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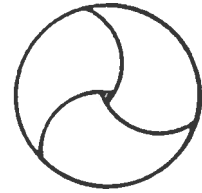
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Implications of Social and Economic Changes on Rural Areas

by Edward J. Blakely and Ted K. Bradshaw

Rural America, long neglected as part of the nation's romanticized past, was nearly forgotten and dismissed in the nation's rush toward an urban industrial society. Population flowed from the farm and countryside into cities during most of this century, and policymakers and academics shifted their attention from problems of rural farm communities and agricultural supports to suburbanization, ghettos, urban crime, race discrimination, and urban ecology. What remained of interest in rural areas was primarily nostalgia and awe at the power of agricultural and related technology to continue to produce massive yearly increases in farm, lumber, and mining productivity, further depleting the need for rural labor (Newby & Buttell, 1980). Today, there remain tendencies to view rural America as an extension of a lost past or as the powerful technological force of agribusiness and mining companies (Shover, 1976).

Rural America should not be neglected or forgotten, however, because it is rich in the things Americans value most. More importantly, rural areas are now experiencing renewed vigor as a result of a population shift to rural areas and small towns. Rural areas increased their populations by 15.4 percent in the 1970 and 1980 decades compared with a national population growth of 10.4 percent. This population turnaround to rural areas forms the base for an advanced industrial growth which is now helping small town rural communities become a frontier of experimentation and innovation with technological, economic and social developments removing barriers that have long hampered rural development. Advanced technology has an impact in rural areas much larger than in increasing agricultural

production. Recent innovations in electronics and communications have created new potential for high technology manufacture; improved transportation has made rural-urban linkages easier and more practical; small scale businesses are opening up many opportunities previously unexploitable in rural labor markets (Brown & Wardwell, 1980:13; *New York Times*, 1980). The rural economy is also changing with the growth of vital service employment and locations for professionals in medicine, law, government, art and other technically sophisticated occupations (Beale, 1980). Finally, the increasingly affluent American population is discovering that rural areas are more conducive to their life-style options both in their working years and during retirement (Blakely & Bradshaw, 1980). At the same time these changes are making rural America more attractive and lucrative, the problems of urban America are growing more complex and more dismal. As a consequence of the renewed population growth in the 1970s, rural America is facing a new set of challenges and opportunities unanticipated for either rural or urban areas (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1980; Deavers & Brown, 1980). It is within the context of these emerging challenges that public policy must be developed for a new socio-economic order in which rural areas may play a more dominant role.

The recent population and economic growth does not mean that the old problems of rural areas no longer exist. As new growth comes to rural areas the relative position of the poor in many cases is not improved. More pockets of poverty and deprivation in rural areas are created and continued as mechanized agri-industry displaces small farmers, as old manufacturing plants are lost

in corporate takeovers, and as continuing pollution of rural water and land resources alters the attractiveness and productivity of many remote locations.

Furthermore, the real distinction between what is rural or urban has been eroded and in many instances erased by new population and economic growth. It is fruitless and perhaps even counterproductive to develop a facile definition of rural. The old census and Department of Agriculture specification for rural places has been overthrown by time and technology. Today the entire nation is socially urbanized in one form or another. Some growing rural locations by population definition have little or no agricultural production or extractive industry, and act as retirement and/or recreation centers. Conversely, some of the richest agricultural land in the nation lies within Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) in California, Texas and Arizona. What is or is not rural depends upon a variety of factors relating to density, economic base, history and culture, factors not captured well by the Bureau of the Census classification. Perhaps a new nomenclature is required to capture the greater variety and distinction in rural nonmetropolitan settings (Brown, 1979). This label does not yet exist. Therefore, in the balance of this article references to rural will be used liberally to describe small cities, towns, places, and rural areas of less than 20,000 in population. Prior to 1960 most of these communities were farm oriented or had other natural (e.g. coal, forest, lakes, wildlife) resource bases. These same areas generally lacked economic or cultural diversity, that is, coal towns were alike, as were mill towns, wheat towns or cow towns. In sum, rurality is, as Fred Schroeder (1980) suggests, more a cultural perception than an absolute standard. Current scholarship on the changing rurality is hampered by an inability to clearly establish what was once rural so as to clearly articulate the changes that are transpiring. Rural, as Liberto suggests, is:

... a mythology ingrained in our historical and literary culture which has portrayed, even to this day, country living and family life as unspoiled, pure and wholesome, free from pressures and tensions while set within idyllic gardens and fields. Completing the romantic version of rural life is frequently the inclusion

of the extended family concept as represented by Grandma and Grandpa who are usually seen as contented sentimentalists, somewhat dull, carefree and most usually perched on a gentle moving swing. . . (1979).

Rural life was seldom, if ever, like this and the characters portrayed in this scenario are the product of Hollywood and rural romanticists of the Mark Twain school. Yet it is this selected romantic view of rural life that is helping to generate a demand for rural living and undergirding the dramatic population reversal.

Exploring Policy Implications of the Population Turnaround

The major changes taking place in rural economies and community structures with the new population growth present both new opportunities and challenges for public policy. However, as Deavers and Brown point out:

Seldom before has a social phenomenon generated so much popular interest as has the population turnaround in rural America and yet resulted in so little new policy and program development (1980:51).

In part this is because there are so many signs in the new growth that it is hard to define problems to work on. It is also due in part to the diverse nature of the new migration—some of it is retirement, some energy based, some high technology industry expansion, and some small city attractiveness. Moreover, the lack of policy attention is due to the need for a unified coalition of organizations representing rural needs and interests. Although these and other reasons apply, there is a need to articulate the implications of the current situation and develop a model that integrates the processes of rural change with an understanding of the opportunities for impacting rural economies. The remainder of this article sketches the implications of the rural turnaround as it relates to:

- 1) increased and intensified societal polarization as educated whites abandon cities for nonmetropolitan life styles;

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- 2) the emergence of a human resource based, rather than physical resource based, economy in the nation with new production activity in rural areas;
- 3) the forces for further class/race segmentation of rural communities; and
- 4) the impact of the new migration on rural political institutions.

Finally, a model is offered for conceptual and policy development within the new rural growth context.

Implication of Reverse Migration for Societal Polarization

The demographic reversal in the flow of the nation's population away from major metropolitan areas is increasingly well documented (Fuguitt & Beale, 1976; Morrison & Wheeler, 1976; Zuiches & Brown, 1978; Brown & Wardwell, 1980). The sunbelt states are leading the trend, but the population movement to rural areas is also occurring in selected areas of the Northeast and Midwest as well. Voss & Fuguitt (1979) report a substantial turnaround of migration in the Upper Great Lakes Region. Similar population reversal has been documented in Pennsylvania (De Jong & Humphrey, 1976), Maine (Ploch, 1978), and Illinois (Sofranko & Williams, 1980). At the same time over 500 rural counties continue to decline even in broad regions of otherwise rapid growth (Deavers & Brown, 1980:60). More important, even in declining areas the rate of out-migration has slowed. This population movement is unlike most of its predecessors in that it is both demographically and community selective.

Frey (1979) demonstrates that the migration from the cities into rural or nonmetropolitan areas has been highest among well educated and skilled white population. The net loss of whites is only partially overcome by continued but slower migration to the cities of some whites and educated minorities; nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly clear that older central cities are net losers of their most industrious white populations (Vinning & Kontuly, 1978; Taeuber, 1972; and Frey, 1979). Conversely, the trend toward nonwhite and foreign-born settlement in major metropolitan areas continues while many small communities remain unable to hold their most able youth. This migration pattern of well educated whites out of the big cities is acting as its own magnetic force propelling more whites out of the big cities in a "leapfrog" action over the suburbs and into small towns and rural areas (Swanson et al., 1979). The migration is

more than an increase in commuting distances; it is a new residency pattern complete with its own sense of social identity (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1980; Hummon, 1978).

It is interesting to note how current socialization has masked some of the real reasons for the population shift. No one wants to say they felt less safe in cities with dominant minority populations. Rather survey data and analysis in the current literature identifies quality life-style and rural atmosphere as the major forces behind the movement to small towns (Blakely et al., 1978; Ploch, 1978; Sokolow, 1977; Voss & Fuguitt, 1979). Underlying these survey responses are the fear and frustration of big city life. As several residents of a small town told David Hummon in his research (1978):

- "In cities, there's too much riff-raff. You have to protect your back all the time"
- "From reading the paper, I'd say cities are unsafe or very unsafe. . . ."
- "First of all, cities are like a magnet for a lot of people who commit crimes . . . especially younger people who are doing a lot of the crimes."

In essence, these people are saying the metropolis is out of control. Many small town emigrants, who would never consider themselves bigoted or prejudiced, associate the loss of control with crime, quality of schools and lowered values resulting from the larger minority population.

As a result of their perceived sociocultural needs, the new small city/rural emigrant does not usually exercise rational economic choice in making the move. Newcomers consistently report that non-economic values are significantly more important than income. Many move from cities without a job in mind or opportunity available (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1980). Thus the rural newcomer may be viewed as an *idee fixe*. While the precise form of the new small town/rural ideology is only now being sketched, certain tenets are clear. It is already apparent as Sofranko and Fliegel (1980) point out that "newcomers to rapidly growing rural areas have different conceptions of what is appropriate and desirable for the communities in which they locate." It is clear that newcomers are seeking community in their transition to small towns. It is also clear they are not abandoning urban life comforts or values, but are superimposing some neoclassical views of the good life onto these smaller places.

The migration to rural areas can only partially be interpreted in the same way as the suburban growth. In

fact, the new rural migrants have a stronger idealism and a stronger motivation for community identity and social integration within their new-found home communities. This new migratory stream represents a more virulent strain of white flight from the central cities which may further polarize the nation's sociopolitical fabric. While the concept of the ideal community as well as the notion of individuals seeking their own destiny have been major forces in the nation's tradition, these values as they are reflected in the rural turnaround, may not be on a collision course with the need to reestablish common national bonds among race, classes, and social institutions.

Implications of a Human Resources Based Economy

Most efforts to stimulate economic growth in rural areas have focused on improving the output of agricultural and natural resources. However, today the major economic growth in rural areas outside the South has been in knowledge intensive enterprises such as computer applications, computer and electronic assembly, optics, information services, printing and publications. The reasons for this form of growth are detailed in *Rural Communities in Advanced Industrial Society* (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1979). In this book it is argued that rural areas offer a very attractive venue for human resource based knowledge intensive industries.

First, it is suggested that rural areas provide the ambience or setting in which scientists and engineers can work creatively without the distraction of urban centers. Also, the cost and availability of land allows for the easy growth in adjacent space of the many interrelated enterprises required for complex sophisticated enterprises. The right land package can be assembled in rural areas without having to rebuild or retrofit existing facilities to new uses. As Jerald Hague put it "plants requiring the latest technology can be built anywhere and the logic of economic factors gives in many instances . . . preference for nonmetropolitan areas" (1979:97). David Birch of MIT adds, "all of a sudden you're at a point in history in which you don't have to be anywhere in particular to do business People are locating where they want to, not where they have to" (*New York Times* 1980).

Further, the expansion of government, post-secondary education, recreation/tourism and other aspects of the service sector in small communities has increased the economic base of many small towns. Between 1962 and 1968, 6.7 million jobs were created in the rural service sector in health, insurance, education,

law and recreation. Today, service employment exceeds 70 percent of the rural work force, having increased at a rate exceeding service employment in metropolitan areas. Service employment has accounted for 81.5 percent of the new rural jobs from 1962 to 1978, many in small business establishments. Further, government facilities ranging from federal tax centers, state highway offices, schools, libraries and health care facilities have improved rural job opportunities appreciably. Transfer payments in the form of social security and government programs are also a new major component of rural wealth. Since these payments follow individuals, it is a source of much new found wealth of many rural communities through retirement populations, disability payments, CETA programs and related government social programs.

Nonmetropolitan places with four-year colleges and universities grew the fastest in the last decade and continue to show the greatest economic diversity and population increases (Fuguitt, Voss & Doherty, 1979). Communities with colleges offer both expanded cultural amenities as well as a skilled labor force for high technology firms. In addition some small towns have been able to build a tourist economy because of their isolation or quaintness, factors which until recently were thought to be liabilities. Other small communities have benefited from the recent leisure boom in skiing, hiking and other wilderness-related recreation (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1978).

Another attractive feature of rural locations is the less complicated government bureaucracy where local small community officials have a substantial enthusiasm for various forms of clean industry (*New York Times* 1980). The reduced union influence also makes it possible for enterprises to control their major labor costs and remain competitive within their industry. They can operate without the encumbrances of union work rules or the inconvenience occasioned by strikes or other forms of labor action. High technology firms are not energy or transportation dependent. Thus, rural locations offer no specific disadvantage in terms of raw materials, resources or markets.

As a consequence, the United States has inadvertently and without master plan developed one of the world's most ambitious and effective rural decentralization schemes. In essence, manufacturing requires rivers, coal, iron, large population and easy access to markets, while knowledge intensive industries require low density environments. The success of the emerging computer and electronics industries, particularly in their decentralized pattern, is a vital element in a national evolution

toward an advanced industrial society. (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1979).

The economic improvement in rural areas is a phenomenon much like the earlier push/pull factor of metropolitan out-migration. That is, the desire of the highly educated population to relocate provides the base for economic growth. The relocating educated population acts as the pull factor for the electronic and other knowledge intensive businesses. On the other hand, the combination of deficient human capital, unions and land assembly problems are "push" factors for human resources firms away from many major metropolitan centers. Similarly, the increased year-round population in rural areas and general affluence has made tourism, leisure and small business opportunities outside of major metropolitan areas more profitable (Edmunds et al., 1980).

The movement of knowledge intensive manufacturing or component development activities, service enterprises, and government to rural areas should not be confused with the development of new intellectual centers. Urban centers like Boston, New York and San Francisco continue to dominate both capital and research developments. However, many assembly, manufacturing and service jobs are moving from the city population to a new base. Alternatively, manufacturers are moving their operations to the site of new human capital away from the city. The implications of this new labor equation on both the urban and rural areas remains unclear. However, it does seem clear that the earlier rural development strategies which focused on attracting industries needs to be reassessed in favor of techniques to improve the community's attraction for a well educated, talented labor force. In addition, rural community development programs will have to be designed to take advantage of this new talent pool as a resource for initiating new businesses and creating new wealth out of the incoming human, rather than the existing physical, resources.

Finally, it is not clear how the emerging economy in rural areas will fare because of recent budget reductions in Washington, D.C. and state governments. The reduction in social programs proposed by the Reagan administration will probably reduce employment prospects and alter the economic base of many rural communities. Our data suggest that reduction in local government employment associated with California's tax initiative, Proposition 13, has not greatly slowed rural growth. Among residents coming into rural counties 10 to 15 years ago, many found good jobs in local government. This greatly slowed after Proposition 13, with government employment now accounting for less than 10 percent of new

employment among newcomers. (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1981). We think similar patterns will apply as federal budget cuts are felt. Growth will continue although many sources of economic growth will be changed from government to private sectors. This itself will not be easy, with a significant number of problems in transition. Furthermore, it may be that the changing balance of programs will hurt urban areas. However, the major implication of reduced federal spending will not be a major deterioration of the new rural economy, as it might have been if the rural economy was largely resource industry based or if support programs were the basis for the majority of the population. With a growing service base and a high technology industry foundation, rural economies are probably past the threshold point for sustaining growth. In brief, the newcomers are not tied very tightly to social programs which may be cut, but the existing poor in rural areas promise to be more seriously affected.

Implications for Rural/Urban Segmentation

National policy has treated rural communities as homogeneously disadvantaged and disenfranchised. As a consequence, even current literature which recognizes the emerging diversity in rural settings continues to focus on the old problems of poverty or underservice (U.S. Senate, 1978; President's Commission on Rural Poverty, 1967). It is true that many of the old problems persist. Rural medical care is frequently not as modern or easily accessible. Rural schools may lack essential equipment and the teachers are less well prepared. Rural family incomes remain below urban family incomes, particularly for nonwhites. While all this remains true and adequately documented, a new dimension is emerging. Rural life is in fact getting a lot better for some and remains both absolutely and relatively worse for many others (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1979). The same factors that contribute to continued unemployment and underemployment persist in spite of new job creation. The new jobs being created in rural areas either demand more skills than the local population possess or the newcomers' superior education makes them more desirable than longtime residents (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1980).

Race and sex are added to education as a continuing force of job discrimination for many rural residents. While there is little current research on the employment opportunities between newcomers and old-timers by race and sex, there is undoubtedly an effect. First, many new jobs are being created where there is not a large or well organized indigenous minority population (e.g., Black, Native American or Hispanic). Data suggest there is little or no migration of minorities from metropolitan to high technology growth communities (Bradshaw & Blakely,

1980). Second, female participation in the labor force in growth areas remains almost entirely in low wage service arenas such as clerical, sales, waitress, needle trades, and light assembly. Female participation in the burgeoning professional fields such as law, accounting, management, and the like in rural areas is far less than the participation rates of females in these same fields in metropolitan regions (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1980; Tweeten, 1980)

While some jobs are created in the public and service sector for minorities, these are usually in the lowest occupational and skill categories. While general employment options and opportunities may be increasing, the segmentation of the labor market is only accentuated. Growth in rural employment is more than offset by declines in urban areas. This situation, Calvin Beale suggests, "raises serious policy questions for the national government . . ." since the government must "deal with declining areas and underused facilities and services in the cities and simultaneously with all of the demands of growth in expanding areas" (*New York Times* 1980). As a consequence there are proposals to ration jobs or plant locations among urban and rural sites through various tax and investment incentives or by outright regulation. Some of this thinking is already being suggested by anti-plant closure groups.

Another emerging source of inequality is the bias in many rural communities toward any improvement in public social welfare and housing services. Research in rural California indicates that newcomers to rural areas generally do not use many of the traditional social welfare services (Blakely & Bradshaw, 1980). More importantly, there is an active civic antagonism toward basic social welfare services such as county welfare, county hospitals and certain aspects of employment services (Blakely & Bradshaw, 1980). With shrinking public fiscal resources there is little doubt that public social welfare services in many rural areas may be drastically curtailed. The net effect of these actions by county and state officials may drive more of the young, undereducated, dependent population from rural areas to the cities. This increases the burden on the strained metropolitan service agencies and makes rural communities relatively better off than urban areas.

Finally, there is an increasing rural social class homogeneity in particular communities. It is similar to the homogeneity of the suburbs of the 1950s and 1960s. The newcomers and remaining oldtimers in growth communities seem to share attitudes and values (Hummon, 1978; Voss & Fuguitt, 1979; Bradshaw & Blakely, 1981). While it is true that among various small communities the value orientation differs (i.e., tourist town, artist

colony, college town, senior citizen community), Schroeder (1980) shows there is remarkable uniformity or "phased covenants" within growing small communities. In some respects it may well be the reemergence of a sophisticated version of the narrow monoculture in the rural past. This single dimensional closeknit and socially suffocating environment is the very aspect of rural life people earlier sought to mitigate by migrating to the cities and that some newcomers rejected in their recent moves from the city and suburbs. Rural communities must now struggle with both the potentials and consequences of the current growth.

The policy implications of continued urban/rural segmentation can be seen in the actions rural communities take to protect or extend perceived values. Some communities have enacted certain forms of growth control (Schwartz & Johnson, 1980); others have withheld taxes or failed to vote new taxes (Hennighn, 1978); others are active in environmental movements and community restoration efforts designed to provide a community identity (Craycroft, 1980); and finally, some communities have enacted land use ordinances designed to keep out factories both to prevent pollution and to stop influxes of lower socioeconomic groups. The dilemmas for policymakers in this situation are socially and morally difficult choices. Each small community acts within its microenvironment to maintain, preserve, or extend a lifestyle or point of view without any deep appreciation for, or understanding of, the consequences of their actions on the social fabric of their community or the nation.

Implications for Governmental Institutions and Social Structure

Recent rural population growth is presenting new challenges for small town civic institutions. The capacity of small local governments, cities, townships, counties, or special districts to meet the needs of the new population is severely strained. Small town governmental structures were developed as maintenance organizations rather than as planning and/or problem-solving institutions. Most small town and county governments were unprepared for the recent migratory stream, and few even now have developed appropriate instruments to control the rising problems.

As Robert Hawkins puts it in his study of *Capacity Building for Small Units of Government* (1980):

"While (rural) growth is a fact it is also a concern The basis for this concern is found in the increased demands for services that new

populations place on existing units of government. Not only do service demands increase but demands of new and different types of service also increase, placing even greater demands on existing service providers Growth also generates its own problems independent of citizens' demands. Growth in rural areas also produces certain natural consequences; the most basic being increased interdependence, which also increases costs."

The recent demands on small local institutions occasioned by growth are made more complex because the growth pattern defies current institutional structures. For example, most of the recent growth in small towns in just beyond local city limits rather than within the city's jurisdiction (Blakely et al., 1978). This complicates rural governmental relationships in several respects. Generally, the nearby city is legally obligated to extend water, sewer, and sometimes fire protection to the new residents with only modest reimbursement for such services. However, the greater problem arises from the new population placing greater stress on existing streets, parks and public spaces both in the city and county. The burdens for these increased maintenance costs are frequently imbalanced. While the county governments encourage new shopping centers on the edge of town in order to collect point of origin sales and property taxes, county officials seldom provide for adequate police protection or assist the city in upgrading auto-circulation systems to accommodate increased traffic congestion. Further, recent rural arrivals are frequently confused about which governmental agency is responsible for which service, leading to possible acrimonious interchanges among local officials in emergency situations such as fires, crime and hospitalization. This clearly shows that small local governments, as Hawkins and others point out, require increased or new capacity (Hawkins, 1980; Waldhorn & Blakely, 1976). The issue is how this capacity can or should be developed in light of continued local chauvinism without any tradition among small towns of sharing resources.

The most obvious answer to the issue of increased governmental capacity is to consolidate small local governments and/or abolish overlapping authorities and districts. However, this remedy seems worse to both new and longtime rural residents than the problems. Both new residents and old-timers overwhelmingly reject consolidated, metropolitan or single authority governments (Blakely et al., 1978). In fact, many new migrants report their reason for moving to their new community is that government is closer and more visible. As one respondent said to David Hummon (1978) about schools:

"In a small town, like I say, you can get acquainted with the teachers; maybe know a lot of the families that your children know. The schools are smaller so they can have better relations with the teacher."

This proximity to governmental apparatus, irrespective of direct participation, has led many small towns and counties to reject Councils of Government (COGs). Some small cities in the Midwest and West have recently developed elaborate barriers to prevent intergovernmental cooperation. Such initiatives can require a 2/3 vote of the residents of the community to enter into any cooperative governmental organization.

Nonetheless, it is imperative for small cities, special districts, counties and other entities to cooperate. As a result, novel mechanisms are being developed by some public officials to meet the challenge. A few small towns are entering into mutual agreements to either merge their planning departments with the county, utilize the state university, or contract with planners specializing in rural areas (Blakely et al., 1978; Blakely & Zone, 1976; Watts, 1980). While small communities may not see the desirability of a multi-governmental form like a COG, they perceive the need for mutual or joint city-county planning.

Another arena of problem solving is emerging in the delivery of expensive public services such as solid waste management, sewage treatment, water, fire protection, and public transportation. In these capital intensive program areas, special districts covering several geographically contiguous communities seem workable and appropriate. Several small Wisconsin jurisdictions have formed limited special organizations by entering into joint powers agreements to provide such basic services as solid waste management via a multi-community non-profit corporation (Wolensky & Miller, 1980).

Within the same genre of the limited special organization or joint powers agreement is the concept of the Ruralplex. This notion was first advanced in Wisconsin by its current governor. The basic idea is for a group of small cities within close proximity to plan for and provide various public and private services for the total group of communities. One community might be the site of the junior college or trade/technical school, while another provides a regional hospital, and a third community acts as a major light industry or high technology center. These same communities might also form a joint authority composed of their city councils or subgroup of council members to provide coordination of regional transportation.

sewage and solid waste management services. While this particular form has not gained widespread acceptance, some elements have emerged spontaneously. Related to this notion is the circuit riding planner, city administrator, or multi-city clerk. These single-function, multi-jurisdictional services have received considerable state and federal support. Thus, growth in rural areas does not mean the blind or even selective application of metropolitan planning or institutional forms (Watts, 1980). It is apparent that new planning and institutional mechanisms are required. These systems can only be devised within the actual environment (Cohen, 1977; Getzels & Thurow, 1980).

Furthermore, J.C. Doherty argues:

"The diversity of people and institutions in nonmetropolitan areas is giving rise to new forms of urbanization at the county and sub-state regional level. In what might be called the 'Countrified City,' small municipalities and open country communities are tied together by the demands and opportunities of common economic, social and cultural pursuits" (1979:56).

The implications for these innovations in rural areas are important to the entire national political system. The reasons for this are:

- 1) Small communities may be able to develop model institutional structures and governmental systems more responsive to current and future needs than urban areas.
- 2) The innovations in regionalism being developed in rural areas may teach governments how to plan, cooperate, and interact without regional governments.
- 3) New rural development policy may emerge in better shape from this form of natural experimentation than from the socioeconomic intervention proposed by development economists over the last several decades.

A Policy Framework and Model for Rural Development

In the next decade, rural areas and small towns will need to experiment with new governmental forms. There will be pressure at the national level to impose cooperation through federal regulation or induce it with govern-

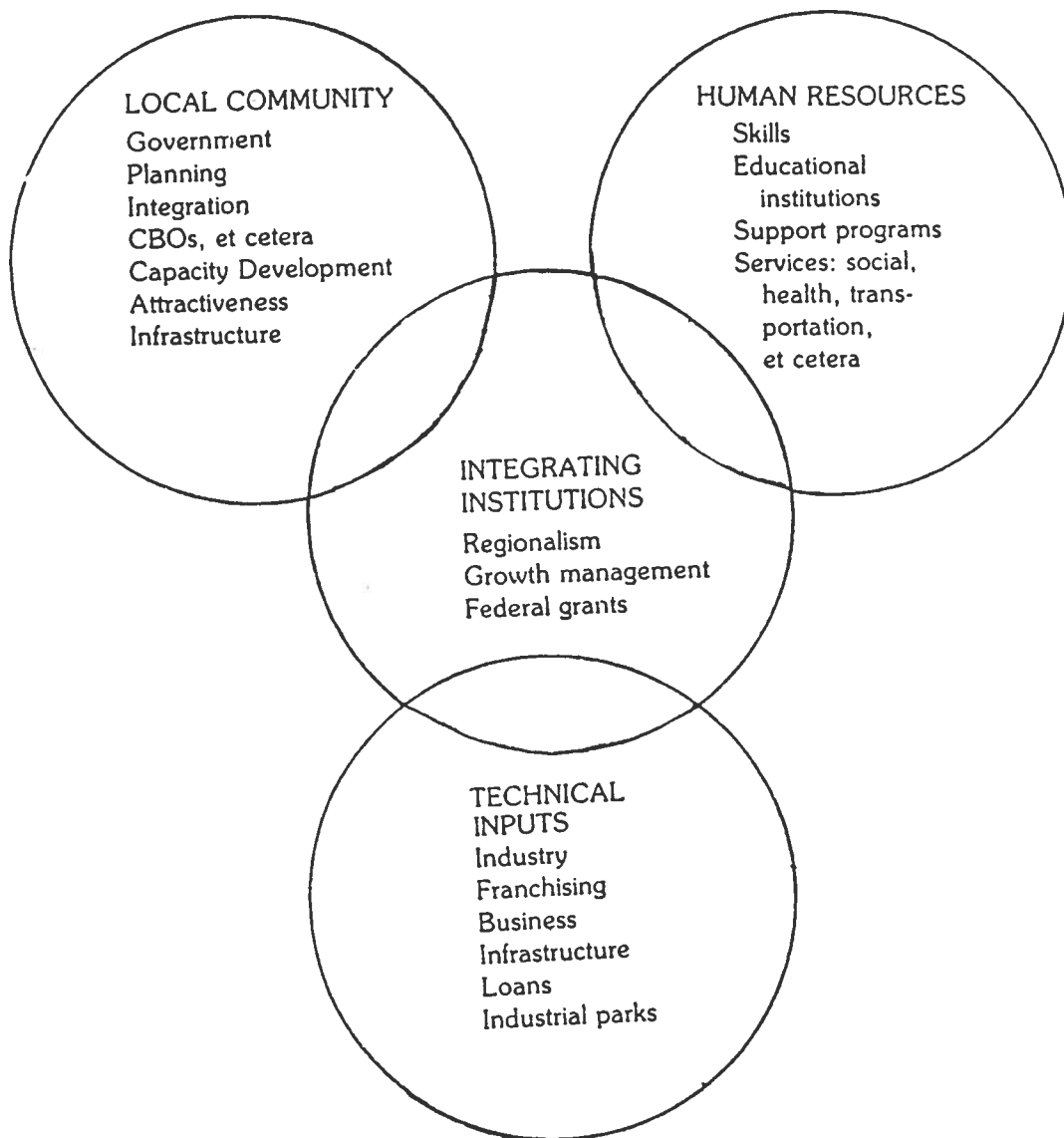
ment grants. Both alternatives seem unwise, unworkable, and unnecessary at this time. The issue is rather what types of policy systems need to be forged in this new environment.

Rondinelli & Ruddle (1978:81) have presented a policy model of integrated development for underdeveloped countries which provides a starting place for articulating a model for U.S. rural development. They identified four sets of inputs which are necessary for reaching policy objectives based on a deficiency model. Their model has been altered for growing rural areas. First, they suggest technical inputs are needed which include the "package" of services and facilities that stimulate economic development, including both infrastructure and training programs. Second, inputs include local support programs to stimulate local capacity to manage change and to provide local infrastructure and social services including housing and transportation. Third, they include national policy and organizational inputs to alter the conditions of markets for agricultural products, trade, financial resources and the like for rural development. Finally, program inputs are needed for the effective design of local projects which carry out the potential made available by the other components. This formulation is a good beginning, but for the purposes of this article, its components would be organized differently.

Technical and industrial inputs. The technical and industrial infrastructure of rural areas is critically important to any change. It has been noted in rural growth that there is a major alteration in the source of technical inputs from those imposed from the outside by change agents to those received indigenously by the migrant. However, policy needs to be redirected in terms of the character of rural industrialization programs from attracting large plants to the facilitation of human resources and small business. The role of local governments must be to protect and extend the opportunities of the disadvantaged.

Human resources and skills. The changing economy is critically affected by the new higher technology industries moving into rural localities. But more important, these areas are receiving persons who have ample human resources. The character of the training and human resource component changes in the new rural area because different types of programs are required and a new framework for educational institutions is required.

Local community. Because these skills and industrial locations take place at the local level, a great



need exists for the effective stimulation of local community based institutions. Often this means stimulating the capacity of local governments, but more often it implies the creation of effective regional or multi-community organizations that can create the conditions for economic and social development for several jurisdictions.

Integrating institutions. Finally, there is a need in rapidly changing rural communities for a set of institutions to coordinate and facilitate developments taking place in private and public sectors. These institutions are often regional organizations or similar units. More commonly, they are organizations that provide a range of social and

training services through grants from the federal and state governments. Educational institutions also sometimes play these functions. What is important is that these institutions have a new and expanded role, and policy mechanisms are needed that can facilitate their work.

The four components identified here are all mutually interrelated. One does not operate without the others. But the integrating function is particularly central. This policy model can serve as a basic paradigm for both understanding the current situation and formulating public policies more responsive to the changing environment.

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