the County's economy which is much higher than Canada's national average of 3% and indicates the significance of agriculture in the County. The fact that footloose factories could leave in 10 years has led some local residents I spoke with to think the Council is putting too much emphasis on industry.

Mrs. X commented:

"I think the council itself has to change their attitude, the council wants industry to come to the County, what industry is going to come here? Why would it come here? Five years ago they took the rail lines out; there is no communication, so how are we going to get the product out? When you can move into a place like Mississauga or Pickering where there's good access and infrastructure, why would you want to come to a rural area? The council thinks there's going to be a car plant or something here and it's just not going to happen. The only industries we have are the cement plant, the mushroom plant

and Midtown Meats, which has been crippled and is probably going now. They have to change their vision.”

My research clearly indicates that industry should not be considered an equal pillar in the County’s economy and that the sector itself is in a state of flux as traditional manufacturing employment is being replaced by smaller, more flexible businesses in the Canadian economy as a whole. Moreover, the opinions of residents about the current state of the sector differ significantly from those in decision making positions in the County and published plans and reports.

4.3.2 Arts, Culture and Heritage

In an effort to improve tourism and attract new residents the County is marketing itself as an arts and cultural destination which offers quality of life amenities. Although artists have migrated to the County throughout its history there has been a recent boom of cultural activity which is reshaping the County’s tourism and hospitality sectors as well as its economic and social demography.

The County boasts over 300 artists and many more creative individuals involved in cultural activities ranging from pottery and painting to glass blowing and quilting. Of these 300 practicing artists roughly 10% have commercial outlets in the form of studios and galleries, which are listed on Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Cultural Activities in the County (www.pec.on.ca/other/business)

Activity	Number
Fine Art	6
Painting	4
Pewter Art	1
Music Composition	2
Crafts	5
Glass Blowing	4
Hand Crafted wood furnishings	1
Quilting	4
Hand Painted Silks	1
Pottery	5
Photography	2

Table 4.4 depicts the diversity of cultural activities but only shows establishments and studios and, consequently, does not represent artists working from home without a formal studio or artists who show their art in cooperative galleries. This clustering of individual artists has led to the creation of arts groups like the Prince Edward County Arts Council. These bodies support the arts, provide assistance to artists and help to organize larger and collaborative events to celebrate the skill and diversity of artists in the County. The County's Studio Tour, for example has been running for eleven years and now attracts more than 3,000 visitors for the last weekend in September. This represents a huge boost to the hospitality and retail economy during the shoulder season. The Jazz Festival is another large event that packs the main town of Picton for five nights in late August with a variety of musical entertainment. The summer 2004 edition featured over twenty jazz shows. These large shows generate spin-off business for retailing, hospitality services and other artists and this synergy is being perpetuated as more artists move in and more events are scheduled.

In addition to artists, the County has promoted its own history and heritage to attract a growing number of visitors interested in heritage tourism. Just as Niagara-on-the-lake sells itself as a 'quaint township,' the County showcases its loyalist past, old houses, historic buildings and

storied agricultural roots. One County marketer told me that the County is really trying to integrate the heritage element into its promotion strategy, “we’ve got this fabulous 200 plus years of heritage that I think is totally undervalued as an economic resource, so we need to showcase this amenity.” The County does this with its museums as well as tours of historic houses and farms. The County’s main streets are full of commemorative historical plaques describing the creation of hotels, buildings, shops and so on. The Picton Gazette, located on Main Street Picton, for example, is advertised as Canada’s oldest community newspaper (est. 1830). The County’s main highway route is called the Loyalist Parkway, and every visitor entering one of the towns in the County is greeted with colorful signage illustrating the age of the towns and their slogans. Picton (1837) is called “A Proud Loyalist Town” and Wellington (1863) is “Home of the Dukes.” Figures 4.3 and 4.4 illustrate the ways in which the County’s agricultural roots and role as a loyalist sanctuary are reinforced and commodified through constructed imagery.



Figure 4.3 (B. Hracs 2004)



Figure 4.4 Bloomfield (B. Hracs 2004)

Janet Davies' columns which are featured in the Picton Gazette and on the County's economic development website (www.thecounty.ca/cips/success) are a useful source of information about the businesses and economic activities in the County. One article entitled *1956 Mustang draws the crowds* found on the website is a great example of a business that fuses heritage, nostalgia, technology and fun together to be successful. The Mustang is a drive-in movie theater that was built in 1956, today is it restored and running successfully. During the summer tourist months the theatre packs in over four-hundred cars for multiple movie showings every night. The attractiveness of the theatre speaks to the demands of County locals and tourists alike. For baby-boomers and retirees going to a classic yet restored drive-in movie theater from

the 1950's brings back all kinds of memories and the elements of heritage and nostalgia add to the popularity of this activity. For local and visiting families the theater is an exciting and safe experience as well.

“Paul and Nancy made the Mustang Drive-in a safe and fun evening for customers of all ages. And for young families it's a fantastic deal, too. One of the enduring appeals of drive-in theatres is taking the children in their PJs, particularly when under-sixes get in free!”

For tourists the Mustang drive-in Theater is another unique offering that adds to the County's attractiveness as a summer tourist destination.

“Sean and Sarah Williams, young professionals from Toronto on a weekend break raved about the experience. “It was just fabulous, it was so much fun, it had the feel of a concert or something. Everybody gets into it. And the movie was good too!” Tourists and residents alike know there are many things that make Prince Edward County unique. The Mustang Drive-In is definitely one of them.”

The County's most symbolic example of art, culture and heritage is the Regent Theatre. According to a member of the Regent Theatre board the Regent was originally opened in 1919 by George Cook. By 1921, however, the theatre was too small for the community and in 1922 Cook opened a rebuilt version that could accommodate eleven-hundred, making the Regent equal size to that of The Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto. Interestingly, the County's population in 1922 was roughly thirty-five-hundred people and the Regent was even big enough to house international productions. “When you look through the archives, there is a playbill from the Boston Opera Company, who played here in 1928, on their Canadian tour, which included Hamilton, Toronto, Picton, Ottawa and Montréal.” Despite the Regent Theatre's attractiveness as a provider of live theater and film (Cinifest), and its status as the County's number one cultural amenity for the majority of people I spoke to, the Theatre faces a fiscal and administrative crisis. This crisis which was arguably the biggest story in the County during the summer of 2004 when

I conducted my fieldwork will be outline in chapter 5. Figure 4.5 shows the Regent Theatre on Main Street Picton.

4.3.3 Agriculture

Despite the agricultural sector being labeled as one of the County's four economic pillars, it is experiencing significant changes. Agriculture in the County has traditionally had boom and bust periods. Currently, the sector is in a period of flux as many family farms are closing or consolidating under pressure from corporate influences. Farmers recognize that they need better economies of scale and access to markets to compete head-to-head with better equipped and positioned regions. Therefore, the County's producers have shifted their focus to providing unique; value added goods for niche markets like local restaurants, and the tourism industry. The County for example boasts ice wine, hand made ice cream, artisan cheese and even an Ostrich Farm.



Figure 4.5 the Regent Theatre (B. Hracs 2004)

The County's agricultural sector is no longer the independent pillar which holds up the economy the way it traditionally had, since the sector has become much more integrated with the tourism, retailing and hospitality industries. The farms are a vital feature of the countryside and rural landscape and play a significant role in attracting tourists and visitors who want to 'escape the city.' Moreover, many farms or farm houses have been converted into bed and breakfasts to service the same visitors they help to attract. Farmers in this manner can sustain themselves completely or partially depending on the scale of the operation by accommodating tourists and visitors. This practice has helped to slow the rate of farm closure among unproductive farms and provides the owners with cash flow while they wait to sell their farms at higher land prices.

In addition to providing rooms for tourists and visitors, the agricultural sector produces foods for local restaurants that service visitors and in turn support and promote the local growers in a symbiotic fashion. One County restaurant owner/operator I spoke to spends many hours a week picking up products like mushrooms, produce and meat from local farms. Despite this arrangement which costs more time and money than simply being supplied from the city, the owner said that supporting the local growers and having authentic County products is a priority for their restaurant.

Another way in which agriculture, tourism and the hospitality sectors are linked is through cooking schools. There are a few cooking schools housed in old farm houses which have been converted into country inns and tourists are invited to stay at the inn, take some cooking classes and of course use local County products.

Just as the County has attracted many prominent artists who help to boost cultural tourism at least one of Toronto's best known chefs has also migrated to open a restaurant in the County. These restaurants, which have been heavily publicized in local and regional media

outlets, have sparked increased interest from locals, visitors and tourists in the hospitality sector and their use of local products has generated positive economic spin-offs for local farmers and producers. Again, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between tourism, the hospitality sector and agriculture.

The symbol of the agricultural sector's future in the County is the emerging wine making industry. In recent years the County has added cold climate grape growing techniques to the County's rich soils to develop a niche wine making industry. There are currently eight wineries in the County at various stages of development; some are fully functional while others are still waiting for their vines to mature. These wineries have provided many benefits to the County; through wine tasting they have boosted tourism, especially among older, more 'cultured' visitors, they have created jobs and helped to prop up other sections of the agricultural community. Despite the positive implications for County the wine industry has promoters and detractors and the industry as a space of contestation will be examined in more detail in chapter 5.

To further illustrate the ways in which the agricultural sector is interconnected with other economic sectors some of the County's marketing initiatives involving food and tourism will be examined. 'Maple in the County' is an agricultural event that aims to jumpstart the spring tourist season and provide economic benefits to the retailing, tourism, hospitality and agricultural sectors. According to the County's website (thecounty.ca/maple/) "Maple in the County is a new County tradition," it was created in 2002 and "won a first place award in the national Marketing Canada Awards." The event, which is held the weekend of March 19-20, is a self-guided tour of the County's "maple syrup harvest, local culture and rich history." This event drew over four-thousand people in 2003 and brings families and visitors into the County, stretching the tourist season and promoting local agriculture, culture and heritage.

Positioned in early October in an effort to further stretch the traditional summer tourist season ‘Taste! A Celebration of Regional Cuisine’ is an event that attracted over two-thousand visitors in 2004. It promotes regional cuisine in the form of foods and beverages grown and prepared in the County by local farmers, producers, wineries, chefs and restaurants.

The County’s ‘Taste Trail’ is a full time marketing initiative that promotes the agricultural, tourism and hospitality sectors. It is comprised of a brochure and road signage which allows visitors to find and experience the County’s agricultural offerings, restaurants and accommodations. To date, twenty-five establishments are participating in the initiative and participants whom I have spoken to indicated that they have experienced some increase in business from tourists with brochures and were optimistic about further benefits in the future. Figure 4.6 depicts some of the road signage which directs visitors to activities and amenities in the County.

Analysis of the agricultural sector suggests that it has significantly altered its methods of production and offerings as it has shifted from being predominantly an independent producer of goods for regional consumption, to one that produces and supports the local community and economic activities. This increased interconnectedness and integration of the economic sectors seems to be a survival strategy based on cooperation and teamwork as alone each sector is not strong enough to sustain itself but together, through common markets and cross-promotion economic stability and development is slowly occurring.



Figure 4.6 Road Signage (B. Hracs 2004)

4.3.4 (A) Tourism

According to a market readiness assessment prepared by WCM consulting Inc. in September 2004 (www.thecounty.ca/cips/resources) Prince Edward County's tourism sector has the potential to become very developed and profitable. Interestingly, the reason for the sector's potential success, its wide range of amenities and attractive qualities, is also its largest impediment to reaching that success. This section will show how the diverse offerings and intangible factors possessed by the County are contributing to the sector's development and at the same time holding it back in the form of sub-par coordination and cross-promotion.

As mentioned, the County's tourism industry started as a rural cottage retreat for people trying to escape the city. Once the 401 highway provided access to the County's remote location via Trenton and Belleville in 1961, several resorts, camp grounds and cottages were established. The main attractions were Outlet Beach Provincial Park, the County's serene environment and slower pace of life. To some extent traditional elements from this time still persist in the County,

families still come for the Sandbanks and there are over forty camping and cottage resorts and about six fishing resorts in operation (www.pec.on.ca/other/business). The County is still seen as a good place to visit for families who enjoy the outdoors but it is clear that the industry is shifting its marketing focus towards different groups. Mr. H, who is involved in marketing the County's tourist offerings confirmed the existence of this shift, and indicated that it is a policy initiative not to market to traditional visitors.

“Quite often when families are interested in coming here to the Sandbanks, they pack up their cars with their groceries, they put their gas in, they drive down, they stay in their tents and while that is great for the park, it doesn't have the same economic spin-off so we love the families coming but we're not marketing to them. It is a great experience for them down here but really outside of the Sandbanks if it rains you watch them pack up and leave, because there really isn't a lot to offer. The museums have a couple of programs, there is cycling and a Regent Theatre matinee but there is limited children's activities so our focus is basically that 35 to 65 high yield consumer with double income and no kids, by and large that is our marketing focus.”

These 35-65 year old, high yield consumer tourists are interested in a wide range of activities and amenities from bird watching and hiking to wine tasting, boutique shopping, pottery workshops, fine dining and relaxing spa treatments. To attract these people a tourism destination must cater to their interests and that is what the County is attempting to do. Several sub-sectors within the tourism industry have emerged including; heritage tourism, eco-tourism, agro and culinary tourism, retail or boutique tourism and arts and cultural tourism. There is a large degree of cross-over and integration among these sub-sectors, therefore, examining each one helps to break down a crucial part of the County's economic base and contributes to our understanding of consumer behavior among this important and economically significant group.

4.3.4 (B) Heritage Tourism

As mentioned, heritage tourism is an underdeveloped but emerging facet of the County's attractiveness. Old buildings, farm houses and historic figures are attracting increasing numbers of tourists. The Regent Theatre (1922), Picton Town Hall (1866), Crystal Palace (1890), White Chapel Methodist church (1809) and Merrill Inn (1877) are some of the County's built heritage attractions (www.pec.on.ca/pehac/historic_notes). Historically, the County was the one time home of many important figures in Canadian history including Sir John A. Macdonald. Additionally, the County experienced Iroquois settlements, the French fur trade, loyalist settlement in 1783 and Quaker meetings in Bloomfield in 1803. Alone, these heritage sites may only spark the interest of a small number of tourists, but as each successive set of amenities and offerings is piled on top of the other it becomes evident that it is the synergy between each sub-set of tourist activity that forms the base of the industry. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 2 small towns and rural communities must distinguish themselves as unique places to visit if they are to compete successfully, by slowly tapping and marketing its heritage, the County is providing additional reasons to visit or relocate while differentiating its offerings from rival communities. Florida states that young members of the creative class are attracted to music scenes, arts scenes or technology scenes. The County's elements of heritage seem to act as an attractive scene not for young members of the creative class, but for older visitors and residents who make up the 'rural' creative class which was defined in section 2.10. These individuals enjoy experiencing unique or historical buildings and locations and the County's abundant heritage offerings contribute to the County's overall attractiveness.

4.3.4 (C) Eco-Tourism

For tourists trying to ‘escape’ the city the County’s natural rural environment is an attractive destination in and of itself. The demand by urbanites for outdoor activities and rural landscapes has created the need for an eco-tourism sub-sector of the tourism industry in the County. Figure 4.7 and 4.8 show the natural beauty of the County.



Figure 4.7 (B. Hracs 2004)



Figure 4.8 (B. Hracs 2004)

The County's natural appeal combined with specific attractions like the Sandbanks Provincial Park which offers three beaches, swimming, campgrounds, hiking, fishing, sailing, water sports and cross-country skiing keeps tourists coming back for more. One resident who lives near the park told me that "17,000 people go to the Sandbanks on the August long weekend." Despite the number of younger tourists attracted to the Sandbanks (according to County marketers), the eco-tourism sub-sector is shifting towards activities that cater to older, high yield tourists.

David Foot (1996) in his popular book, Boom Bust and Echo anticipated the rise of activities like walking/hiking and bird watching based on demographics.

"It's not surprising that bird watching has become big business. It combines gentle exercise, travel, and intellectual challenge (identifying birds) with the joy of collecting: serious birders keep detailed accounts of their sightings and compete to add rare species to their records. These factors help explain why, in a projection of growth rates of outdoor activities between 1996-2011, bird watching was predicted to be the fastest-growing of all: 6% growth, compared with 3% for golf and 4.5% for fishing. Bird watching, gardening, and walking are among the few activities that people do more of as they get older. That's why Canada will have some of the world's most closely watched birds over the coming decades" (Foot, 1996, 118).

As the Canadian population ages and the popularity of such activities grow, areas suitable for such activities will have the opportunity to harness this demand. The County is perfectly positioned to tap this emerging market with its, open spaces, hiking trails and rare birds. According to the County's website (www.pec.on.ca/other/birds) the County is a "world-class birding location" with over 300 species of birds visible from Prince Edward Point which is a major staging area and flyway for migratory birds. The County has a birding festival each May which draws many tourists to spend time in the County and there is even a birding column in every edition of The Picton Gazette (the County's main newspaper).

Birding, of course, is just one illuminating example of how activities not necessarily thought of as big business in a conventional sense can attract tourists and generate positive economic spin-offs for other sectors as ageing baby-boomers and retirees have the ability to prop up the economic base with their collective spending power. Other outdoor activities like gardening and garden shows, cycling, hiking and nature tours are becoming popular as well. It is important to note that each tourist or visitor who comes for a specific activity like birding needs a place to stay, eat and will more than likely visit other attractions and purchase other goods and services.

4.3.4 (D) Agro-Tourism and Culinary Tourism

As the work of Gayler (2003) explained in chapter 2, wine and food tourism is emerging as a profitable sub-sector in some tourist industries. The County with its burgeoning wine industry, quality agricultural products and restaurants run by well known chefs from Toronto is well positioned to capitalize on this growing trend. Several residents told me that they have noticed a recent change in the restaurant offerings and that the wine industry is causing that change.

Mrs. K commented:

“Somebody said last week, we need a good Thai restaurant in Picton which I would love. I said I think that would be great, but I can't see a Thai restaurant being able to survive in Picton. Having said that, it is one of those things that is changing, with the wineries, because you're getting a whole group of different people coming down to visit the wineries that expect better restaurants, and that those restaurants are coming.”

In fact, there are over sixty restaurants in the County with different target markets and offerings. Some serve the local population while others specifically cater to the growing group of tourists and retirees who want upscale, culturally diverse, fine dining experiences which include,

exotic dishes as well as authentic County products, County wines and the menus of renowned chefs. The recent emphasis, therefore, on expanding the quality and range of the County's culinary offerings is further evidence of the existence and influence of a 'rural' creative class in the County. According to Mr. K, a restaurant owner/operator there is synergy between upscale restaurants aimed at tourists and new urbanite migrants and the County's agricultural sector and wine industry. The integration of the tourist, agricultural and hospitality sectors "is very big for us, we participated in one of the openings of a winery recently, so we did some food for their opening and we carry their products." Despite the developing nature of the County's wines, their restaurant serves and promote locals wines.

Mr. S commented:

"When I serve a County wine at the table I always make sure that we have a chat first. I explain that these are young wines that are developing, but that they need our support if they're going to continue to be here. We need to purchase them along the way I try to focus on the fact that it is a fascinating process to be a part of as it is happening, as opposed to telling them that they are going to expect a burgundy quality wine right away."

I was also surprised to learn tourists are actually more understanding about the developing quality of the County wines than the locals and that the development process is actually quite attractive to agro-tourists.

Mrs. J commented:

"A lot of people come to the County on agro-tourist trips and it is almost like reliving or being a part of Niagara during its growth periods about 20 years ago. People want to be part of the development stage, they're willing to come out as tourists to see where it's at, or to see where the benchmark is because every year the bar is going to be raised higher and higher."

Ultimately, Mr. H told me that he decided to open his restaurant in the County to some extent because of the synergy between the sectors and that the presence of a wine industry and established agro-tourism would help their business prospects. Another restaurant owner, Mrs. V,

told me that the current debate surrounding the viability of the wine industry is not a concern because the mere presence of wineries in the County symbolizes to potential tourists that the County is a good place to go for agro-tourism and the intrigue of the wine industry is sufficient to generate extra business for her establishment.

In another column by Janet Davies entitled *Something Good Growing by the Lake* (www.thecounty.ca/cips/success) the Devonshire Inn located on Wellington's waterfront is featured. The Inn which employs twenty people during the summer season has a thirty-seat restaurant and partners with local wineries to offer wine-themed tourist packages.

"We partner with places like Peddlesden Winery and Chadsey's Cairns for wine-themed packages,...Guests get a glass of wine at check-in, winery tours and special dinners paired with County wines."

This example shows how the hospitality, tourism and agricultural sectors are linked and how they can combine to generate spin-off revenues for each other.

The growth of restaurants and wineries has also benefited artists and designers. One County artist I spoke to told me that they make cards for the wineries and contribute art to the Ontario wine industry brochure. An architect told me that they have done design work on many of the new wineries and that this has become a large part of their business recently. This example of synergy in the County is different from the type of synergy which Florida attributes to the 'urban' creative class. Florida explains that young productive knowledge workers drive existing firms and create new ones through their innovation and creativity. Moreover, the productivity of the high-tech and creative industries generates this synergy with complementary sectors of the economy. In the County it is the spending power of members of the 'rural' creative class which generates spin-offs for architects, artist, contractors and service workers. This represents a fundamental difference between the 'urban' and 'rural' creative classes, one generates

development through its innovation and productivity and the other through its accumulated wealth and demand for lifestyle amenities.

Finally, culinary tourism, specifically tourists who visit the County to attend cooking schools has been shown to generate spin-offs for different sectors of the economy. This attraction ties together elements of tourism, agriculture and hospitality as the cooking or cookery schools are located in large county inns and use local County food products. The ‘rural’ creative classes’ affinity and interest for food and wine is another characteristic which differentiates them from their ‘urban’ counterparts. While Florida explains that all members of the creative class enjoy hands on recreational activities rather than passive ones the ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ groups prefer different types of participatory activities and experiences. Those in urban areas who are younger enjoy interactive street culture, for example, while those in rural areas who tend to be older enjoy cooking schools and arts workshops.

4.3.4 (E) Arts and Cultural Tourism

As Bunting and Mitchell (2001) point out, despite the increasing number of artists locating in rural areas over the last 30 years in Canada, most of the literature focuses on artists in urban settings. One of their research goals was to determine why artists are leaving cities to live and work in rural areas. When I posed this question to the artists I spoke to in the County, some of the responses supported Bunting and Mitchell (2001) whose research found that rural areas offer lower costs of living while still providing reasonable proximities to urban amenities, for example, but some of the responses I received suggest additional factors which will be outlined in this section. The appeal of rural landscapes and natural beauty is cited by Bunting and

Mitchell (2001) as a major reason why artists, especially, landscape painters and photographers, migrate to rural areas. Rural landscapes are the raw material for this artistic production.

Mr. M, a photographer commented:

“The County is really pretty and there's water all over the place, it is a photographer's dream actually because you don't have to drive very far to get good pictures and anywhere you go you are right by water and water is always great for landscape pictures with sunrises and sunsets.”

The cost of living and running an artistic business in urban and rural areas was repeatedly mentioned by artists as a major factor for their migration to the County. In some cases the cost of starting a studio in a city was too expensive and in other cases it was proving to be uneconomical.

Mr. P, a County artist commented:

“I was living in Toronto and decided I needed to move out of the city, it is very expensive to operate this sort of business in the city. I had five employees, and it was just getting to be too much. So I moved here for a change of lifestyle, I wanted to live and work in the same property, so I built my studio here.”

Bunting and Mitchell (2001) explain that artists have been migrating to rural areas to take advantage of inspirational landscapes and lower living and business costs partially because many rural communities are now reasonably accessible to consumers in major urban centers. While the work of Bunting and Mitchell (2001) serves to reiterate the point that artists have been migrating to bucolic rural areas for hundreds of years it suggests that the consumption of art has changed. Artists I spoke to indicated that while they do show their work in cities such as Toronto, they also sell to the County's tourists and that this has allowed some artists to conduct business solely within the County. This is significant because it signifies a change in the consumption patterns of art. Now, instead of producing art in rural areas and selling it exclusively in urban areas, art is

being sold in rural areas and people are visiting rural communities like the County for the purpose of purchasing art.

One reason for the success of cultural tourism and cultural industries in the County, according to artists themselves, is the synergy that exists among the arts community and complementary sectors of the economy.

Mr. P. Commented:

“One of the things that has been very beneficial to both the restaurants and the artists is that the restaurants support the artists, they show their work on their walls, they commission the artists to do art work...about five restaurants in the County have commissioned me to do cappuccino cups, dinnerware, water jugs and bill trays which is just great.”

“I can always tell when (a local restaurant) has my little vases on their table, I can always tell because people come in here and order those vases. When they drink out of their cappuccino cups, they come here and order cappuccino cups. It is amazing; the restaurants here recognize what the artists are doing for the community and the County. But it goes both ways, because I will recommend restaurants when people ask me where to eat too. I will say well what do you feel like and then recommend a good place to eat and it is very amazing how it works. I have lived in many parts of the world and it's amazing how supportive of people everyone is in this community. I think it is because we're an island, because we're separated, by the bridges, ferry and locks and because of that insulation, even though it is an island many tourists don't realize it. But because of that, it makes a more caring community. Because people know each other and what goes around comes around.”

Despite this caring environment and cooperation many artists struggle to survive in the County.

Artists continually wrestle with producing commercially viable art and art which satisfies their creative passions. During different seasons they alternate between making art for tourists and art for themselves. The propensity to just produce art for tourists, however, is a divisive issue within the arts community with some artists believing the production of art for art's sake is being eroded by solely commercial artists. One County artist went so far as to say that commercial art is not even art at all.

Mrs. X commented:

“There was a recent book review, it said the County is full of painters but only a few artists, similarly it said it’s full of scribbler’s but just a few writers. That sums up a lot of it, if you look at the art in the County it is very much and I will get into trouble for saying this, the Women’s Institute School of Painting, watercolor flowers and pretty things and landscapes which all look the same, and they’re everywhere, and that’s what people love and that’s what sells by the way, but it is not art. It’s just not art, art is supposed to have some kind of expression, some meaning to it, we all do pretty pictures to try and sell it, but when you do art you want to say something, you want people to come in and say I don’t like that, that’s a good thing because no reaction is terrible.”

My research provides some answers regarding the reasons why artists are coming to the County and also how the arts community functions as a cluster of creative people. My research also suggests that in addition to attracting people who work in the fine arts the County is also attracting other people who create ‘meaningful new forms’ to use Florida’s terminology like writers, designers, and marketers/advertisers. The presence of artists, creative workers and the cultural industries they run also drives the tourism industry as the community attracts tourists and visitors in a variety of ways. Most obvious for the art work itself is that many tourists and visitors buy art work from local artists, studios and galleries. Artist workshops are another way in which the artists make money and attract visitors to the County. A few of the artists I spoke to told me they run educational workshops during down times in the tourist cycle to make extra money. Many enjoy teaching their craft and draw visitors from urban areas such as Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. These workshops like cooking schools or wineries may be the initial draw but once again these visitors need a place to stay and eat and many visit other amenities and spend time in the County during their trip.

One reason why art lovers visit the County instead of simply buying art from a Toronto gallery, according to one artist I spoke to, is the face-to-face interactions between tourists and

artists that is available in the County. The slower pace of life and occurrence of home based studios allows artists to personally engage with clients and visitors.

Mr. P commented:

Tourists come to the County “because they want to meet the artists, they know that if they can come to a studio that is actually operated by an artist, they will buy things because it's like they're buying a piece of me, and that is a strong and unique thing.”

4.3.4 (F) Retail or Boutique Tourism

Another sub-sector of the tourism industry I uncovered in the County is retail or boutique tourism. Bloomfield, which is one of the County’s smallest towns, has been transformed in recent years into a centre of retailing and accommodation with boutique shops and bed and breakfasts which cater to tourists. Figure 4.9 and 4.10 show Bloomfield’s Main Street as a shopping destination for tourists. This boutique retailing is also becoming more prevalent in the main town of Picton which has seen traditional stores like barber shops replaced with salons, gift shops and craft shops. While the retail sector in the County is shifting its offerings in an attempt to attract tourist dollars, local residents of Bloomfield and Picton are worried about the decreased functionality of the downtowns and their ability to adequately service the local population year round.

Mr. B commented:

“Bloomfield is awful; it has no services for the locals, only for tourists and is dead in the winter. I would like to see downtown Picton bring more tourists dollars here and especially for businesses like mine, but there needs to be some balance as well so that it can maintain the services for the local community.”



Figure 4.9 (left) and Figure 4.10 (right) Shopping in Bloomfield (B. Hracs 2004)

An extension of this problem according to store owners on Main Street Picton is that the increase of retail activity predicated on tourism also brings pressure to update storefronts to be more visually appealing and consistent with other stores on Main Street. An example of this is the recent design plan conducted by Ryerson students which examines Picton's downtown and makes numerous suggestions about how to improve the overall design and accessibility.

Mrs. K commented:

"We bought this building two years ago, and since we moved in we have been getting comments from people saying that we should restore the facade of the building. Well, we'd love to and in fact we have an architect's drawing of what it should look like, but we can't afford to."

4.3.4 (G) Lifestyle Tourism

The tourism industry in the County is organized around different sub-sectors, and these sub-sectors, when integrated, serve to attract tourists and, therefore, constitute a key economic activity in the County. My research has uncovered an additional tourism-related trend which is not a formal sub-sector but rather I consider it a by-product of many factors and amenities in the

County: I refer to this as a Quality of Life (QOL)/ lifestyle tourism. The aforementioned tourist offerings, when combined with the rural landscape, slower pace of life, and proximity to urban centers, make the County an ideal location for those who want to escape the city. There are tourists who go to the County not for a specific amenity but rather for the total lifestyle package. Similarly, there are weekend residents or part time residents who own second homes in the County who come primarily to escape the city. There is also a new wave of permanent retirees and new residents who have come to the County to escape city life and enjoy what they perceive to be a better quality of life. Let us first examine the reasons why the County is such a popular lifestyle destination, and then consider the economic and social implications of incoming residents to the County.

Many of my respondents explained that QOL factors convinced them to move to the County full-time. One positive factor was the improved environmental quality.

Mr. S commented:

“Better air quality is a huge benefit, I had terrible allergies when I lived in the Toronto, my eyes would blow up and I had to use really strong drops. So I stocked up on all my prescriptions before I came out here and I haven't used them once, so that is an increase in my quality of life.”

The countryside also allows for access to more open space which is something many urbanites desire for themselves and for their children. One respondent explained that the 10 by 6 box of a backyard they had in Toronto was like a cell for their young daughter but now in the County she has access to one acre of green space which they now own to play in and are within 15 minutes of a beautiful beach at the Sandbanks and horseback riding facilities.

The big advantage in the County according to another respondent is the best of both worlds phenomena as the County offers many urban amenities but also of course offers the benefits of living in a rural community.

Mrs. Q commented:

The attraction for baby-boomers “is the fact that the County now offers cultural and business opportunities that are not the same but comparable to what is offered in the big city, but we also have all of the advantages that come along with being in a small town, you can know more people, it is friendlier, less crime, you can have a backyard, it is not noisy and so on. So basically, we have in a sense re-created an urban culture here, it is not exactly the same, we try very hard not to make it the same because we can't do it, it is too small scale, but we can still have festivals and music and art, and what have you on the cultural side and combine this with a beautiful natural setting.”

This ties into what is attracting seniors as well, the cultural amenities, sense of community, slower pace of life and serene natural environment. One retired couple visited the County for a weekend and enjoyed it so much that they came back the next weekend and bought a house on the water in Wellington.

Mr. T commented:

“I liked the slower pace of life, I lived in Ottawa and it was getting busier by the month, I drove from west to east Ottawa everyday and it seemed that the traffic was getting worse every month. We had a lovely house, in a nice area that we moved into about a year ago but we had no social contacts whatsoever with the neighborhood...Whereas here people are much more friendly, especially when you live in the village, you see people and you greet people everyday and it is nice. It is a much slower pace of life and I think that is the main reason why we came here but of course the beautiful countryside is nice as well.”

When I asked one government employee if selling the County as a quality of life destination to tourists and new residents was a deliberate strategy they laughed and said “quality of place is all we’ve got!” Without ‘401 presence’ or rail infrastructure they made it clear to me that wrapping all of the County’s amenities into one big quality of life promotion is an intentional economic development strategy.

A radio advertisement paid for by the County which aired in the fall of 2003 and winter of 2004 exemplifies how the County is trying to promote itself and the group it is marketing to. Table 4.5 shows a transcript of the radio ad.

Table 4.5 Radio ad promoting the County as a lifestyle destination

This advertisement was taken from CJRT 91.1 FM “Canada’s Jazz Station” on February 8th 2004

“Prince Edward County, a place apart. Escape for a day, a week or even a lifetime. Rediscover a gentle place where neighbors care, shop keepers smile and gourmet food is a passion. Rejuvenate your soul with a day at the spa or meet local artisans who call the county home. Just two hours east of Toronto. Prince Edward County, a place apart. Visit thecounty.ca/escape. Ontario more to discover.”

The ad was featured on “Canada’s Jazz Station” which caters to older, more ‘cultured,’ and well off urbanites. Moreover, the language in the ad suggests it is aimed at ‘cultured’ or creative class people who enjoy fine dining, spa treatment and art.

There is evidence to suggest that this strategy is working to attract ‘cultured’ baby-boomers, and retirees to the County. An analysis of Canadian Census data reveals that from 1991 to 2001 the County’s population experienced an influx of older residents and an outflow of younger residents. Table 4.6 illustrates this trend.

Table 4.6: Population Change by Age Cohort, Prince Edward County 1991-2001

Age Group	1991	% Share	1996	% Share	2001	% Share
14 and under	4,605	19.38	4,645	18.55	4,160	16.71
15 to 24	2,705	11.38	2,780	11.1	2,740	11
25 to 44	6,780	28.53	6,675	26.65	5,855	23.51
45 to 64	5,460	22.98	6,255	24.97	7,060	28.35
65 to 74	2,555	10.75	2,780	11.1	2,895	11.63
75 and over	1,680	7.07	1,920	7.67	2,190	8.8
Total Population	23,785	100	25,055	100	24,900	100

Statistics Canada

In addition to increasing the average age of County residents, this recent in-migration has increased the average level of education as well. Looking at the same period between 1991 and 2001 the Canadian Census data reveals that the percentage of the County’s population in 1991 with a university degree was 6.84% but by 2001 that number had jumped up to 11.34%. One

reason for this is that many of the new residents are urban professionals with more education than the average, longtime County resident.

After identifying that there are older and more educated people moving from urban areas to the County to enjoy, as they see it, a better quality of life I found it interesting that new residents of working age were forfeiting, by choice, economic gains for a better quality of life as well. Many respondents told me they had moved to and stayed in the County despite large income losses to enjoy a better quality of life, and that the trade-offs were well worth the lost income. Table 4.7 shows an excerpt from an interview with Mr. B, a new resident who moved to the County from Toronto to open a business and enjoy a better quality of life.

Table 4.7 (Interview excerpt, B. Hracs 2004)

So is this store your main source of household income?

Totally, it is my household income. I have seen my income drop, not the store income but my personal income since I took over the store.

But do you enjoy this more?

Oh, I love it

So the trade-off is worth it?

Absolutely, I think though that if I am lucky I will make about 20% of what I made last year gross. (in Toronto)

So quality of life is important to you then?

Yes, and it (the store) is fun and it's mine, and you have a chance to build on something. Belonging to a small community like this is just incredible. In the city I worked every hour that god gave, and in a lifestyle like that you spend a lot of money because you feel like you deserve to treat yourself because you work so hard. I had a wonderful house that I never saw, I never went out and my friends gave up on me years ago. And now I'm out more than I have been in years and people are really friendly, and there's a ton of things to do, you have everything from, poetry readings and the Celtic highland dance that you go to and there's art openings and just going down to the corner for a drink with somebody. They're things that I never used to do in Toronto, go to plays, go to movies. There is so much happening, I mean life is so busy here, every night of the week they are doing something different, all kinds of things, it's great!

For many business owners there is a sense that making lots of money is pointless if the pace of life and stress levels are such that they can't enjoy their lives. A sense of community involvement and inclusion is also important for these people who, paradoxically found themselves isolated in urban areas. Moreover, business owners and new residents with children told me that the slower pace of life and flexibility of owning their own business afforded them more time with their family and it was worth giving up economic gains for this.

Mr. H commented:

“It is interesting because you see those MasterCard commercials, and it talks about an experience at the cottage as being priceless. It was funny because my husband said that the other day, he has his own business and with me working here we had a crazy night with our son who was up all night and my husband managed to take him to daycare and let me sleep in, he said you know what that is, that's priceless. If I worked for anybody else, if I worked in the city I couldn't do that. It is true, he gets to have the winters off to hang out with our son and that is priceless and there are things like that the money just can't buy and it's pretty hard in the city to have 34 acres like we have here and pay \$1200 a year in property tax. Some of those things are just so far from being attainable in the city it's like yeah you can make \$80,000 a year in the city but what can you get for that?”

The idea of having a better quality of life with less money is interesting; according to respondents life is not only richer in the County but a lot cheaper as well. One couple for example went from making \$60,000 and \$70,000 in Toronto to having a combined income of less than \$20,000 but in their own words, they are not struggling to put food on the table and they enjoy County life much more. Another respondent made reference to a newspaper article in which the cost of living in Toronto and Kingston was compared.

Mr. H Commented:

“It was something like an \$85,000 job in Toronto had a value of \$40,000 in Kingston and I thought if it's worth \$40,000 in Kingston what is it worth here? We are talking Kingston, which has 100,000 people and is four times the size of this entire island so what is the County equivalent of a \$40,000 job in Kingston? I think if you can make \$30,000 a year in the County you are alright.”

4.3.4 (H) Retirement

According to Aguiar, Tomic, et. al. (2005, 128) the concept and practice of worldwide retirement is a relatively new social phenomenon. Moreover, comparing their research which deals in part with retirement communities in Kelowna B.C. with my research in the County suggests the existence of two different forms of retirement activity. Kelowna is imagined as the ‘Hawaii of Canada’ and as such attracts large numbers of seniors to retire there. In Kelowna the retirees seek a pleasant climate, recreational activities such as golf and segregation from the young.

“The idyllic image of retirement includes the outdoors, a never-ending play-ground, a pre-work, child- and adolescent-like life. Golfing is presented as a suitable type of outdoor sport for retired people, a good way to spend leisure time, a good way to have fun...In Kelowna, there are many openly advertised ‘adult-only’ buildings, these buildings accept people over forty-five or fifty years of age, claiming that seniors have the right to peace” (Aguiar, Tomic, et. al. 2005, 129).

Retirement in Kelowna has turned into a lucrative industry which is based on good weather and leisure activities, the seniors do spend money and generate economic spin-offs for the community but prefer to remain isolated from that community. Although retirement in the County has also become a vital part of the community’s economic base my research indicates that the behavior and lifestyle of the County’s retirees differs in critical ways.

The County’s low cost of living compared to urban areas like Toronto provides a strong incentive for migration. Well-off retirees, for example, can sell their homes in Toronto, move to the County and live comfortably on their savings. The influx of well off, educated and ‘cultured’ seniors in the County constitutes an additional sector of the economic base which is supported by the wealth of retirees. This process entails seniors moving to the County on a full-time or part-time basis, perhaps wintering in a warmer climate and bringing with them disposable income to

spend. This spending power is a basic industry because the money comes from outside of the County and, therefore, generates economic spin-offs for businesses which cater to this group.

We have seen that the creative class in the County is different from the one Florida outlines; it is not made up of productive knowledge workers, but rather older, more established professionals from neighboring urban areas like Toronto. While this 'rural' creative class which has higher levels of disposable income wants to enjoy cultural amenities and a slower pace of life, it does not necessarily want to be isolated from the rest of the community. Unlike the seniors in Kelowna who prefer to live in gated or walled compounds, retirees in the County who are members of the 'rural' creative class enjoy living in an interactive and vibrant arts community. They buy and restore old houses in existing neighborhoods instead of creating isolated, 'senior friendly' compounds and despite favoring some more acquired past times such as wine-tasting, and high-brow culture enjoy the same active leisure and recreational activities as the rest of the population. Another interesting divergence between seniors in Kelowna and the County is that retirees in Kelowna want to slow down and relax after years of work but those in the County actually get rejuvenated by the vibrant arts and cultural amenities enjoyed by much younger tourists and residents. This occurrence is consistent with Florida's comparison of the creative class and working class where he explains that members of the creative class, who are inherently creative and challenge seekers, prefer, to engage in active and participatory recreation and entertainment while their working class counterparts prefer passive forms such as watching television and attending professional sporting contests. Although further research on retirement behavior in a wider range of communities is needed there is enough evidence in this limited comparison to conclude that different classes of retirees desire different styles of retirement and

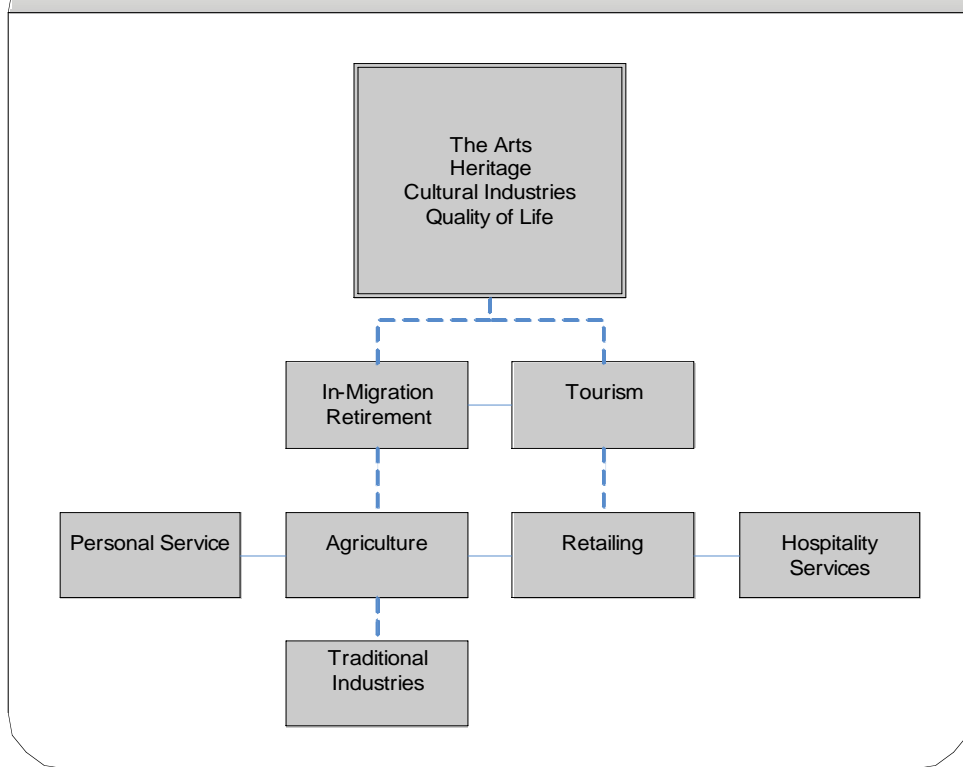
that the former professionals and knowledge workers who are now retiring to the County constitute a 'rural' creative class.

4.4 Summarizing the New Economic Base

Contrary to the model outlined on the County's economic development website (www.thecounty.ca/cips/overview) where four economic pillars support the economic base with limited interaction among them, this chapter has elucidated a more interconnected version of the economic base. Table 4.8 illustrates this model which I argue helps to visualize the connections between the amenities and sub-sectors of the County's economy.

After examining the economic activity in the County it is evident that there is a great deal of interconnection between the sub-sectors. Moreover, the cross-promotion and layering of amenities and offerings which contributes to the interconnectedness of the economic base has been shown to aid in the County's struggle to stabilize and further develop that economic base.

Table 4.8 The New Economic Base



The question remains, however, how successful have the County's economic development strategies which include the promotion of cultural industries and quality of life considerations been in generating a stable economic base that has the potential for further growth? I would argue that the County is certainly better off than other rural communities in Canada with similar economic and social problems, but some of that can be attributed to the County's physical and geographic characteristics more than any conscious government strategies. The County, for example is located within a reasonable proximity of major urban markets including Toronto, has little through traffic, a long coastline which provides valuable waterfront property and a supply of cheap properties on the whole due to the decline of farming. The County is attracting new residents to boost its population and expand its tax base by

promoting itself as a quality of life destination. The economic base is gathering momentum with new businesses opening in diverse fields and the increased coordination and integration among the sub-sectors of the economy. Taken together, the County's prospects seem to be looking up and some of the negative trends and hardships many rural communities in Canada face are being reversed. Furthermore, the County because of its natural and developed amenities and attractiveness is outperforming other rural communities who continue to struggle as they have much less to work with.

Despite the positive trends outlined in this chapter, there is still a long way for the County to go if it is to stabilize its economy and compete successfully in the future. The quality and range of employment opportunities are still limited in the County, with many low-skill and low wage jobs being associated with the service sector which is seasonal. The County does not possess a technology or knowledge sector of any significance, and even with the recent implementation of high-speed internet infrastructure the development of technology based sectors in rural communities is a difficult prospect to sell. Without knowledge businesses and firms and the lack of a substantial industrial sector, the County relies too heavily on tourism as its main basic industry. As mentioned the jobs associated with the tourist industry are not high 'quality' because they are often seasonal and low-wage in nature.

As the County's economy is comprised primarily of small businesses, people without sufficient education, training, entrepreneurial skills and start-up capital have little choice but to seek employment in the service sector. As many of the individuals lacking these attributes are long-time residents of the County the situation has created a two-tier economic system with new, more affluent, educated and 'cultured' residents enjoying greater employment flexibility and consuming power while the long-time residents are being relegated to working on mushroom

farms and shopping at bargain stores. These social and economic divergences along with other issues of contestation will be examined in chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Contested Spaces of Development

5.1 Introduction

Hopkins (1998) asserts that rural areas which attempt to develop economically by capitalizing on their environmental attractiveness to promote tourism are in constant danger of over-commodifying that environment and destroying the resource which allows for such development. In chapter 4 Prince Edward County's efforts to boost its economy by promoting itself as a life-style destination for tourists and new residents was outlined. Reference was made to several contentious issues that have resulted from this recent development, for example, the viability of the wine industry, the 'insider-outsider' conflict involving long-time and new/recent residents, the inflation of real-estate prices, and the financial crisis at the Regent Theatre. This chapter will elaborate on some of the conflicts and contested spaces in the County using information from interviews and newspaper articles. The chapter begins by looking at issues surrounding the County's youth population, this section is followed by an examination of the unbalanced economic and social development currently occurring in the County. The next section outlines the recent growth of the County's wine making industry; this is followed by a discussion of an emerging debate which I call the development debate. The chapter concludes by chronicling some of the events and issues surrounding the financial 'crisis' at the Regent Theatre which occurred in the summer of 2004.

5.2 The Two Tier-Economy

In chapter 4 the County's economic base was outlined. Lacking substantial knowledge, technology or industrial sectors, the County's economic base was shown to be very reliant on tourism as its main industry. This dependence has resulted in poor employment opportunities for individuals without higher education, training or enough capital to start their own business.

Mrs. R commented:

“Banks don't even look at you if you don't have two years under your belt, I think there are a lot of energetic individuals out there who want to take the plunge into owning and operating a small-business and those people definitely won't be getting financing through the banks... It is not funding it is just financing; really what it is just somebody who is willing to give them a chance.”

As many long-time residents find it difficult to participate in the small business economy those without the means join the service workforce. This employment sector offers seasonal, low-skill and low-wage employment in the tourist, hospitality, retail and agricultural sectors. These jobs are not quality jobs and do not provide workers with job security, upward mobility or the opportunity for a better life.

The situation for long-time residents who have limited formal training and skills is in direct contrast to incoming urbanites who are educated and usually come to the County with skills and start-up capital. They open shops, restaurants, wineries, bed and breakfasts and benefit from the County's ability to attract tourists. If the incoming residents do not have sufficient start-up capital; my research suggests that the training, education and business plans that these individuals do have is usually enough to garner financing from institutions or silent business partners.

Mrs. Q commented:

“It is pretty obvious, I mean it makes sense but we don't have a source of jobs that people are used to, there is a limited number of government positions, there is no industry

beyond the cement plant, the only new jobs that are created are when people like myself create their own business. And I would never have come here thinking I could do anything else, so we recognize that most people incoming are retired or older or have their own jobs, there is no expansion, there's no sense for the young people that there is a future for them, entrepreneurship is fairly limited to a certain amount of people, and it can only be executed by a certain amount of people, you know the entire graduating class of the high school can't go out and start a small business. You know and that's, I think that's the main reason there is no sense in the community that we have a place for young people to go work. Most of the businesses that would have employed a large number of people are downsizing and they are not expanding, and of course you have an aging population, very few job openings if you look at job listings around here it is quite sad actually. There is a lot of calls for unskilled labor to be paid minimum wage but anybody who is going to University, college even high school would be hard-pressed to find something that matched their qualifications.”

What I found in the County, especially in the main administrative town of Picton and the small village of Bloomfield was essentially a two-tier economy and social system. On one hand there are long-time residents and new residents who have means; who own businesses and retirees from urban areas who are living comfortably off their savings and investments. These people shop at the boutique stores, buy art, go to the nice restaurants, drink wine, visit the spas, have nice houses and generally live very well in the County. On the other hand there are long-time residents without means who work for low wages at jobs that lay them off every winter, who shop at bargain stores like the Giant Tiger in Picton and really cannot enjoy the County's offerings and amenities because they cannot afford to. This situation is common place in rural communities but the County's proximity to Toronto and recent arrival of a 'rural' creative class has intensified these economic and social divisions.

Mrs. Q commented:

“It seems that we have two markets, I think we have one for the urban expatriate types and retirees and tourists, those sort of service center, sort of higher-level of service, but still sort of a service industry, even what we do in retail is providing a service. We have those and we have the discount type places because there is a population that would probably find more opportunity elsewhere but for financial reasons they cannot afford to leave. So you get this fragmentation, between those who are better off financially and those who shop at place like the Giant Tiger. You get your boutiques; I look at

Bloomfield's main street as being emblematic of where the better off people and the tourists shop. Then on the other hand you get the people who shop at the Giant Tiger."

This account of the economic polarization in the County reflects some of the literature on contingent work and the service sector in the new rural economy. According to Winson and Leach (2002) the growth of contingent work and the service based economy has several negative impacts on people with lower levels of education and training. In general, "the service economy is first and foremost a low-wage economy" (Winson and Leach, 2002, 26), moreover, the decline of permanent employment associated with the rise of the service economy reduces job security because many service sector jobs such as the ones found in the County's tourist or hospitality sectors are seasonal. In addition to receiving fewer hours and the difficulty of living from one shift to the next and from season to season, Winson and Leach point out that permanent jobs on average provide higher wages and better benefits than non-permanent ones.

"The permanent – non – permanent wage gap is \$3 per hour. In 1995, two-thirds of permanent jobs has at least three of five benefits (employer-sponsored pension plan, health insurance, dental benefits, paid sick leave, paid annual vacation), compared with only 18 percent of non-permanent jobs. Only 16 percent of permanent jobs offered none of these benefits, compared with 60 percent of seasonal, temporary, or casual jobs" (Winson and Leach, 2002, 26).

Furthermore, the authors explain that contingent work typically entails lower skill requirements, is more repetitive, and offers less decision-making autonomy than permanent jobs in the stable work world. These incidences have contributed to the growing inequality between County residents who have good quality jobs and those who work in the service based economy. Those with education and money enjoy all that the County has to offer while those without steady, well paying and rewarding work are stuck on the sidelines. Further exacerbating this gap is the fact that without employee benefits and guaranteed hours many marginalized workers in the County cannot save enough to break out of the cycle of dependency. At this juncture it would be logical

to present statistical evidence of this income and employment trend between 1996 and 2001. Unfortunately due to the recent amalgamation of the County and the decision by Statistics Canada to update its employment categories from 1996 to 2001 this is not possible. It can be said, however, that in 2001 25% of the County's total workforce was employed in the sales and service sector which represented the largest concentration of jobs. The second largest was the trades and transport sector which employed 16% of the workforce in 2001. These figures indicate, therefore, that a high proportion of the County's workforce is employed in the service sector and subject to the economic marginalization outlined by Winson and Leach (2002).

The presence of the 'rural' creative class in the County contributes to the growing inequality, but according to Florida this is to be expected, "growing alongside the Creative Class is another social grouping I call the Service Class – which contains low-end, typically low-wage and low-autonomy occupations in the so-called "service sector" of the economy" (Florida 2002 a, 71). As Florida predicted in cities, the County's expanding service sector and service class is growing along side the 'rural' creative class which values time over money and would rather pay others to perform menial tasks for them.

Driving along the Loyalist Parkway (highway 33) near Wellington there is striking visual evidence of the current income inequality in the County. Figure 5.1 and 5.2 show the difference between the vernacular homes in the County and the monster houses new residents are building.



Figure 5.1 (B. Hracs 2004)

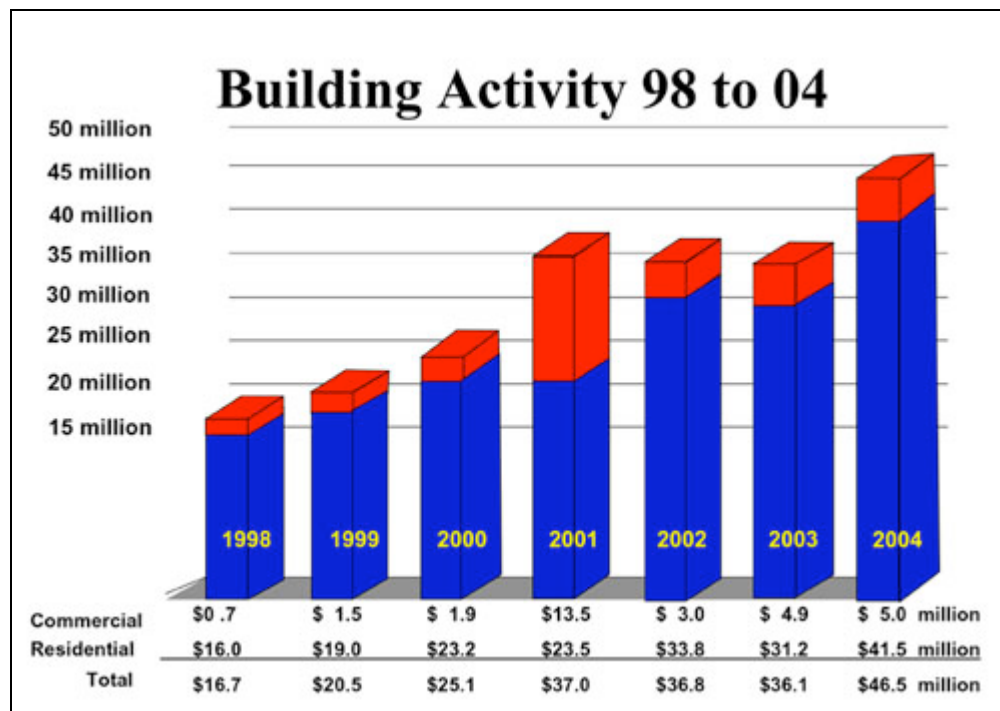


Figure 5.2 (B. Hracs 2004)

A Sense of Place Realty is a local player in the County's housing market. The style and price of houses listed on their website (www.asenseofplace.ca/res) and newspaper advertisements further illustrates the economic and social polarization in the County. There are

modest homes going for \$100,000- 200,000 and ‘country estates’ on the waterfront selling for over \$1,000,000. Price disparity in the housing market is not uncommon in many communities but evidence from County documents and newspaper articles suggests that more houses are being built and housing prices on average are increasing, the chart in table 5.1 and the article excerpts in table 5.2 and 5.3 speak to this trend.

Table 5.1 Building Activity in the County from 1998 to 2004



(www.thecounty.ca)

Table 5.2 County’s building boom continues
(The Picton Gazette August 11th 2004 Page 1)

According to information provided by Chief Building Official Garry Davis, the County’s building boom, which began roughly two years ago, has shown no sign of decreasing as permit sales and construction value have both increased each year. As of July 31 the number of building permits issues this year was 570 with a construction value of \$28,970,338. Over the same period last year there has been 507 permits issues equaling \$21,938,854. “It’s a standard 25 per cent increase over last year” Davis told the Gazette. “I anticipate (for 2004) about \$35 million worth of construction but with the way it’s happening,, it looks like we’re going to go to approximately \$40 million and it wouldn’t be unheard of to break that if some of the larger projects come on stream.”

Table 5.3 Real estate market on record pace
(The County Weekly News, July 16th 2004 Page 15)

It has been a record first six months for real estate sales in the Quinte area, according to the Quinte and District Real Estate Board. Agents have sold 14 percent more housing units for the January-to-June period in 2004 than last year for the same time frame – 2,114 units sold this year compared to 1,854 in 2003. ... The average purchase price of a residential home in the Quinte area has increased by 9.9 per cent this year, Middleton said. “This 9.9 per cent rise exceeds the national increase in the average residential price across the country,” she said.

In *The New American Dream* (2003) Richard Florida concedes that as his ‘creative class’ grows in numbers and prominence the ranks of the ‘service class’ which has emerged to service well-off individuals who do not have time to waste on mundane tasks like cooking and cleaning will swell. Furthermore, Florida states that higher levels of creativity and the increase of the knowledge based economy will only bring more inequality. As the County promotes itself as a lifestyle destination and relies more and more on tourism the two-tier economic system will become more entrenched. The question, therefore, becomes: does the County’s recent economic development, which is predicated on cultural industries, quality of life amenities and tourism, provide positive changes or does it merely substitute one set of problems for another? The following sections will outline some of the social, political and environmental problems associated with the County’s recent development.

My research indicates that the growing gap between the County’s affluent and depressed groups has amplified several areas of contention in the County. Resentment from long-time residents towards new residents and the development they symbolize came across in several interviews. One long-time resident who owns a business in Picton felt conflicted because the new development and attractiveness of the County boosts their business sales but also serves to price-out locals with moderate and low incomes.

Mrs. K commented:

“That is becoming part of the problem, to go back to culture look at the Milford Bistro, I would love to go eat at the Milford Bistro but I can't afford it. ...other people have mentioned it to me as well; that it is getting to be that the people who live here can't afford to go out in their own community.”

Mrs. K went on to explain that the price of hotel rooms has risen from \$65 to over \$125 for a basic room and that the spas, cooking schools and restaurants which cater to wealthy visitors and new residents are driving up the prices for everyone.

The local perception that prices are rising because of the tourists and new residents has hurt new businesses just starting as the resentment by long-time residents towards these newcomers translates in some cases to boycotting. Although the County has traditionally had an elite element (going back to the resorts for wealthy visitors from Toronto, see 4.2) the difference today is that the affluent group is larger. As increasing numbers of wealthy retirees and new residents migrate to the County the balance of power shifts and the resentment and marginalization of the County's disadvantaged groups intensifies. The argument can be made that without tourism and new capital from migration the County's poor would be even worse off but this realization has not been made by the County's long-time residents who are struggling and has not pacified their disdain for the urban 'transplants'.

Mr. T commented:

“The locals are very set in their ways and I experience that very much in my business. People here classify themselves, the blue-collar workers will never set foot in my establishment, I mean there are all these strikers sitting there for three weeks now and not one of them has come in here for a cup of coffee. They all go to the Wellington Grill which has a different atmosphere, they feel that my place is too posh or whatever. But that is not the case and they are reluctant to develop, and to accept changes.”

Many people I interviewed who were less than 40 years of age are of the opinion that everything in the County is geared towards baby-boomers and seniors and to be a senior in the County is ideal.

Mrs. Q commented:

“This place is the most senior friendly place on the planet. I mean everything that goes on essentially has to be marketed at seniors...”

Despite this perceived seniors paradise other evidence suggests that the two-tier hierarchical structure of the County’s economy and society extends to seniors as well.

Mr. B commented:

“I would say there are two tiers of that in the County. There are seniors who were born and raised here who were farmers or whatever, have limited incomes, you know and may have health problems or whatever. And those are people who aren't that wealthy.”

So there is a section of the senior population who cannot afford to participate in the activities being marketed to them, they cannot afford to eat at the fancy restaurants, visit the wineries or go to the spa. The sad reality for seniors who are not as well off is that they must deal with the resentment of younger people who think the whole County revolves around them but do not experience that better quality of life. The unseen marginalization of the youth population, individuals working in the service economy and seniors without the means to enjoy the County’s offerings warrants further discussion.

In “Active and Dormant Neighborhoods” (2002) Ranu Basu examines the ability of different groups within neighborhoods to influence public policy and attain services. With regard to education services and school closures, Basu explains that the more affluent and educated groups had a stronger voice in the community:

“The communities from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were less effective than the other groups in resisting school closure proposals. Bondi demonstrates the different tactics used by the campaign groups. Whereas the more affluent middle-class groups

concentrated on developing and presenting researched and reasoned reports, setting out their cases, and getting early support from their councilor, the other group resorted to public demonstrations of their dislike of the proposals and received less sympathy from councilors. This, she argues, resulted in systematic biases in favor of more affluent, better educated, and age structure of the residents (Basu, 2002, 278).

To test this hypothesis in the County, I attended two public meetings, one dealt with the potential closure of the Regent Theatre and the other attempted to gather information from residents about the County's economic and social vision and direction heading into the future. The 'Save the Regent Theatre' town hall meeting held on July 24th 2004 saw over three-hundred people turn out to express themselves, and while I could visually detect a mix of young and old, long-time and newly arrived residents from different ends of the economic and social spectrum I would say that Basu's conclusions were accurate. It seemed to me that business owners, wealthier and more educated people asked more informed questions and gave more constructive comments while the long-time residents only provided negative rants and passionate opinions.

In the second town hall meeting on February 7th 2005 about sixty people came to the town hall in Bloomfield to share their thoughts on the County's vision and direction for the future. The economic development officer was there and the meeting was run by a consulting team which was conducting research for a report commissioned by the municipality. Once again the people being heard, and in this case providing information that will shape the policies and direction of the County, were business owners including many B&B owners, new residents, councilor's, artists and members of economic groups in the County. The strongest voice, therefore, came from the County's business and creative class which meant several groups were not heard from. These are public meetings which anybody could attend but it demonstrates that young people, some long-time residents and those with less education and wealth feel disengaged from the political and decision making process and are unwilling or unable to attend.

To strengthen this point table 5.4 shows an excerpt from a County news article about another town meeting in which certain segments of the County's population were absent.

***Table 5.4 Progress versus Tradition: by Steve Campbell
(The County Weekly News, July 9th 2004 Page 5)***

“While attending the meeting on finding a County vision for the future, I was not surprised to find that, among the over-100 people assembled, there were lots of ideas on how the County should look several years from now....I do take exception to one small thing. Mayor Leo was quoted in the paper as saying he was pleased to see a “good cross-section” of County people. I didn’t see that at all. I saw large numbers of people who make more money in retirement than I have seen so far in my business lifetime. I saw lots of B&B owners, lots of retirees from Toronto and Ottawa, and not many retail store owners. ...there were lots of recognizable faces representing various Boards and organization, most them tourist-related in some form or other. But a ‘cross-section’? Not at all. Factory workers, teenagers, 9-5 workers, local seniors, small business owners and their staffs, fourth generation County families...there’s a very large voice that was not heard at the meeting.”

5.3 Prince Edward County's Wine Making Industry

As the County's social makeup evolves, there are those who champion and promote further development and others who are fighting for retrenchment. The debate surrounding development for the sake of positive change and over-development which could ruin the nature of the County will be explored in the following section with specific reference to the County's wine making industry. This debate has been discussed in section 2.9, specifically, by Hopkins (1998) and Dayton-Johnson (2004) who argue that rural areas are in constant danger of becoming over commodified and losing their charm and viability as pastoral retreats from the urban and everyday.

As outlined in chapter 4 the County's wine making industry is an emerging force in the County's economic base and has contributed to the changing demography by attracting older, more affluent urbanites. Opinions about the wine industry found in newspaper articles and my

fieldwork suggest that the industry itself and its implications for the County's future development and direction are highly contested.

First and foremost the County's wine making industry symbolizes the new era of agricultural production in the County. As explained in chapter 4 the County has had a history of boom and bust agricultural production, with the sector currently shifting its production to provide value added goods to niche markets in the tourist and hospitality sectors. The presence of a wine making industry also helps to attract agro-tourists and new residents who have 'sophisticated tastes' and wish to escape crowded urban areas in favor of rural retreats which offer higher quality amenities. Those who support the County's wine industry point out that being agricultural in nature the industry serves to protect and enhance the agricultural sector and the farming way of life which has recently fallen on hard times. In addition, it can be argued that the practice of wine making itself is a creative industry which requires innovation and technology. Wine making, therefore, is an industry which compliments the County's agriculture past can be seen as a rural example of the high-tech clusters Florida describes in the urban context and can be branded as an industry which is associated with the 'rural' creative class.

The wine industry is also perceived as a creator of jobs in the industry itself and also, through the economic spin-offs it generates, for the tourism and service sectors. According to one government employee, the current job offerings and the additional jobs that will be created as the wine industry expands over time can help provide employment opportunities for young people who are leaving the County and stabilize the agricultural sector and economic base.

Mrs. G commented:

"We've got the wine industry that is bringing in some maybe even higher-paying jobs, some full-time stuff and there are other things as well, so I think if we could continue to build a diversified economy, we can create things that are interesting for youth."

“The wine industry is agriculture but it is not the agriculture traditional farmers have fond memories of, but that is going by the wayside. Agriculture is consolidating with larger operations, less jobs, talk about jobs, it is highly mechanized. So we can look at the past and revel in that but my understanding is that the past isn't the future with respect to many things including agriculture. So we've extrapolated numbers out of Niagara and applied them to Prince Edward County and based on today's vineyards in the ground and today's wineries up and running you put that out another two to five years once we're sort of up and running full speed. That is going to create 300 to 500 jobs.”

Artists, people in the hospitality industry and residents told me that the wineries help to spin-off extra business for other fields and because there are only a few places in Canada which are suitable for grape growing it gives the County another dimension or amenity which helps attract tourists and new residents. The presence of a wine making industry also lends ‘cachet’ to the County as a place of bourgeois production and helps to attract members of the ‘rural’ creative class who enjoy wine and wine related activities.

One restaurant operator told me that the County’s wine industry influenced their decision to open a business in the County and helps to generate interest among locals and tourists for their business. Moreover, despite the developmental stage of the County’s wines Mrs. J explained that most tourists are understanding while County locals are skeptical about the whole process.

Mrs. J commented

“The local wine industry is very big for us, we participated in one of the openings of a winery recently, Huff Estates, so we did some food for their opening, and we carry their products.”

“I think that tourists are actually more forgiving than the locals, you can't generalize or say that everybody feels a certain way but I would say that there is a prevalent feeling among locals that the wine industry here is a joke and it will never take off. What are these people doing, are they crazy? Whereas the people from away have a little bit more patience and they look at the bigger picture and understand about developing industries and understand that this is not where it is going to be in the next 10 or 20 years. And a lot of people that go on these little agro-tourism trips, they have been to Napa, and Niagara, and they understand that those vines are 20, 30, or 40 years old and ours are 5 to 10. It is almost like reliving or being a part of Niagara during its growth periods, you know. So with it's like the same thing as Niagara was 20 years ago, people want to be part of the development stage. They're willing to come out and do the tourist thing to see

where it's at or to see where the benchmark is because every year the bar is going to be raised higher and higher.”

On the plus side the wineries are attracting a ‘rural’ creative class, creating jobs, boosting tourism and generating economic spin-offs for artists who do work for the wineries, people in design and construction who build the wineries, restaurants, inns and hotels which cater to wine enthusiasts and the County’s cooking schools. The industry continues to grow with more wineries opening, more planned to open and more bottles and varieties of wine being produced. Despite its detractors who say that the soils are inadequate, that it is too cold to grow grapes in the County, that the industry is too small to compete with national and global producers and that it symbolizes unwelcome development of tourism and in-migration of urbanites the County’s wine industry is gathering support, growing and looking to expand in the years to come. The following excerpt from a local newspaper article contained in table 5.5 exhibits the attitude of the industries promoters.

Table 5.5 Pair promoting County wine industry by: Henry Bury
The County Weekly News, July 16th, 2004 Page 14

Brock Hart and Jeff Vance are longtime friends who regularly enjoy sipping wine. They are now in business together to promote the Prince Edward County wine region. “We want to make it the next Niagara-on-the-Lake,” Vance said.

Vance said the county is a beautiful region and not enough Canadians know about it. “The county’s wine region is certainly growing at an astounding rate...we are trying to put the Prince Edward County wine region on the map so that Canadian’s know about the treasure we have here.”

Although it appears that the County’s wine industry is entrenched in the County’s economic development plans and vision of the future as mentioned there is palpable criticism being levied against its existence and continued development by people in the County and beyond. One of the biggest knocks on the County’s wine industry is not that it exists but that it is

over-promoted. Articles are constantly surfacing from the County and Toronto about the County's expanding wine industry and many locals feel that the achievements of the industry to date do not warrant so much attention from the media.

Mrs. X commented:

"The wine industry is promoted more than it deserves and it is kind of slightly dishonest and it turns out that a lot of the wineries are using Niagara grapes because they don't have their own grapes yet."

Mr. B commented:

"They may have shot their wad so to speak because the wineries are really not up to the level of promotion."

Table 5.6 which contains an excerpt from a Toronto newspaper article demonstrates some of the criticism coming from Toronto. While some people in Toronto celebrate the County and its wineries as a great tourist and lifestyle destination others including the author of this article view the County's wine making industry as a drop in the global bucket and nothing to get worked up about.

***Table 5.6 Prince Edward County ripe for wine enthusiasts by: Gordon Pitts
(The Globe and Mail, August 10th, 2004 Page B1, B18)***

In the last past decade, eight wineries have sprung up, with four more likely to open next year. Fifty vineyards of varying size are operating in this old United Empire Loyalist enclave. That's small stuff compared with the roughly fifty wineries in Niagara, and just a drop in the global bucket. Indeed the jury is still out on whether Prince Edward County can ripen into a viable *terroir* for choice grape varieties such as Chardonnay or Pinot Noir or remain a marginal cottage industry.

"You can't tell someone not to invest"...but a wine region takes a long time to develop and the Prince Edward County growers are "getting a little bit ahead" of their grape growing reality.

Mr. Pennachetti jokes that more newspaper column inches have been devoted to Prince Edward wine than actual bottles have been produced there.

In response to the perceived over-promotion of the County's wineries one government employee who markets the County told me that wine is a sexy story and the media is hungry to make a big deal about it despite the developing nature of the industry, and this rush to spread the word has contributed to the over-promotion, but even bad press is good press and the media buzz surrounding the wine industry has attracted many people to the County who want to see what it is all about.

Mrs. G commented:

"There's kind of this critical mass and media is hungry for stories, wine is another sexy story, and there isn't another wine region opening in Ontario every year or every month, so that is interesting to see unfold and there are different stories within the stories, cuisine and beaches. People are now intrigued and we are now on the radar screen and that sticks after awhile after you read the third or fourth article about Prince Edward County you know there's something going on there."

With all of the media buzz surrounding the wine industry in the County and the constant news of more winery openings there is a sense that anybody can move to the County, open a winery and make it work. While some of the County's wineries are run by families who have been involved in the County's agricultural sector for many years the large new wineries are often run by professionals from Toronto and backed by big-time investment capital. My research indicates that for the small investor who dreams of working their own land and running a winery, staying afloat is a constant struggle.

Mrs. W commented:

"I think the problem is you need a lot of capital to make a winery work. We were over at (one winery) the other week and it is state-of-the-art stuff. They have a lot of capital behind them, and we also know the people who run (another winery) and they don't have a lot of money behind them so they're really struggling. Because you don't make any money until the grapes mature, there is sort of a five-year lull where no money is coming in at all. So how can small investors survive, they obviously rely on bank loans and everything but it is pretty dicey I think."

Mr. C commented:

“Well my parents own a winery, last year we were bringing in like \$2000 a day and this year it is like \$600 a day, so it has gone down for everybody because the weather has been so bad, the weather has been terrible.”

Mrs. X commented:

“It is a struggle to grow, I know because I have a friend who struggles every winter. He and his wife worked themselves to death for 5 acres of grapes which brought them I think \$10,000. Well that's not really worth it is it? And they say every seventh year you can lose your crop, or every fifth year. The last two years haven't been too good and they have to bury the vines apparently which makes it labor-intensive. So I don't know, Niagara took 20 years to get where it is, and it was the joke of the wine industry for a longtime.”

“They have jumped the gun, they shouldn't be in production yet in my view, they should still be investing in it. It is a rich man's game, it is no coincidence that these vineyards in California are owned by actors and golf stars and people like that because they have the money to back it up, to them it is just a game they're playing at.”

These quotes suggest that the two-tier structure described in earlier sections exists within the wine industry as well and serves to cement that system. Wineries backed by investment capital from cities can afford to wait five years for their grapes to mature and even import grapes from Niagara. These wineries can afford to take advantage of expensive but effective technology for producing their products and often have beautiful and well maintained grounds which help to attract tourists and visitors. The lower tier wineries and small vineyards run by locals and new residents without large capital reserves struggle to turn a profit and compete with the larger wineries. The two-tier structure extends to the employment hierarchy within the County's wine industry as well. While those who support the wine industry and its continued expansion claim that it will create hundreds of jobs which will help to sustain the County's economic base, critics warn that the potential employment opportunities will only serve to further entrench the two-tier system and further marginalize the County's service class.

Mr. B commented:

“Most of the jobs, and this is where I object to some things like wineries, they will say that putting in new wineries will create employment but generally speaking a winery creates a lot of low-paying manual service employment and the people at the top who own the wineries or whatever, or, for example, one of the wineries will have a marketing director who comes from Toronto and lives in Belleville and they have the marketing position which is probably one of only two or three somewhat managerial type positions, and the rest of the people are growers or pickers. So that is what you're saying to the kids, you're saying there are 50 of you and 40 of you will pick grapes five of you will leave and five might come back and get a position in a managerial sense.”

The wine industry's use of low-skill and low-wage labor reinforces its position as a creative class activity. For it not only caters to and attracts members of the 'rural' creative class but serves to expand the County's service class and encourage the two-tier economic and social system.

The most contentious issue surrounding the County's wine industry is its long-run viability. Despite assurances that new cold-climate grape growing techniques and proper management can mitigate the danger of the County's winters which can be colder than Niagara's, detractors are not convinced. Those following quotes are indicative of the debate surrounding the viability of the County's wine industry.

Mrs. G commented:

“One of the things I've learned about the wine industry here because I have a small little stake in it myself, when I did my business plan and said the worst thing that can happen is my vineyard could get wiped out, all the wines would die. If I were to rewrite that business plan today with what I know that wouldn't be in the business plan, the vineyard won't get wiped out. In that same business plan I would've said the next worst thing that can happen is I won't have the fruit next year, same thing, and that won't happen. We've got a small core group of 40 odd growers, that are learning how to manage the new challenges of the new area, and man has a history of adapting an evolving to circumstances that he is presented with, and that is happening here. I don't know what to say other than I think it is highly liable to grow grapes here, I think the challenges that nature throws at us creates an upside because it is going to limit our yields which forces higher-quality, because that is the net result of lower yields. So that creates an interesting niche combined with our soils which are very interesting and high quality for grape growing, I say we believe, most of us know that and it will be proven over the next number of years. But you need the experience, you need the age in the lines, you need the age in the wine makers making the local wines, I am quite confident that Prince

Edward County will be making outstanding wines and it will be known for really good quality wines.”

***Table 5.7 Cottage country wine festival by: Gordon Stimmell
(The Toronto Star August 4, 2004, p. D02)***

Most have heard about the hardy dreamers playing pioneer and putting up edgy wineries in Prince Edward County, where it's far colder than Toronto.

But who would believe growing new clones of vines that can survive minus 30C winters in the Kawarthas, or north of Quebec city along the St. Lawrence River where minus 43C is the normal low point of the year?

To put this in perspective, prolonged bouts of minus 25C are enough to rock the existence of most vines, if not kill them right down to the roots, as we rediscovered in Niagara over the last two winters – unless the vines are patiently buried below soil or a natural massive snow cover.

I tasted several lean gamay noirs that were less than inspiring, so the noble ambition of turning Prince Edward County into Canada's new Burgundy with world class pinot noir remains for the moment a chimera awaiting warmer winters.

Finally, there is some concern related to the increasing number of wineries in the County. When there were only one or two wineries open for business in the County they were a total novelty for tourists and those who enjoy wine related lifestyle amenities, but with more and more competition among the County's growing number of wineries it is no longer enough to be open to be successful. According to one government employee responsible in part for marketing the County's wine industry, the wineries have to differentiate their offerings to compete.

Table 5.8 A dream in the County by: Gord Stimmel
The Toronto Star August 15, 2004, p. D12

The great grape gold rush to Prince Edward County is still at fever pitch, attracting post-urban pioneers, Niagara winemakers, Toronto restaurateurs and sommeliers as well as neo-Burgundians in droves.

But the parallels to Burgundy in soil and solar days and growing seasons end abruptly at reality – the County has vine-killing winters that plummet to -20 and -30 C.

Is it then a fool's gold rush? A folly facing certain doom? After all, the noble Burgundians do not have to bury their vines below dirt and straw to protect them from "Beaune"-chilling winters. And toiling in the vines from sunup to sundown may beat the Atkins diet but it's not everyone's cup of wine. Still, lemming-like the pinot noirists come, seemingly extracting ancient rural DNA and long-forgotten farming ways from their citified blood.

Mr. H commented:

“I think the industry and the growth of the industry is a great thing for the community. Obviously the spinoffs are huge but I think that anybody who is telling you that they are coming here solely for the wineries has got some rose covered [Sic] glasses on because I think it is part and parcel of the fact that nobody comes here for just one reason. I think it is a combination and a package of the different offerings that we have.”

“I don't think it's the majority but there are businesses out there that feel that they can limit their marketing or are not as strategic in their marketing because they feel they have a standalone product, however, that mentality is slowly devolving because as competition arises more people have to be aware that they have to promote their offerings, they really actually have to make something unique about their offerings because when it was just one winery or two wineries you are guaranteed to get everybody who is down here. But now those one or two are seven so you have to have a unique offering or great customer service.”

This call for increased quality and service among County wineries is something that should be examined over the next few years because my research indicates more is expected from the wineries by County locals.

As this section has demonstrated the County's wine making industry is a contested space that divides the County's population. The fear of over-commodifying the County's rural charm

and natural landscape is also a hotly debated topic which stretches from the wineries to over-promoting tourism and environmental degradation.

5.4 The Development Debate

One respondent, who moved to the town of Wellington in part because of its beautiful lakeside landscape, fears that the County is in danger of losing its attractive natural environment.

Mrs. W commented:

“One of the things that I've been reading about in an article recently, and it is an ongoing issue is that our dumps are failing provincial inspections. We have to do a better job of protecting what we've got... I think there are things that we have to be careful of, and we have to preserve it. For instance, the Wellington beach was closed the last week of June, because of pollution, and there was a sign up that said the beach is closed because of pollution. Well it was the runoff from the rain and I guess the fields have manure, E. coli they call it. So they closed the Wellington beach, well we had visitors from Holland who said what? This is the pristine area, so the one time it happened they see it, but the people here don't even care about it. They say oh well the Wellington beach is closed big deal, nobody goes there anyway. Well wait a minute all the tourists go there and we have to be very careful to protect that kind of thing.”

The danger is that complacent attitudes resulting in inadequate protection of the County's original source of attractiveness, its natural beauty could hinder the County's ability to attract tourists and new residents which could ultimately unravel the new economic base described in chapter 4. Table 5.9 which provides an excerpt from an article about The County's polluted beaches serves to further illustrate this problem which could become much more serious without government intervention.

Table 5.9 Environment officials test eastern Ontario beach littered with dead fish, birds
The Canadian Press Ontario & Quebec News, Monday, August 23, 2004 (Online)

WELLINGTON, Ont. (CP) - A public beach in eastern Ontario has been closed and health authorities were investigating Monday after dozens of dead wildlife washed ashore from Lake Ontario.

Ron Vitale said he was completely unprepared for what he saw when he walked the half-kilometre stretch of sand and rock on Sunday morning.

"Just about every species of wildlife that we have down here was dead or dying on the beach," said Vitale, harbourmaster for this lakeside town about a half-hour's drive south of Belleville, Ont.

"I was totally freaked out."

Vitale said he commonly sees a handful of dead fish along the waterline, but the scene before him was far from normal.

"I saw 45 to 50 dead fish, and, ballpark, 20 to 25 dead or dying birds," Vitale said.

"I noticed snakes, crows, seagulls, killdeer, swallows, cormorants, and bats ... Literally, these animals were dying before my eyes."

Belleville-born Keli Mitchell, now a resident of Victoria, B.C., expressed surprise at seeing so many dead animals as she walked along the beach with son Braden, 3, and daughter Kennedy, 1. "We were over at Sandbanks (on Sunday) and some people said ... that it looks just like this - a bunch of dead fish," said Mitchell.

Jeremy and Carol Gander, who own the Ganders Bed and Breakfast at the beach's west end, said they've noticed both the increase in carcasses on the beach and the disappearance of other animals.

Potential and actual environmental degradation caused by the County's wineries is another reason why some people in the County object to their growing numbers.

Mrs. X commented:

"Wineries are springing up everywhere, within a couple of fields of my place there are two or three of them. And when you see houses being sold it has potential for wineries, and there's a big one on Royal Road now that has just been sold and that is going to be a winery, which is great. You say all that helps the leisure industry and it isn't going to spoil the County but there is a rough side to it. Think about it, drive around Niagara and they are spraying all the time, they're wearing suits and masks, and nobody can go into the vineyard for four days, what the hell are they spraying. Well on a windy day figure out where that stuff might go. There is always a price to pay for change, good or bad, they could do it organically, but it is harder to do it organically, so they won't do it. How many organic farmers are doing that, there is a spray that they can use on the grapes and apples that is organic, but two days later they have to spray again, but the stuff they use they just spray it once. What is that doing to the ground? The ground is totally lifeless,

the only thing that is in it is what they put in the ground, there is nothing natural, you won't find any crickets or worms in there.”

The new economic development in the County has bred a fear of over-development and specifically losing the rural charm through over-commercialization, over building and tourism.

Mr. M commented:

“If you bring in industry you are going to lose the charm right and if you keep developing it you're going to lose the charm, so you've got your pros and cons. How much you want to develop it and it is a good thing to keep thinking about, so we want all these new things to do, or just kind of leave it the way it is. Having said that not growing doesn't work either, it has to grow, but it is going to lose its charm if it keeps growing at the rate it is because it is going to be totally commercialized, and it is going to be like a little tourist town and that's it, and there isn't going to be anything for anybody else.”

Deciding how much to develop and at what rate is a very big issue in the County and one that has opinions on both sides. Development is seen by most people as necessary to build the economy and create jobs so the community does not just wither away and die, but the mode of development and rate is debatable, some are just fed up with the constant building of new houses and stores and that view is typified by the article excerpt in table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Local development frustrating for land owner by: W. Brice McVicar
The Picton Gazette August 11th 2004 Page 3

Prince Edward County may be experiencing a building boom but not all residents are enthusiastic to see such growing development in the municipality.

Dee Hazell, a resident of Hillier, made this clear to the County council last month as she expressed frustration towards the continuous development in the County. Focusing not on one particular development or issue, Hazell simply cautioned council on the building boom reminding them not all available land has to be used for development.

“The number of homes on my street has doubled in the last five years and I live in a farm community. It seems each day as I drive to and from work there is another being built or a building lot being sold off.” She stated. Though it is wonderful to reside in a beautiful area where so many other people wish to live, Hazell added, but there is also a down side.

Having one of the highest construction rates in the province us nothing to be proud of even if residential growth can be pitched as an economic growth feature but not all land needs to be sold off, she said.

“Once all the land in our community is developed it’s gone forever. Sustainable development is an oxymoron, there is nothing sustainable about development,” she told council. “Sooner or later all of our land will be gone, our raw resources will be used up and then what?”

It is understandable that long-time residents of the County do not support the economic, social and environmental changes taking place but what is interesting it that urban transplants, new residents who have come to the County from cities in search of quality of life amenities criticize the changes as well. My research suggests that these transplants want the County to remain the rural paradise they moved to even though the occurrence of urban migration contributes heavily to the current wave of changes in the County. Such contradiction and complications are indicative of the slew of attitudes in the County and perhaps explains why so many issues are contested. The range of opinions and attitudes hinders the ability of County planners and managers to direct the development and steer its future direction, one government employee expressed his frustration with the contrasting views.

Mrs. G commented:

“The County was this paradise before all the new people came and in the last 50 years there has been an economic down slide, so while it was still a paradise it was secret and preserved for the longtime residents, there was this void and not even growth or maintenance of sustainability almost. So what the new people do is that they bring in a vibrant city, some economic gains and so there's a trade-off, some people say, we liked it the way it was, let's close the bridge down now, well we also want amenities and we want jobs for our youth, we want agriculture to be sustainable and so on, we want our taxes to be low but we sell our property to the city guy for double and triple and we are happy with that, so once again you are damned if you do and damned if you don't. It is Canada it is an open society and people can move freely, whether they want to leave or whether they want to come. It is a challenge, I feel honestly for the most part that it is a fairly healthy change and exchange, however, sure there is going to be resentment, but I also think that those who are unhappy and resentful are also benefiting in some ways as well. People don't like change typically and change is difficult especially in a community that hasn't changed a lot in quite a longtime, but we are evolving right now, there is kind of a revolution, it is going pretty fast, it is kind of almost Toronto speed for Prince Edward County, this is a pretty big shift for any community let alone a rural community.”

5.5 ‘Crisis’ at the Regent Theatre

As mentioned in chapter 4 the Regent Theatre which is located in the centre of Picton's downtown is the County's largest, oldest and most symbolic cultural facility. In 1994 after many decades of uncertainty the theatre was purchased by the Regent Theatre Foundation which is a community based, not-for-profit organization. In 1998 after years of upgrades and repairs the theatre was re-opened and began putting on concerts, movies and live theatre. In recent years one of the summer's biggest attractions in the County had been the summer theatre festival at the Regent Theatre. The live theatre offerings attracted locals, tourists and weekend residents alike and is credited as being one of the catalysts that helped rejuvenate the County's economy and spearheading the current cultural renaissance. In the summer of 2004 the Regent Theatre advertised its summer festival all over the County, Theatre Passe Muraille was returning for another year of new performances and I was looking forward to studying the synergistic effects

of live theatre on the County's economy. Although the summer theatre season started according to plan the summer theatre festival was cancelled two weeks later and the severity of the Regent Theatre's financial situation was revealed to the public. For the remainder of the summer the financial 'crisis' at the Regent Theatre became the hottest topic in town and during my fieldwork I was bombarded with commentary concerning the situation. The following section chronicles the events of the 'crisis' and presents some observations about how the community reacted during the ordeal.

On July 14th 2004 it was announced that the summer theatre season at the Regent Theatre was to be cancelled two weeks after opening because of poor ticket sales and financial concerns. The news came as a shock to the community and business owners along Picton's Main Street who enjoyed positive economic spin-offs from the audiences the theatre had attracted in recent years. In addition, the Regent Theatre Foundation laid off its permanent staff. Table 5.11 and 5.12 contain excerpts from newspaper articles pertaining to these events.

***Table 5.11 Summer Festival hits financial wall by: Rick Fralick
The Picton Gazette July 14th 2004 Page 1***

Poor ticket sales and mounting production costs have forced the Regent Theatre Foundation to cancel its County Summer Festival less than a week into what was to have been a six week run. Of the four Theatre Passe Muraille productions supposed to be in play from July 2 to August 14th, only the musical *Duets* and the drama *Al Purdy at the Quinte Hotel* ever saw the light of day.

"Ticket sales were absolutely horrible and we were getting deeper and deeper into a hole," confirmed Judy Fraser, marketing and development manager at the Regent Theatre.

***Table 5.12 Regent Theatre staff let go by: Rick Fralick
The Picton Gazette July 14th 2004 Page 1***

Four staff members of the Regent Theatre have been laid off in the wake of a decision last week to cancel the County Summer Festival.

The board of the Regent Theatre Foundation decided Monday morning to lay off its marketing and development manager, its administrative manager, and two box office staff.

Many people in the community were understandably upset, confused and saddened over the cancellation of the summer theatre season. There was no advanced warning and no indication of financial troubles, this left many scouring the local newspapers for answers about the ‘crisis’ at the Regent Theatre. There was also a good deal of resentment and anger directed at the Regent Theatre Foundation Board of Directors. To clear the air and explain the situation the chairman of the board at the time, Willem Maas, made the following comment which can be seen in table 5.13.

Table 5.13 What is wrong with the Regent Theatre?
A comment by Willem Maas of the Regent Theatre Foundation
The Picton Gazette July 14th 2004 Page 5

Take an aged building, four years of costly summer productions with little box office support, maintenance and repair expenses that would cripple any enterprise, and an appalling membership of a mere 250 members, mix all ingredients well and you have the recipe for what happened at The Regent Theatre last week.

Since 1996, more than 80 directors have served on the Foundation Board, each bringing his or her own commitment and expertise to solve the problems faced by the Regent. The current board is no exception. We never worked as a more determined and committed group of County people, giving it their all to make a success out of this endeavor.

We all lose – the community at large; the staff members who worked so hard to keep the doors open; the many volunteers who have helped gladly with needed tasks; the directors, both past and present, who gave freely of their time to make a success of the theater; the benefactors who on many occasions gave generously to fund the essentials for the theater’s continued operation; the local suppliers who patiently waited to get paid for work done; the business sponsors who stepped up top the plate every time we asked; the visionaries who saw a jewel in Picton’s downtown core that could be a viable centre for the visual performing arts community and the actors and crew, with their tremendous skills, who brought a first class summer season to Picton and had to be sent home because there was no more money to continue.

The cancellation of the summer season has left us profoundly sad. So much promise was finally wiped by a few seminal events: poor ticket sales (only four for last Wednesday’s Al Purdy show), grant delays, intense cash flow pressure from high production costs, and the burden of maintain a building in disrepair – as on opening day then the waste pipe under the auditorium broke, sending rivulets of sewage down the auditorium floor.

This board used every ounce of its energy to make the Summer Festival work. We were encouraged to forge ahead by generous sponsor support and by the grant opportunities that were to come about, but all that meant very little when seats were not sold, robbing us of an opportunity to re-coup the costs incurred.

Everyone in this community needs to look into their own hearts and see what difference they can make to support the Regent Foundation in its time of crisis – before it is too late.

As the news of the cancellation sank in, the County's citizens began to remember how empty Picton's downtown felt before the Regent Theatre was re-opened in 1994. There was talk about how the lack of a summer theatre season would hurt tourism which would in turn negatively affect other sectors of the County's economy. According to merchants located on Main St., Picton, the Regent Theatre is the centre of the downtown, physically and symbolically. The theatre's ability to attract theatre, concert and movie goers generated spin-off business for the surrounding business. To create further synergy some business owners had altered their store hours to take advantage of the 'theatre' rush.

Mr. B commented:

"There had been an initiative by the Merchants Association, where anybody that works within a reasonable distance of the Regent Theater would keep their store open late on theatre nights. And I certainly bought into that when the theatre opened on Friday. Tuesday, which was the first night they were showing a new play I had several groups come in here on their way to the theater. So at least a quarter of my days take took place in about an hour and a half between five and seven, when the people were going to the theatre. And I can identify groups as theatergoers. And then Wednesday, they canceled their performance and Thursday they shut the show down. But I'm sure if they had kept that summer program going I would have seen quite a spin off of people coming down on the way to the theatre, there's a lot of synergy. For example, on Sunday afternoons in the winter they show a two o'clock, matinee and I open eleven to four. Between twelve-thirty and two I see a big rush of people who come in and browse or have lunch before they go to the movie. So having that as a viable entity is really very important to me as a business person."

Interviews with business owners produced accounts relating to the boost in business the Regent Theatre generates for local shops and revealed a common fear among these shop owners that the cancellation of the summer theatre season would have negative repercussions for Picton's economy, examples are shown below. Content analysis of local newspaper articles pertaining to the Regent Theatre saga confirm these findings, table 5.14 contains excerpts from on such article.

Mr. M. commented:

“Last year I sold a lot of matted prints with the theatre on it, the people buying them were visiting or living here for the summer and they wanted to take a souvenir home with them.”

Mrs. R. commented:

“My thoughts on the theatre is that it is critical to downtown Picton, it is very much a focal point for Picton, and not many communities have a historic theatre, especially one that size, the problem with something that old though it is that it takes quite a lot of money in upkeep. So I really believe that the town should ensure that the theatre remains viable, I think the negative spin-off of the Regent Theatre closing would impact and affect a lot of businesses.”

Table 5.14 Local businesses will feel loss of live theatre by: Bruce Bell
The County Weekly News July 16th 2004 Page 2

The cancellation of the 2004 Summer Festival will be felt by more than theater lovers, according to members of the town’s business community.

The series which was cancelled less than a week after its 2004 opening has left business owners in Picton shaking their heads in disbelief.

“It’s one less reason for people to come to this area in the evening,” said Alexandra Bake who owns Olivia & Co. Fine used Books on Main St. “The theatre is an event, not to say going to the movie isn’t, but it’s not the same. People going to the movies don’t usually go out for dinner and browse around in the shops and when the theatre was on, it was always quite busy down here so it’s going to hurt everybody.”

Prince Edward County’s economic development officer Dan Traylor said it wouldn’t be only restraints feeling the pinch of losing the summer series.

“It’s going to have a negative impact on all of Prince Edward County and Picton’s economy in particular,” he said. “It’s still too early to put a dollar figure on it but it’s not only the restaurants that will lose but book stores and shops of every kind will suffer not having a successful theatre in the downtown area.”

Chamber of Tourism and Commerce of Prince Edward County general manger Lawrie Ackerman, said the ripple of the summer cancellation would be felt throughout the community.

“It’s going to be a real loss if we can’t maintain it. You can’t possible put it into numbers at this point,” she said, “certainly business in the immediate area will feel it but I also know that people have moved here and chosen this area because we have a live theatre. So if we can’t maintain the theatre then we’re possible talking about it affecting things like home construction.”

It is clear that the Regent Theatre is the focal point of Picton’s downtown, the main figurehead of the County’s arts community and an amenity which serves to differentiate the

County's offerings from rival towns, all of which improves the County's ability to attract tourists, new residents and members of the 'rural' creative class. During the weeks directly after the Regent Theatre Board's decision to cancel the summer season there was a buzz on the streets as everybody wanted to talk about the theatre, and the local newspapers were publishing numerous articles and letter from the community pertaining to the 'crisis' at the Regent. Ironically some business owners found that the cancellation improved their sales because so many people were flocking to Picton's downtown to hear the latest news about the Regent.

Mrs. Q commented:

"Since the recent attempts to bring the Theatre back to life, we have noticed an incredible increase in the number of people who are in the stores. Yeah, because there has been a rallying, and it is amazing actually I've never seen this in this community before. So we have tapped into a vein of community spirit, but it also has people coming downtown, everybody wants to talk about it, people go into stores now specifically to talk about it. And as far as I'm concerned anything that brings anyone into my store is a good thing.

The first formal public meeting about the Regent Theatre's financial crisis and the first opportunity for the community to express their opinions came on Saturday July 24 2004. Table 5.15 shows an excerpt from an article in the Picton Gazette about the meeting.

***Table 5.15 Meeting will decide future of Regent by: Rick Fralick
The Picton Gazette July 21st 2004 Page 1***

The future of the Regent Theatre – and whether or not it has a future – will be decided, or at least discussed, at a special general meeting set for this Saturday, July 24, at 10:30 a.m. at the theatre. The meeting is open to the public although only the approximately 250 members of the Regent Theatre Foundation would be entitled to vote on any motions forthcoming. The existing 11-person board of directors, chaired by Willem Maas of Picton, remains in place until the meeting and will take its direction according to the wished of the general membership.

While attending this meeting I witnessed and documented the range of opinions and emotions expressed by the audience of over 350 members of the County's community. The meeting served

three functions; the first was to inform the members of the Regent Theatre Foundation, who have voting rights and number around 250 of the Regent's financial crisis which necessitated the cancellation of the summer season and cessation of activities at the Theatre. Second, membership would vote on the resignation by the current 11 member board and the proposal to install a new board. Finally, the meeting provided a forum in which questions about the situation could be asked, blame could be laid and ultimately suggestions for the Regent's future could be heard.

5.5.1 A New Board a New Vision for the Regent Theatre

Due to the large capital losses and fear of increased indebtedness the 11-member board of directors tendered their resignation at the meeting. The board cited its failure to turn things around, their collective exhaustion, and their wish step aside and let a new board take the reins. The new board which was announced at the meeting first presented its platform and then was voted in by the membership explained some its initiatives and strategies for turning the Regent Theatre around. Marrying sound business and theatrical practices was presented as a way to reverse the theatre's decline. By being fiscally conservative and presenting theatre and offerings that appeal to the wider community the new board expressed hope that the Regent Theatre could regain the support of the community which had been lost to some extent because of the experimental theatre which had not been popular with the local majority in the County. There was also a proposal to separate the cost of running the Regent Theatre's artistic offerings from the cost of maintaining the dilapidated building itself which apparently costs over \$100,000 a year to heat alone.

5.5.2 Voices from the Crowd

For the remainder of the meeting people went up on stage and voiced their opinions about topics ranging from who to blame for this ‘crisis’ to what to do about it. There were three important recurring themes that emerged from the testimonials. The first was that a successful community theatre needs community support and that the County as a whole needs to step up.

“I just want to briefly mention how wonderful it is to see this many people out here today but starting the day today we had 205 members of our community that are members of the Regent Theatre Foundation with a population of 25,000 people. We sold 24 memberships today because people wanted to come here and express their voice, and if this is truly going to work we need way more community support. I encourage everybody who doesn't hold a membership now to buy one today and tell everyone you know and all of your friends to come down here and get a membership, because ultimately, the theatre will only continue if the community supports it.” – (loud applause)

“It is about time that the business community of Prince Edward County supported one of the greatest assets this community has ever had. – (loud applause) This is about business, you want to sell houses you better have a vibrant arts community. You want to attract people to retire to this community, you want to attract new businesses you better have a vibrant arts community. It's good business, it's not good arts and our community needs to come together to support the initiative of this group.” – (loud applause)

The issue of municipal funding for the Regent Theatre came across loud and clear during the meeting and in newspaper articles. The municipality's promotion of the arts, heritage and culture in town plans and economic development initiatives and the lack of municipal funding for the Regent Theatre is seen as counter-productive and a major reason why the Regent struggles to compete with community theatres in neighboring communities. Tables 5.16 and 5.17 contain excerpts from local newspaper articles.

Mrs. V (a former Board member) commented:

“Another interesting thing is that the Regent Theatre has never had support by the local municipality, until the past couple of years and they finally clued in and Dan Taylor has been a big help to say this is important, they have clued in that the Regent Theatre is important because it ties together the arts, the wine industry and the downtown of Picton so they have recently started to support the theater. They use to give us grants of \$5,000 a year and last year they gave them \$50,000. So it is a start, it should be a lot more but it

is something. I think almost all of the other theatres are owned by the municipality, we are not at the Regent so we have to pay taxes, we show movies so we are not tax exempt as a strictly live theater.”

Table 5.16 Why is the Regent Theatre going under?

**A letter by: Norma Currah
The Picton Gazette July 21st 2004 Page 4**

I believe it is a cumulative effect of several factors. Why are the Stirling Festival shows sold out with a sizable percent of County people attending? Could it be because the town of Stirling owns and maintains their gem. Our County Council preferred to contribute offer \$100,000 to a Mississauga company for high speed internet service rather than invest in our “gem.”

Table 5.17 Staff laid off as Regent Theatre mulls next move by: Jack Evans

The County Weekly News July 23rd 2004 Page 1

The pressure of trying to meet operating and production costs on top of massive capital repairs and improvements have taken a toll on the present and past boards.

(Willem Maas) referred to other small-town theatres, successful operations like Stirling and Port Hope.

“That’s the difference between municipal councils and communities that take an interest, he said. He admitted that Prince Edward County this year gave the Foundation a generous grant of \$50,000, but almost \$20,000 of that was returned to the county to cover back taxes. Efforts to have the theatre operate tax-free have failed. The county has agreed to lower the burden to 40 per cent of the tax, Maas said.

The municipality’s lack of financial support for the Regent Theatre which is seen as the County’s most symbolic cultural facility appears to be a serious contradiction and one that can hinder the development of the County’s new economic base. According to the accounts presented above, further research and common sense, most community theatres are supported and subsidized with state capital, hence the term public-private partnership. The logic for this is born out of an understanding that a vibrant venue for live theatre will attract tourist and local dollars not only to the theatre but to the downtown core and adjacent businesses as well. Moreover, if the County’s future lies in being a creative rural milieu, the Regent Theatre is essential beyond its immediate ticket sales because it valorizes Picton and the County as a creative place to visit and relocate to. How, therefore, can a community such as Prince Edward

County which according to planning documents and published development strategies is trying to promote itself as a life-style and tourist destination full of arts and cultural amenities not support its most visible cultural entity? As I asked this question some interesting responses arose; according to local artists and event organizers who have asked the council for financial support for cultural activities the council does not heed the advice of the County's planners and marketers who advocate supporting the arts and cultural community.

Mr. P commented:

"We need more funding for the arts, and whether that comes provincially or locally we need the arts to be recognized as one of the four pillars of economic development. And even though the powers to be have heard that it has happened, honestly, many of the counselors are not arts savvy, there are a few of them that really are, and are involved a lot in performing arts or have husbands or wives who are artists and really understand. But many of them or the majority of them don't, and have looked on it as church bizarre type of thing, and can't really get past that.... It is frustrating because they would much rather give money to the hockey team or the RAF Museum in Trenton. They came to ask for money for the RAF Museum in Trenton and the council gave them huge bucks, but they won't support local artists."

Mrs. Q commented:

"First and foremost, I would get that stupid council to start taking into account the importance of the cultural economy, they budget the same amount for both the Chamber of Commerce and Taste the County what they got from council last year and yet offer more money to things like the cement plant which is obviously a dying industry, is never to go anywhere and is never going to expand, but they tend to think of that is very important, I think because it is big and physical and historical. They just have no idea, the work that could be done if you just put some money into it and into promoting the County as a destination for artists and entertainers and people like myself who are in the sort of sideline businesses attached to culture. If there was that financial incentive to open up things, we could make this County into another say Niagara-on-the-Lake. I mean we have that potential, but I feel that the policymakers are clinging to this outdated notion of the County as being half industrial type jobs but of course except for the cement plant all of the plants are closed, and on the other hand also agriculture which of course, no farmer makes any money."

Clearly there is a perception that council does not give enough support to cultural activities, and the Regent Theatre has suffered greatly because of those decisions. To not give tax breaks and

subsidies to a building that costs \$100,000 a year to heat and cool and one that has money multiplying capabilities in Picton's downtown and the County on the whole is counterproductive.

The most heated topic relating to the operation of the Regent Theatre is the issue of programming. Several strong opinions came across in my interviews and analysis of local newspaper articles, including numerous calls to put on productions that will actually appeal to County locals and leave the experimental theatre to sophisticated art lovers in Toronto.

Mr. B commented:

"I liked theatre Pass Muraille but I could see them in Toronto and if I come from Toronto I don't need to come here to see theatre Pass Muraille. I can get that kind of cutting-edge theater in Toronto.... There is a bit of an elitist group too in the County that in their mind and maybe in mine too, that we read better books and watch better theatre so we want to make a distinction, so if you say I'm going to bring in Oklahoma they say oh God but if Oklahoma fills the theatre then that's what you should be bringing in. Not all the time but some of the time so when you do want to bring in a theatre Pass Muraille or some cutting-edge show or whatever, it doesn't happen for so long that nobody goes, and it also gives people who might not have that kind of taste and opportunity to try it out."

Mr. H commented:

"It is interesting because I was actually on the previous Regent Theatre board and I actually feel strongly that if the community theatre is going to be successful it has to cater to the community first and foremost and the tourists second. I can still remember the first board meeting I went to I said we have to look at the County consumers as our bread and butter and the tourists as our gravy, because until we develop something that is at a Shaw or Stratford level we can't expect people to come here for theater and even then we have to look at the type of season that Shaw and Stratford have had this year, their numbers are down. Somebody said the other day that they felt it was because their programming was weak, I think our programming has been weak for the two years that theater Pass Muraille was there because it was very experimental theatre. And that has a very small appeal, our proven successes have been in community-based theatre like Macato and the community theatre group. Look at communities like Sterling and their success, the Empire Theatre and they are bringing in products that have a broad appeal and while artistically that might not be as avant-garde it doesn't matter if it puts bums in seats. And that is the bottom line, especially when you have a building that sucks over \$100,000 a year in utilities."

The debate over the programming and whether to cater to County locals or tourists is a further extension of the issues surrounding the two-tier economy and social system presented

earlier. It is evident that the Regent Theatre's attempts to cater to tourists and visitors from urban areas come at the cost of ignoring the local community and rural history of the County which further alienates the majority of the population. Consequently, there has been a backlash among long-time residents who do not care for experimental or avant-garde theatre, for example, and who do not support the continuing inundation of tourists and urban transplants and the negative result in this case was a financial crisis at the community theatre which had lost the support of that community. The issue can be reduced to what kind of culture should be promoted, and which group or groups should be catered to. Should the Regent Theatre, for example, cater to long-time residents who favor low-brow productions exclusively, cater to members of the 'rural' creative class who favor high-brow productions or a mix which is suitable for both groups and the range of tourists and part-time residents? The excerpt from Steve Campbell's weekly column shown in table 5.18 sums up this debate succinctly.

Table 5.18 A final word on The Regent by: Steve Campbell
The County Weekly News August 13th 2004 Page 6

There are still a few things that need to be said, so that the mistakes of the past won't be repeated by the new Board. First - and I'm terribly sorry to be the only one to say this out loud – 'Word On The Street' has it that Theatre Passe Muraille is awful.

This, of course, does not mean that they are, in fact, awful. I saw 'Duets' and thought that they were immensely talented. But a large number of people in the County do not want to see them, nonetheless.

As I mentioned in the last column, I heard from many people who were disappointed with last year's productions. They all pointed out their concerns to Regent staff who, I understand, pointed it out to the Board.

Comments made to me ranged from: "The productions were short and rushed, to allow the movie people to come in," and "tickets prices were too high," to comments on the shows that often included the words 'terrible,' 'pointless' and 'drivel.'

One lady told me that she informed the Regent staff. "If they return I will not be buying a single ticket, much less a season ticket."

In response, the Regent Board booked the troupe for another season.

In my mind, if you're going to give the audience more cod liver oil after they've told you they don't like cod liver oil, then you're going to get poor ticket sales.

My point is this, bluntly: You artistic theatre types who enjoy avant-garde and experimental theatre, and can talk for hours about the playwright's crafty manipulation of common drivel, should form yourselves into one group, pile into a bus, and go to one of the many Toronto clubs which cater to people who enjoy listening to nonsense while they sip lattes.

Frankly, in Picton, we don't need any more of that. What the Regent needs is a few productions that don't cost over \$100,000 to stage, and which draw an enthusiastic audience of more than five people.

So the rest of you can laugh and roll your eyes every time 'My Fair Lady' or 'The Mousetrap' is mentioned as a possible Regent production. You can snicker at the common peasants who are ignorant enough to ask for entertainment in return for their ticket. By the same token, I refuse to hang my head in shame because I prefer the Beatles to Beethoven. I don't claim to be sophisticated because, frankly, sophisticated people are very serious about their entertainment and, don't appear to have much fun.

I know it's hard to turn a huge profit with only 350 seats, especially if you want to keep ticket prices low to fill the house, but I believe that a lot of little performances that fill seats is better than four that draw 20 people.

Despite the financial crisis which mired the summer tourist season of 2004 and threatened to close the County's biggest cultural facility and the divisive arguments over the Regent Theatre's programming the crisis also served to unify the community. In an effort the

raise money for the Regent the new board organized a benefit concert, details are provided in the excerpt from a local news paper article shown in table 5.19.

***Table 5.19 Local musicians rally to Regent's aid by: W. Brice McVicar
The Picton Gazette August 4th 2004 Page 3***

Many have performed on the stage of the Regent Theatre in Picton but this week familiar faces will return to the stage in the hopes of saving it.

Over a dozen of Prince Edward County's most enduring performers will share the stage on Thursday, Aug. 5 beginning at 7:30 p.m. in a benefit concert to assist the Regent Theatre Foundation's efforts to decrease a debt load over \$790,000. The benefit concert marks the first major fun-raising endeavor staged to begin the attack on the debt since the Foundation's board announced the cancellation of the summer festival last month.

"We want to continue that community awareness," explained David Sweet, Action Chair of the Regent Theatre Foundation. "It's still open and we want the community to know that. We're still showing movies, we're still trying to get acts on the stage..."

The goal of Thursday's concert is \$7,000 which could be reached should the show completely sell put. Tickets are selling for a requested \$20 each though Sweet noted some people are purchasing the tickets at higher prices or if they buy two tickets simply pay with a \$50 bill and say 'Keep the change'.

I bought a ticket and attended the benefit show to see how the community would react to the recent events, I was interested to see how much the community would support the Regent economically through memberships and donations, who among the community would attend and what the mood would be. Economically, the benefit concert was a huge success with a sold out theatre, over one hundred new memberships being sold and numerous donations being made, some for over \$1,000.

Mr. B commented:

"We sold the whole theatre, I think we probably made about \$10,000 last night, because we would make about \$7,000 in ticket sales at minimum because we were saying \$20 a ticket which was the minimum donation but many people paid \$40 or more for the ticket, and then Currah's came and they were giving \$2.50 for every drink sold, and then T-shirts, CD sales some of the artists gave five dollars off of every CD, plus concessions, so I'm just guessing but it would not be unheard-of if it was around \$10,000 in one night. And the pledges were good as well, and you heard probably that somebody came in this morning and dropped off a check for 1,000 bucks, this morning I got an e-mail and someone I know has a bed-and-breakfast and they're getting together with 10 other bed-

and-breakfast's just in Picton and they want to do a Christmas House tour, these houses are huge historic buildings and people would go to these houses and tour them and they were looking for a Charity to do this for, they would charge \$15 and it promotes their bed-and-breakfast because they're beautifully decorated, and they want to donate the proceeds to the Regent.”

While \$10,000 is small compared to the amount of debt the Regent faces, the public outpouring of support suggests that the community wants to save the theatre. Moreover, the pledge of economic support from the businesses within the County’s retailing and hospitality sectors is further evidence of the economic synergy and interconnectedness described in the model shown in Table 4.18. As the County’s oldest and most visible cultural industry its continued operation is essential to that model of economic organization, without the arts and cultural industries tourism and in-migration will decrease which will have negative consequences for the interconnected service providing sectors such as retailing and hospitality. The Regent, as the County’s number one cultural amenity also helps to attract members of the ‘rural’ creative class and, therefore, is a key component of the County’s new creative economy.

The County’s recent economic development strategies, which cater to tourists and the ‘rural’ creative class, attempts harness the economic spin-offs these groups create. In so doing, it has produced several spaces of economic and social contestation within the County. While this chapter demonstrated some of these contested issues such as the two-tier economic and social system, it is important to note that this cannot be understood simply as tourists and urban transplants versus longtime residents of the County. Some longtime residents have benefited tremendously from the arrival of tourists and retirees either through the sale of land at inflated prices or by providing the newcomers with services. People working in the trades have reaped the rewards of the new residential and commercial developments. The real disadvantaged or marginalized group are those who cannot participate in the County’s new creative economy,

people who do not have land or services to sell and are consequently left out of the new economic model. The current challenge for the County's planners and politicians, therefore, is to balance the benefits of the new economic development among all the citizens by allowing them to participate in some way so that they are not left behind.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Overview

This final chapter will examine whether the model of a creative economy in a rural setting discussed in chapter 2 was supported by the evidence presented in chapter 4 and chapter 5. This research project investigated the use and effectiveness of culturally driven strategies for economic development and social restructuring in Prince Edward County, Ontario. The goal was to examine the validity of these ideas in rural settings and to ascertain the positive and negative ramifications for struggling rural communities if they pursue strategies based on creative industries. While the findings are exploratory in nature and can for the most part only be applied to the study site of Prince Edward County itself some key conclusions can be made.

6.2 For Better or Worse?

Pondering the effectiveness of the County's recent economic development strategies it is clear population growth, economic development and an infusion of wealth and capital into the County has helped to remedy some aspects of the rural development problem. But as chapter 5 explained, these economic benefits have been accompanied by some destructive social developments as well. There is an expanding two-tier economic and social system which is threatening to destroy the County's social cohesion and alienate a large proportion of the County's population. The new wave of economic development has also, to this point, failed to improve the economic opportunities for young people who continue to leave the County. In addition, the development has placed the County's rural environment in danger of being over-commodified and lost forever.

It is my fundamental belief, therefore, that some of Florida's ideas, modified to a rural or small town context, help to understand the recent development in Prince Edward County. If the County's recent economic development is compared to Florida's intended outcomes for urban areas the most flawed aspect of the County's strategy is its failure to attract firms and workers in the knowledge sectors and to create stable and well-paying jobs for the County's workforce. Having said this, it has been argued that the recent economic development in the County should not be compared to Florida's creative class argument which is designed for use in urban areas, but rather understood as a new variant of the creative economy based on a creative lifestyle, particularly for the migrants in rural areas.

6.3 Are These Strategies Transferable?

It has been pointed out that culturally driven strategies for economic development were originally designed and intended for use in urban areas and researches are currently debating the widespread applicability of such strategies in different cities around the world. As communities like Prince Edward County continue to adapt and implement these strategies in rural settings the question of transferability among different rural communities has become significant.

According to an article published by the County Gazette on May 20, 2005 the County is being recognized as a "model rural community on Cultural Planning linked to economic development." This assessment is troubling; to call anything a model usually implies that it has been successfully tested, but the results of this research project suggest that the County's strategies while positive in some ways are far from being tested and free of flaws. Furthermore, calling the County a successful model strategy encourages other rural communities to adopt similar strategies, and this is problematic and potentially dangerous. Each rural community is

different and, therefore, any development strategies should be designed with specifics and not ideas borrowed from cities or other rural communities with different circumstances and resources. The County, for example, is blessed with natural and developed amenities which many other rural communities lack and this makes any attempt to simply emulate the County's recent experience impossible and inadvisable.

6.4 The Rural Creative Class in Prince Edward County and Beyond

The primary goals of this research project were to examine and document the economic development currently taking place in Prince Edward County, and to ascertain whether or not a 'rural' creative class which is distinctive from Florida's urban creative class is congregating in the County. Although I have chronicled the County's evolving economy, analyzed the new economic base and produced some preliminary commentary on the presence and characteristics of a rural creative class in the County, the thesis has posed as many questions as it has answered.

The thesis did not, nor could, resolve issues relating to the identity and stratification of the County's rural creative and service classes. Specifically: who makes up the different classes? how did they get there? how did the two groups interact with each other? how do members of the local service class resist the economic and social subordination of the creative class? and how are issues of race, gender, class, tolerance and identity experienced in rural communities like Prince Edward County?

Florida's work on the creative class and the new creative economy endeavors to cluster different people into simplified categorizations of class and to extract the essential characteristics of each class. For example, Florida identifies a creative class, a service class and a working class and then explains the characteristics which define each group. In this thesis I categorized different groups of people and analyzed different forms of economic activity but the weakness or

incompleteness of this form of research and analysis is that it fails to consider in sufficient depth the interactions of these classes. Given the constraints of time and resources I took the first step which was to classify and organize, but I understand and acknowledge that rigid categories are not reality; the most interesting thing about the County is its complexity and dynamic social framework. Although this thesis focused on the County's new wave of economic development the corresponding social transformation is equally valid and worthy of further research.

The remainder of this concluding section will present some avenues for further research. I think the rural creative class should be analyzed further, specifically the role of real artists or the super creative core, to use Florida's terminology and the entrepreneurs and professionals. As it stands there seems to be a group who are creative and actually produce art in the County and another group who do not produce but enjoy consuming art and unique cultural experiences. Further research may reclassify this second group as either a professional or an entrepreneurial class who generate economic development through cultural consumption rather than cultural production.

Florida states that all human beings are inherently creative but concedes that only about 30 percent of the American workforce is fortunate enough to be able to work at jobs which allow them to use their creativity. Moreover, Florida explains that members of the creative class prefer active forms of recreation while members of the service class and working class prefer passive forms of recreation. Further research in the County could examine the ways in which the County's service class expresses their creativity through social clubs, for example, and to what extent the recreation preferences of the County's classes differ.

In this thesis I suggest that the County's expanding elite class is subordinating the service class and is taking over many social and political functions in the County; it would be interesting

to examine how the marginalized groups resist and promote their own culture. There is evidence that the marginalized groups stick together and enjoy “popular” activities such as ice fishing and socializing in working class bars in Wellington which the rural creative class usually avoid. The examination of these social divisions is not new: in *Cultural Planning*, Evans (2001) contrasts the pleasure gardens and symphonies enjoyed by the refined professional class, and the music halls, saloons and gin palaces frequented by the working classes of industrial Europe. Further exploration of such issues of power and resistance and the experience of the rural creative class and a rural service class would be of great value.

One of Florida's core arguments is that places need to be tolerant if they are to attract talent. Because members of the creative class are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, these individuals seek out places to live and to work where neighbors are tolerant and accepting. I would not characterize the County as being an overly tolerant or diverse community, and unlike the migration occurring in Toronto, which increases the city's level of ethnic diversity, the recent migration of retirees and new residents to the County further entrenches its predominately Anglo-Saxon heritage and demography. My research indicates that there is a sizable gay community developing in the County, but further research could study the collective experience of this group, and examine in more general terms how Florida's ideas of tolerance apply to the rural creative class.

Much needed is further research which presents comparisons and alternatives to the County's recent economic development strategies which are predicated on cultural industries, and the consumption of tourists, retirees, and the emerging rural creative class. As I have stated previously, I am concerned that other rural communities which are struggling with the symptoms of the rural development problem will blindly adopt the unproven strategies currently being

employed in the County. A brief survey of economic development initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and sustainability of rural communities reveals that positive economic and social changes can be achieved without promoting cultural industries and attracting new residents or tourists.

The work of Massam and Esparcia (1998) on the European Union's L.E.A.D.E.R. (Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) program, for example, suggests that bottom-up programs which emphasize local and cooperative financial institutions and entrepreneurship can generate economic spin-offs and social cohesion in depressed rural communities. Massam and Esparcia (1998, 52) explain that in Mondragon, in the Basque Region of northern Spain, the empowerment of the community led to motivated citizens who established new businesses with the aid of start-up funding and community assistance with the development of business planning. Moreover, it is argued that this regional integration “provides a viable structure through which sustainable development philosophies could be implemented,” and a system where the local population is not marginalized by the capitalist mode of production.

The work of Jennings (2002) on the social and economic issues relating to bank branch closures in rural communities in Australia supports the argument for local and collective financial institutions. Jennings explains that when rural communities who were left without financial services started providing their own, economic development occurred. These communities used their cooperative banking system to encourage entrepreneurship through the issuing of loans and plowed all revenues back into the community which helped in one case to establish business incubator facilities which “helped fledgling businesses on their way to maturity” (Jennings, 2002, 310). Ultimately, as was the case in Mondragon, “through participation, community members gain control over the economic life of their communities

within a self-help framework to identify needs, reach collective decision-making, and take action” (Jennings, 2002, 312).

These two examples have been presented to show that viable alternatives to the cultural strategies for economic development being used in the County exist in other parts of the world. They also serve to justify the need to compare and critically analyze the economic and social experiences which are resulting from the County's new wave of economic development.

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Appendix A Introductory Letter

Culture in the Countryside: a study of economic development and social change in Prince Edward County, Ontario

I am Brian Hracs, a second year graduate student from York University. I am currently working under the supervision of Dr. Glen Norcliffe and Dr. Bryan Massam on a research project in Prince Edward County. I am collecting information about people's opinions on cultural activities in the County. I am trying to assess the ability of interest groups and individuals in small towns to identify and implement cultural policies that will enhance economic activities and affect social change in a positive way.

At this stage I would just like to introduce myself, but I am preparing a questionnaire that I would like to talk to you about later in the summer. Here is my home phone number and email address where you can reach me:

Phone number: 905 508-7494

Email: B_Hracs99@hotmail.com

I would welcome any advice or comments, and over the summer I will be contacting you with further information about my research.

Thank you,

Brian Hracs

Appendix B Informed Consent

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, CANADA

Informed Consent

I agree to participate in the research being conducted by Brian Hracs for the purpose of his MA thesis in Geography. The research seeks to assess the ability of interest groups and individuals in small towns to identify and implement cultural policies that will enhance economic activities and affect social change in a positive way.

I am satisfied that I understand, having received information from the researcher, the nature of the project and the part the information I provide will play. I understand that I will be asked about cultural activities in Prince Edward County and the role of individuals and groups within the County through a semi-structured interview. I also understand that the interview will be recorded. I understand that the data from the interview will be stored in a locked cabinet with only the researcher having access to it and that the data will be destroyed when the research is completed. I understand that I may discontinue participation in the study at any time and that the information will not be used if I decide to withdraw. I understand that I may receive an executive summary of the completed paper, if I request.

I understand that this project has been reviewed and approved through the Ethics Review Process at York University and that I may contact Dr. Glen Norcliffe (Co-Supervisor) (416) 736-2100 x 22475, Dr. Bryan Massam (Co-Supervisor) (416 736-5107) or Alison Collins-Mrakas (Manager of the Research Ethics Office) (416 736-2100 x 55914), if I have any other questions about the research and interview.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Researcher's Signature

Appendix C Questionnaire Instrument

Background and opinions about cultural industries section

1)

Question	Response
Have you lived in the County all your life?	
If No	
Where did you live before moving to the County?	
When did you move to the County?	
Did you move to establish the business?	

2)

Question	Response
Can you tell me a little bit about the nature of your business?	
What is your role in the business?	
Where is this business based?	
How did you get involved with this business?	
Is there any family participation?	
If yes) who is involved, what do they do, and how many hours do they work, during what duration of the year?	
How long have you been involved with this business?	
During what months does the business operate?	
Are you involved in any other business ventures?	
Is this activity your main source of household income?	

3) In your view, what are the major cultural activities in Prince Edward County?

4) What are the characteristics that make the County attractive and for whom?

5) What are the characteristics that make the County unattractive?

6) From 1996-2001 the population of the County declined by 145 people. In your opinion what are the three most important reasons why young people might choose to leave the County?

- 7) Is it difficult for young people to find permanent jobs in the County?
- 8) Are there characteristics that make the County unattractive for seniors?

Economic Development Section

9) Readership of Local Newspapers

Question	Response
Do you subscribe to or buy any or all of the following local newspapers?	
The County Weekly News (y or n)?	
The County Gazette (y or n)?	
The Picton Gazette (y or n)?	
Please indicate which of these newspapers you have read in the last month	
The County Weekly News (last month y or n)?	
The County Gazette (last month y or n)?	
The Picton Gazette (last month y or n)?	

10) Promoting Cultural Industries

Question	Response
Can you identify three articles on culture that you have read about recently?	
In the last month have you searched for or read articles on websites about culture and local development?	
Have you looked at the County website in the last month?	

11) Council Meetings

Question	Response
Have you attended a council meeting this year? If Yes	
When was the last time you attended a council meeting?	
Do you attend more than two council meetings a year?	
Have you attended a meeting of the planning board?	

12) Membership within the County

Question	Response
Are you a member of any associations or groups within the County?	
a) If so	
Could you indicate the name and explain the nature of any associations or groups, and your role in them?	

13) What policies for economic development and social change could be implemented to promote economic development in the County?

14) In Rosebud, Alberta which is a hamlet of 100 people, key actors joined together to open a theatre and acting school to attract tourists. In Plum Coulee, Manitoba the economic development officer discovered that the town had a connection to the founder of the Seagram's whiskey company. He contacted the heir of the company and received funding and planning assistance to restore the town's wooden grain elevator. Do you know any key actors in Prince Edward County who have been influential in this way in terms of bringing about economic development or social change?

15) Is your activity generating economic spin-offs in the County? If so what?

16) Are cultural industries in general generating economic spin-offs in the County?

17) Could you talk about the importance of the Regent Theatre in terms of generating economic spin-offs in the County?

a) In your opinion what will the effect of the Theatre's financial troubles and cancellation of the summer program be on the County in general and specifically on businesses?

18) In terms of actually bringing about economic development and social change, whether that is accomplished by convincing council to go ahead with new initiatives or starting new businesses themselves, could you rate the importance of the key actors using the following categories and elaborate on why you give this rating?

The actions of key actors in the County are the...

- Most important catalyst for development
- One of many important factors
- Of average importance,
- Somewhat important
- Not an important factor at all

19)

Do you know the name of somebody who has written an article about economic development in a media outlet?	
Can you remember the nature of any specific newspaper articles about economic development that you have read?	
b) Do you advertise your business in local media outlets?	
c) Do you find these ads effective?	
d) How else do you promote your industry?	

20) Picton is the main centre of Prince Edward County but there are other small communities in the County which have cultural activities. Can you name five places and activities and show me on the map?

21) Can you list three activities to do in the County during the winter season?

a) Could you elaborate on the difference between the County during the summer and winter seasons?

22) Can you recommend two or three extra people to conduct this interview with?

23) At this point I would like to thank you very much for your time and excellent responses, and ask you if you have any questions or comments for me?

Demography section

The data from these brief demographic questions will be held in confidence and will only be used to better understand the positionality of each respondent. This information is very helpful for my research but if you don't feel comfortable answering any of the questions I understand.

1) Employment and Income:

- a) Can you indicate using the following categories what the gross turnover from your business in the County was last year?

Gross Turnover	Response
(\$0-\$19,000)	
(\$20,000- \$39,000)	
(\$40,000- \$59,000)	
(\$60,000- \$79,000)	
(\$80,000- \$99,000)	
(Above \$100,000)	

- b) Do you have any employees in your business, and what is the breakdown in terms of full time and part time and for how many months of the year do they work? Do family members get involved in the business and in what way?

- c) What are the months of operation for your business?

2) Could you indicated your age using the following categories?

Age Categories	Response
(20-29)	
(30-39)	
(40-49)	
(50-59)	
(60+)	

3) Could you indicate your level of education using the following categories?

Level of Education	Response
(Less than High School)	
(completed High School)	
(College Certificate)	
(Bachelors Degree)	
(Masters Degree)	
(PHD)	
a) If you have a college certificate or higher	
What was your field of study?	