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A Community Built on the Pond: Social Cohesion, Sport Tourism and the World Pond Hockey Championships

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Abstract

Neoliberalism and globalization have contributed to an environment of economic uncertainty in rural Canada, raising concern for the social well-being of its residents. Despite immense challenges, many rural communities possess positive elements of social cohesion that can be used by the community in the pursuit of their communal objectives. This thesis uses social cohesion as a theoretical framework to examine this rural social environment, its relationship with sport tourism and sport's ability to foster social cohesion. Using Plaster Rock, New Brunswick and the World Pond Hockey Championships (WPHC) as a case study, this thesis broadens social cohesion research to include tourists and other visitors to rural regions. In doing so, this thesis demonstrates how the social potential of sport creates a community around the event with its own social cohesion. The residents of the host community participate in the event's activities, which contribute to the achievement the common goals of all stakeholders, local and visiting. This research begins to examine the unique social environment which exists in many rural communities, as well contributes to a better understanding of sport and sport tourism's ability to foster social cohesion in these communities.

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Introduction

Rural communities, once Canada's chief economic engines, now face serious challenges as their economic bases are increasingly eroding or disappearing altogether (Wilson et al., 2001). These dramatic changes are characterized by a persistent loss of services (Halseth & Ryser, 2006), high unemployment (Stedman, Parkins & Beckley, 2004), and a steady stream of out-migration by residents (Corbett, 2005). Concern for the economy during these uncertain times also threatens the social well-being of residents in rural regions. Maintaining a healthy social environment is an important consideration, as a rural community's social cohesion can be mobilized towards the accomplishment of common goals and objectives (Jeannotte et al., 2002). Social cohesion has been defined as the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper (Stanley, 2003 p. 5). This central concept is considered an important indicator of social well-being, which can be developed by events and activities in the community that are recognized to foster it. This is seen with sport-based tourism, which creates a unique environment, where sport's propensity to foster social cohesion may contribute to the community's existing social cohesion. This thesis investigates the relationship between social cohesion and sport tourism in rural communities, with the objective of addressing the research question: does sport's acknowledged ability to foster social cohesion contribute to the existing social cohesion in rural Canada during the staging of a sport tourism event? This is accomplished by applying social cohesion as a theoretical framework to the case study of the World Pond Hockey Championships (WPHC) in the forestry community of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick.

The general conceptual framework for this thesis draws primarily on the pioneering work by Kearns and Forrest (2000). In their model, social cohesion is broken down into five

constituent elements, used to understand the term and its applicability to social phenomena. These elements are: common values and civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital; and place attachment and identity. To establish the theoretical framework, this thesis discusses each of these constituent elements, redefines the term, and presents social cohesion as an on-going process. In this process, the elements identified by Kearns and Forrest (2000) interact as a means of achieving the common goals and objectives of the community. For clarity, a visual model depicting the process is presented when setting the theoretical framework for this thesis. Further to this, the economic and political forces of neoliberalism and globalization are presented, as these forces have contributed to the concern for social cohesion among rural residents.

To set the context for the case study, the political and economic challenges facing forestry dependant rural communities, such as Plaster Rock, are discussed. These challenges have been detrimental to the Canadian forestry industry, as well as the residents who rely on these operations for employment. Many forestry communities have an economy reliant on one particular organization and, as such, restructuring at the corporate level can produce great challenges for these residents. The reality for many residents in forestry dependant rural regions is an environment of economic uncertainty, plagued by persistent lay-offs, loss of services and an all-around lower level of well-bring.

This deteriorating economic state can result in social problems and incivility, which raises concern for social cohesion in these areas (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). However, as I detail below many rural communities show a healthy social environment despite these challenges. Past scholarly work has argued that many residents in rural Canada have a greater knowledge and trust of their neighbours, illustrating a unique social advantage that these communities may hold.

This social advantage, along with the community's existing social cohesion, can be mobilized to achieve the common objectives of residents. One example in rural Canada is demonstrated by the promotion of economic development during difficult times through tourism-based development strategies.

As a non-resource based industry, tourism in rural Canada has the potential to garner great economic benefits. Rural communities can be marketed based on their unique cultural, historic and natural characteristics, which permits small scale tourism programs to be staged with minimal capital, investment and training on the part of the community. These benefits allow for successful tourism-based economic development to be delivered with minimal costs or interference by external or large organizations.

The social environment among citizens in rural Canada is also an important consideration for a rural tourism program, as a proper social infrastructure in the community can contribute to its success. This infrastructure of social networks and connections can benefit the program, as rural residents have a greater propensity towards participation in the community and this is exploited during program delivery. A rural tourism program delivered by using the existing social networks and promoting cooperation among residents towards a common objective illustrates the process of social cohesion in action.

Sport tourism is a niche sector of the tourism industry increasingly being utilized in rural communities. Sport tourists travel to communities they would normally not visit in order to participate in, watch, or have a nostalgic experience through sport. In this thesis, an understanding of sport tourism is established by defining and then deconstructing the term into its subcategories of event, active and nostalgia sport tourism. These categories of sport tourism bring varying motivations for their participants and these motivations are applied to the research

participants at the World Pond Hockey Championship (WHPC).

Participation in sport tourism contributes to the local economy and allows tourists to identify with the host community and the sporting event. During the event the social cohesion among residents in the host community can contribute to the success of the sport tourism program. Existing social cohesion can create an environment where residents are committed to the common cause of the program and act on that commitment through various means such as volunteerism. What is unique about sport tourism in contrast to more traditional tourism programs is the power that sport holds in fostering social cohesion at the event. In rural communities, where a unique social advantage of greater trust, knowledge and volunteerism may exist, the staging of a sport tourism event provides an extraordinary combination of rural social cohesion and sport that sets the foundation for the research question adopted for this thesis.

In investigating the research question, it must be considered that the nature of tourism brings people into a particular community from outside the host region. These tourists, whether tournament participants, visiting spectators or volunteers are active participants at the event, and as such are exposed to the social environment in the community and at the event. Unlike previous social cohesion research, which examines residents in a defined and bordered community, this exploratory research examines social cohesion among all stakeholders at a sport tourism event. These stakeholders include current and formers residents, as well as visiting participants and spectators. For these stakeholders, their experiences at the event and how they relate to the process of social cohesion are discussed in the findings.

The town of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick and the WPHC provide a suitable case to address the research question. Plaster Rock is a community in north western New Brunswick, situated along the Tobique River with a population of approximately 1,200 people. The

community and surrounding area is reliant on the unstable forestry industry for employment, and as such, is experiencing a state of great economic uncertainty. As a result, the community has pursued tourism to offset resource dependency and the WPHC provides a prominent example of this. Every winter in the community since 2002, the WPHC has been held as a fundraiser to replace an aging hockey arena. The inaugural event saw forty teams participate and since then the event has tripled to include 120, many of which are international teams. The event has drawn a great deal of attention to the small village from the media and all levels of government and has raised the initial funds to begin construction of the new Plaster Rock arena and community centre.

Central to the staging of the event is the important role that the residents play in making up the event's volunteer base of over 200 individuals. These volunteers make significant sacrifices, such as time, money, comfort and space, which are necessary for the effective delivery of the event. Further to this, the social organization of current and former residents and the interactions that take place among all stakeholders are important factors for social cohesion at the event. The WPHC in Plaster Rock provides a suitable case to investigate the research question, because it allows the researcher to examine the existing social cohesion in the community, while investigating how it relates to sport and its ability to positively reinforce this process.

An interpretive approach to research was adopted for this thesis, as it allowed direct interactions with participants in their natural setting. In doing so, the data collected represented the subjective meanings and feelings that the research participants held towards the event and the community. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to take a natural, humanistic approach to the research participants, while allowing the research question to emerge from the field work. Based on the qualitative traditions, this thesis strove to paint a rich, complex picture of the

process of social cohesion at the event and how the various stakeholders interacted. The relationship between sport's ability to foster social cohesion and these interactions are discussed in the findings.

The appropriate qualitative data collection methods of non-participatory observation, informal interviews, and documentary analysis were adopted. The preliminary observations and informal interviews took place in the community of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick for the duration of the 2007 World Pond Hockey Championships, held February 8-11, 2007. Conducting informal interviews with all stakeholders including current residents, former residents, tournament participants and spectators allowed the researcher to collect data directly from the diverse stakeholder base at the event. In addition, non-participant observational data was collected as the researcher used his senses to understand the activities as they took place among all stakeholders. These data sources were supplemented by an analysis of secondary sources, such as newspaper reports, television coverage and the event's promotional materials. This method of empirical triangulation allowed the researcher to collect data directly from participants and record observational field notes as the event occurred.

The findings of this thesis examine social cohesion in the rural community of Plaster Rock, during the staging of a sport tourism event. The aim is to generalize the findings in a limited fashion, as well as suggest avenues for future research to test some of the findings reported in this thesis in a more rigorous fashion. Through the duration of the event, the social environment is unique in that it combines the existing social cohesion of the community with sport's ability to foster social cohesion. In addition, visitors from outside of the host region are exposed to the social forces of the event and the community, and as such, are considered in this thesis. Integrating all stakeholders into the process of social cohesion allows this thesis to discuss

the role that the cultural, nostalgic and social forces of sport tourism play in this process. The impact of these forces on social cohesion and the resultant accomplishment of community goals and objectives are discussed.

To address the research question, this thesis now sets out the theoretical framework by presenting the elements of social cohesion, then redefining the term for the purposes of the present research. An understanding of rural communities and the challenges facing these regions follows, as well as a discussion on tourism and sport tourism. This sets the theoretical and contextual framework for this thesis. The findings of the research are then presented by applying social cohesion theory to the data collected in order to address the research question and understand the relationship between social cohesion in rural Canada and sport.

Theoretical Framework

Concern about social cohesion has emerged from the environment of economic uncertainty seen in much the western world, since the 1970s. This uncertainty developed as western governments adopted neoliberalism as the dominant political paradigm governing their decisions. This thesis uses social cohesion as a theoretical framework and as such, neoliberalism is presented to set the political context for this framework. Understanding the political and economic environment is imperative to understand the term social cohesion and apply it as a theoretical framework in this thesis.

In the post-World War Two era, much of the western world recognized the need for state-funded welfare programs. Governments in industrialized nations viewed the provision of welfare programs as an inherent state duty (Midgley, 1997). This duty was based on the idea that the allocation of welfare services provided a higher quality of life for poorer populations than previous 19th century laws and charitable programs had offered. In a welfare state, a government

seeks to provide adequate social protection for those who cannot participate actively in society, or for those who have reached the age of retirement (Esping-Anderson, 2002). Traditionally this protection included providing required services to combat unemployment and assist those stricken with illness, disability and old age (Esping-Anderson, 2002). This welfare state was drastically impacted by the emergence of neoliberalism, bringing with it consequences of social inequality.

Neoliberalism undermines the ideals of the welfare state and changes the way that governments operate by altering the focus away from the provision of welfare services (Martin, 2004). Instead, neoliberalism concentrates on policies and processes, where a small number of private interests are able to control numerous aspects of public life, in turn maximizing their personal profit (McChesney, 1999). This new political way of thinking is the defining political economic paradigm of our time and is being adopted by political parties across the spectrum (McChesney, 1999).

The transition towards neoliberalism is seen as an altering of political thinking, centering on macroeconomic stabilization, structural adjustment and the globalization of production and distribution (OECD, 1997). As this occurs, political power is transferred away from the state towards market-led economic and social restructuring. This free market approach is accomplished through privatization and deregulation of government services under the auspices of developing a smaller government (Lowes, 2004). With neoliberalism, governments are no longer seen as the sole providers of welfare services, and in turn not-for-profit and private organizations are expected to fill this gap.

Neoliberal economic policies are a determining factor in the rise of globalization (Lowes 2004, 2002; Kelly, 1999). Globalization is the technological, commercial and cultural

synchronization that has been seen in developed western nations (Pietrese, 2003). As a result of this transition towards global standardization, international trade becomes intrinsically linked to healthy domestic economies and international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) are playing prominent governance roles over individual states. Globalization's promotion of a global economy is impacting the sovereignty of individual states and giving greater power to the market and international organizations.

By globalizing production and finance, the world economy is transitioning towards monopoly capitalism, seen as a concentration and centralization of capital that creates an oligopoly within a particular sector (Millward, 2003). These sectors are dominated and controlled by a few key global corporations, who become influential actors in a neoliberal government (Millward, 2003). This link between globalization and the dominance of a few private interests illustrates how neoliberalism - particularly the competitive and capitalist discourse associated with this market focused political paradigm – is inextricably linked to globalization (Pantich, 1996).

The neoliberal paradigm subordinates social policy in favour of the economic (Jessop, 2002; Lowes, 2004; Tranter and Lowes, 2005). With an emphasis on efficiency and the promotion of a global market, neoliberal development strategies advocate reducing government spending on health, education and social welfare programs, along with the privatization and deregulation of industries (Stiglitz, 2002). These actions promote productivity, but can also result in an increase in social inequality. Farmer (2003) recognizes this by arguing that the consequences of wage and employment inequality that result from neoliberalism may damage the health and well-being of working people around the globe.

For individuals, the neoliberal paradigm strives to create a system where consumers can

respond to market signals and seek out opportunity yielding the maximum benefit (Demartino, 2000). While all consumers possess this freedom, critics argue that this does not translate into social equality, as countries that have aggressively pursued economic neoliberal reform have seen domestic income inequality grow most significantly (Demartino, 2000). The high levels of unemployment, poverty and earnings inequality seen in prosperous western nations under the neoliberal paradigm raise concern for the social well-being of these populations (Penna, Paylor and Washington, 2000). With this market-based paradigm, the role of the government in correcting these inequalities is re-evaluated to ensure the appropriateness of these corrective actions as vehicles for the market (Kiely, 2005). In other worlds, all actions taken by government must ensure that minimal impact on the market occurs.

The rise of neoliberalism and globalization has brought difficulties for Canadian communities, including creating an uncertain economic outlook for residents. The challenges that accompany these forces inflict damage on the social well-being of citizens by producing dissatisfaction with governments and a loss of institutional confidence. This discontent population contributes to a social environment of distrust, which can impact the overall social well-being of the community (McCracken, 1998). McCracken (1998) describes this threat as a fraying social fabric, resulting from economic inequalities that come with neoliberal development ideals. The label "fraying social fabric" highlights the importance of raising concern for social cohesion during times governed by neoliberalism. Today, social cohesion should be an important consideration in state decisions (McCracken, 1998), as the policy community argues that concern over social cohesion is a product of neoliberal times (Jenson & Saint Martin, 2003). Understanding the relationship between neoliberalism and social cohesion is crucial to examine the political environment within the case study for this thesis.

In times of economic difficulties, concern over social cohesion becomes prevalent for politicians and academics alike. This thesis takes social cohesion as a theoretical framework in applying the concept to a forestry community that has faced economic challenges brought by neoliberalism and globalization. In addition, this thesis discusses how sport, in the form of sport tourism as a recognized tool to foster social cohesion, impacts the community and its social cohesion.

What is Social Cohesion?

This thesis now begins to develop an understanding of the term social cohesion in order to apply it as a theoretical framework for this research. A review and analysis of past social cohesion research demonstrates a range of definitions that have been used by scholars and government bodies alike. Stanley (2003) has defined the term as the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper (Stanley, 2003 p. 5). Judith Maxwell (1996) takes a similar approach by arguing that social cohesion "involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing wealth disparities, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in community enterprise, facing shared challenges and that they are members of the same community". The Canadian government's policy research sub-committee (PRSub-c) (1997) defines social cohesion as "an on-going process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity in Canada based upon hope, trust and reciprocity among Canadians". Lastly, Helly (2003, p. 19) argues that the notion of social cohesion "implies the definition of a modern society as inclusive and founded on a sense of communality and responsibility of its members towards each other". Generally speaking, all four definitions have a common idea of what social cohesion entails as they describe an inclusive community where residents have a sense of togetherness, belonging

and commonality. In presenting this they utilize a variety of different elements in defining the term; however, there remains a vagueness around the term and a disagreement about which elements should be included in the definition. To address the ambiguity created by a continuous lack of consensus among scholars and governmental bodies, this research extrapolates common elements from past social cohesion research and uses them to redefine the term. This provides a definition for this thesis that better reflects the elements of a compilation of past work, without having to commit to one particular definition.

Kearns and Forrest (2000, p.996-1002) discuss the idea that social cohesion can be broken down into various elements, by presenting their five constituent elements of social cohesion. These five elements, based on an analysis of past research, are: common values and a civic culture; social order and social control; social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; social networks and social capital, and place attachment and identity. Social cohesion can consist of one of these elements; however, linkages between them can be present and should be considered (Kearns & Forest, 2000). To create clarity surrounding the term, each element is discussed separately and their interconnectedness is presented within a visual model.

Common Values and Civic Culture

The element of common values and civic culture is based on a society in which the individual members share a common set of values and norms, allowing them to identify and support common aims and objectives (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). Shared moral principles and codes of behaviour of the particular society dictate the interactions between various members and contribute to community support. In such a society, effectiveness is based on the members' ability to subscribe to a common view of how to undertake collective affairs.

The development of common norms and values serve the community by conditioning the

decisions of individuals. Common social norms and values may standardize behaviour, preventing or cushioning any uncertainty or conflict that arises between citizens. Unwritten rules developed by a common values system prescribe the decisions and actions of a particular society, therefore resulting in less conflict.

In political terms, social cohesion ideally produces citizens who are disposed towards taking part in local and national politics. Citizens within such a society trust governmental institutions, and their collectively agreed upon rights and responsibilities are respected (Almond & Verba, 1968). The community is bonded together by the development of common morals, ethics and ideals. When this common way of thinking is achieved, the various members take part in open and democratic debate and become predisposed to working in favour of common goals and objectives against the forces of privatism and personal interests. A cohesive society with a capitalist or private idea system may develop problems as their common values may be individualistic and not in the interests of all community members (Kearns and Forrest, 2000).

Social Order and Social Control

The maintenance of social order and control sees the general absence of conflict or threat as the primary indicator of social cohesion. Modern western democracies such as Canada generally achieve social order and control through subtle and diplomatic means rather than through coercion, repression or violence (Kearns & Forrest, 2002). Social order and control is achieved through the routines, demands, and reciprocities involved in everyday life. It creates an environment in which individuals and groups cooperate towards common goals without conflict (Wrong, 1994). These conditions can be difficult to achieve due to the intricacies involved in integrating diverse groups into the wider social order, while maintaining respect for cultural differences (Giddens, 1994).

Sugden's (1984) concept of reciprocity explains the motivations behind voluntary activity and is a central component in developing social order and control. He writes that reciprocity dictates that a member of society must always contribute to the public good, and that one is morally obligated not to free ride or take advantage of the contributions of others (Wooley, 2003). Turner's (1990) reciprocity theory sees social order and control as a consequence of the exchanges of goods, services and symbols. These exchanges create a dense network of obligations, duties, claims and expectations among members. All members of a society must feel they play a role within this network and thus reap shared benefits (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). Without this sense of belonging, social order and control are threatened by crime and incivility that may arise (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). Social order and control is defined by the lack of this conflict within a community. This order is cultivated as each member is able to find their place within the community while participating in the everyday activities and obligations of their personal and community life (Turner, 1990). With this position established members are able to maintain their sense of belonging and participate in actions towards the public good, and in doing so reap communal benefits.

Social Solidarity and Reductions in Wealth Disparities

Provision of equitable access to social and economic programs and services can assist in the development of social cohesion in a community. Governments can ensure access to: income-generating activities; a society of reduced poverty; reduced income disparities, employment and competitiveness; higher quality of life; and open access to services of general benefit and protection (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). These opportunities can reduce income inequality, which is known to create stress, frustration and disruption, and leads to a breakdown in social cohesion. Crime, violence and other negative actions are products of this breakdown (Kawachi &

Kennedy, 1997). Equitable access to social and economic opportunities can positively benefit a community as these opportunities provide a platform for social interactions. Human beings are more likely to sacrifice for the benefit of those within their social network (Barry, 1989). This increase in social interaction, builds one's social network, and positively impacts their willingness to make sacrifices (Barry, 1989).

The common value of equality plays an important role in this element as it dictates how society should distribute the various economic and social opportunities to its members. This common value manifests itself in the sacrifices made by members in favour of the underprivileged, illustrating the link between the elements of common values and civic culture and social order and control. Further, the development of this common values system is dependant on social interactions that impact the following element, social networks and social capital.

Social Networks and Social Capital

There is a long standing belief that social cohesion is a product of a high degree of social interactions (Kearns & Forrest, 2000) and because of this, social capital and social networks are recognized as important elements of social cohesion. Social capital refers to the norms and social networks of civil society that lubricate co-operative action among both citizens and their institutions (Putnam, 2000). Putnam (1998) compares social capital to that of physical and human capital, by describing how the social norms and networks are utilized as currency in facilitating a harmonious civil society and the accomplishment of community goals. It is the interactions that take place among residents that act as a socialization tool and develop the social capital within a given community. This is important as many collective problems can be overcome through co-operation and this co-operation is easier and more likely to be spontaneous

where social capital exists (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). In cooperating, community members must make sacrifices for the benefit of others, and the social networks that these members have established can positively impact these sacrifices (Barry, 1989). The instances of socialization among family, friends and other residents build a web of social connections developing the social networks that contribute to social cohesion within a community. Along with these networks, the social capital can further a society's action towards shared objectives.

Social capital comprises features of social organization, principally the elements of trust, norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement (Putnam, 1993). Coleman (1990) discusses the link between trust and reciprocity by arguing that people trust others to meet their obligations of reciprocating a favour, if a favour is performed for them. He provides the social equation of "if A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this established an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B" (pg. 302). This trust and reciprocity is strengthened by civic engagement, referring to the number of civic, religious and political organizations, the proportion of people involved in these group and the opportunities for socialization that takes place (Putnam, 2000). These social relationships and organizations that are developed contribute to a societies' ability to overcome dilemmas and problems, because they facilitate collective action. A lack of this social capital within a community can cause healthy community institutions, norms of mutual reciprocity, and trust for social and governmental institutions to suffer (Putnam, 1998, p. v). It is important to differentiate that social capital is not a synonym of social cohesion; rather this element of social norms and organization plays an important role within social cohesion (Kearns & Forrest, 2000) as it is linked to the other elements discussed.

Place Attachment and Identity

The aforementioned elements concern the relationship between members of a particular society; however, this element sees social cohesion as the connection between members and places. Places are the playing field where citizens construct and reconstruct their way of life (Johnston, 1991). Gieryn (2000) argues that "everything that sociologists research is 'emplaced'—it all happens somewhere" and that "place is not simply a backdrop against which life occurs" (p.464). Within one's life, there are places where individuals are socialized into an appreciation of who they are and what is expected of them (Johnston, 1991, p. 256). Furthermore, the formation of self and class identities are linked to memories, recollections and images of places (Aronowitz, 1992; Crow, 1994). This element recognizes that the relationship between a person and a place can play an important role in the formation of social cohesion. What constitutes a place needs additional consideration for the purposes of this thesis.

Gieryn (2000) argues there are three components to the conceptualization of place: geographic location, material form and investment in meaning and value. Geographic location refers to a unique spot in the universe. Places do have finitude in the manner in which they are defined, however their boundaries are elastic and can vary in size and structure. A place could be among others, a room, building, neighbourhood, district, village or city (Entrikin, 1989). Secondly, material form refers to the physicality that places possess (Gieryn, 2000). Regardless of what specific objects are located in a particular place, places are an assemblage of physical items located at a particular spot. This physical collection of items defines a places material form. Having a geographic location and physicality does not necessarily produce a place unless naming, identification and representation by humans take place (Feld & Basso, 1996; Gieryn, 2000). Places are doubly constructed as they are physically built but also socially constructed by linking specific meanings and values to these places (Soja, 1996). The geographic and physical

characteristics of a place are recognized as important; however it is the meaning and values derived from these characteristics that provide a definition for place.

Meanings and values associated with a place can produce a strong attachment to a specific area. This attachment results from the intertwining of people's identities with places, thus contributing to social cohesion (Massey, 1991). Positive experiences influence a human's adherence to the values and norms associated with a particular place. This can also impact their willingness to participate within the community, building one's social network. Having a strong sense of attachment towards a particular place can provide: a sense of security, a link to people who are important to us, a symbolic bond to people, past experiences, ideas and culture (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). Further, places can deliver a means to maintain individual and group identity and foster self-esteem. People often feel that they belong to a particular place, which results in actions that are territorial in nature. (Kearns & Forrest, 2000) Engaging in these actions strengthens the human connection towards the place and enhances the community's support for common goals.

Defining Social Cohesion as an On-going Process

Kearns and Forrest's (2000) five elements of social cohesion highlights linkages between the elements; however, I believe further dialogue is warranted to develop a working definition for this research that better reflects these elements of social cohesion. All elements by Kearns and Forrest (2000) were based on previous work on social cohesion, as such have merit and deserve further examination. The five elements of social cohesion are now categorized into three separate classifications, discussed, and then presented in a visual model.

These categories of social cohesion elements are: social environment, participatory action and common goals and objectives. The social environment refers to the elements of social

cohesion unique to the various members of the community. When these elements repeat themselves among multiple members of a given society, it impacts the workings of the community. Common values and civic culture, social solidarity and place attachment and identity are all individual to citizens, and can exist at the community level when shared among residents. Social cohesion exists when members share these common values, enabling them to identify and support common aims and objectives, as well as share a common set of moral principles and codes of behaviour (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). It is these values and ideals that dictate interactions of society members and the relations among each other. Further to these elements, the reoccurring ideas of trust, social norms, reciprocity and belongingness presented in previous social cohesion research also fit into this category. Stanley (2003) argues that social cohesion is based upon the willingness of people to participate in collective enterprises. This willingness is more likely to occur if the various components of the social environment are shared among residents. All of the components of the social environment are internal to each community member; however it is the adoption of these ideals by multiple members that creates the common values system that serves as the motivating force towards action. As this happens, the values become a common component of the civic culture among residents and can contribute to the cohesion of the community (Kearns and Forrest, 2000).

Participatory action involves a person's willingness to participate within society by their demonstrated sacrifices of time, effort or money made for the benefit of productive cooperation. Bahr and Bahr (2001) define sacrifice as the willingness of a person to "to give up, destroy, permit injury to, or forego (a valued thing) for the sake of something of greater value or having a more pressing claim. (p. 1232). Participation in society's activities and the willingness to accept sacrifices allow for social interaction, and contribute to the development of social networks and

social capital in the community. The link between social environment and participation is important and can be seen by examining the motivations for participation in voluntary activity. The World Value Surveys (WVS) suggests that the dominant reasons for volunteerism among Canadians are; compassion for those in need; a sense of duty or moral obligation; an opportunity to repay something or to give something back; or to make a contribution to the local community (Wooley, 2003). These motivations are individual values that when shared, contribute to participation in the form of volunteerism by multiple community members. These values, which make up the social environment, act as a motivating factor for participation, moving the community towards action (Wooley, 2003).

The most common forms of voluntary activity in Canada are: organizing and supervising events, canvassing, campaigning, fundraising, and sitting as a board member for a private or charitable organization (Wooley, 2003). Each of these voluntary duties can vary in organization, scope and commitment; however, they all provide a platform for social interaction. These activities further demonstrate the relationship between the opportunities for socialization and building of social networks, social capital, trust and sense of reciprocity within a society.

The last category is the common goals and objectives of the community, which consists of the elements of social order and control and the reduction of wealth disparities discussed by Kearns and Forrest (2000). Wrong (1994) explains this by arguing that social order is a result of individuals and groups that are prepared to co-operate with one another. These elements are explicit outcomes of social cohesion and are considered the objectives of the community; however, it is the commonality of these objectives that is important for this category. Regardless of the specific objective, it is whether it is shared among the community that is important as Maxwell and the PrSub-c have dictated in their definitions. The common goals and objectives of

a community cannot be defined by academics or politicians, but are developed by the community itself and can vary greatly. No matter the challenges the community is facing, it is important that all individuals are committed to shared challenges and achieving common goals.

As this review of definitions and past research has shown there is still much ambiguity which surrounds the term social cohesion. Because of this, a working definition will now be established based on the past definitions and the work of Kearns and Forrest. In revisiting Maxwell's definition of social cohesion, I argue that it does represent the common values system and objectives discussed; however, it lacks clarity when describing what social cohesion actually is. This is a gap in Maxwell's definition that needs to be addressed. The Canadian government's policy research sub-committee (1997) fills this gap by defining social cohesion as "an on-going process". Utilizing the definitions of Maxwell and the PRSub-c among others, social cohesion in this thesis is rearticulated to better reflect the various elements of social cohesion presented in the work of Kearns and Forrest.

This thesis sees social cohesion as:

> an on-going process of developing a positive social environment including shared values and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in community enterprise, facing shared challenges and that they are members of the same community, which is acted upon through the mobilization of the community's social capital and existing social networks towards the common goals and objectives of the community.

This definition reflects elements in the social environment from Kearns and Forrest (2000) such as, common values, belongingness and commonality, while articulating how these are mobilized in the development of social networks and capital. How these element interact in the process of social cohesion lead towards to the achievement of the community's common goals. The recognition that social cohesion is an on-going process addresses the gap left by Maxwell's definition and defines the process' effectiveness based on the accomplishment of the common

community objectives. By excluding the element of wealth disparity reduction, this definition places greater importance on commonality within a community by arguing that reducing wealth disparities could be a common goal for the community if agreed upon as such.

The on-going process of social cohesion and the various elements involved are now reflected in Figure 1., which visually presents the process. Figure 1 is based upon the idea by

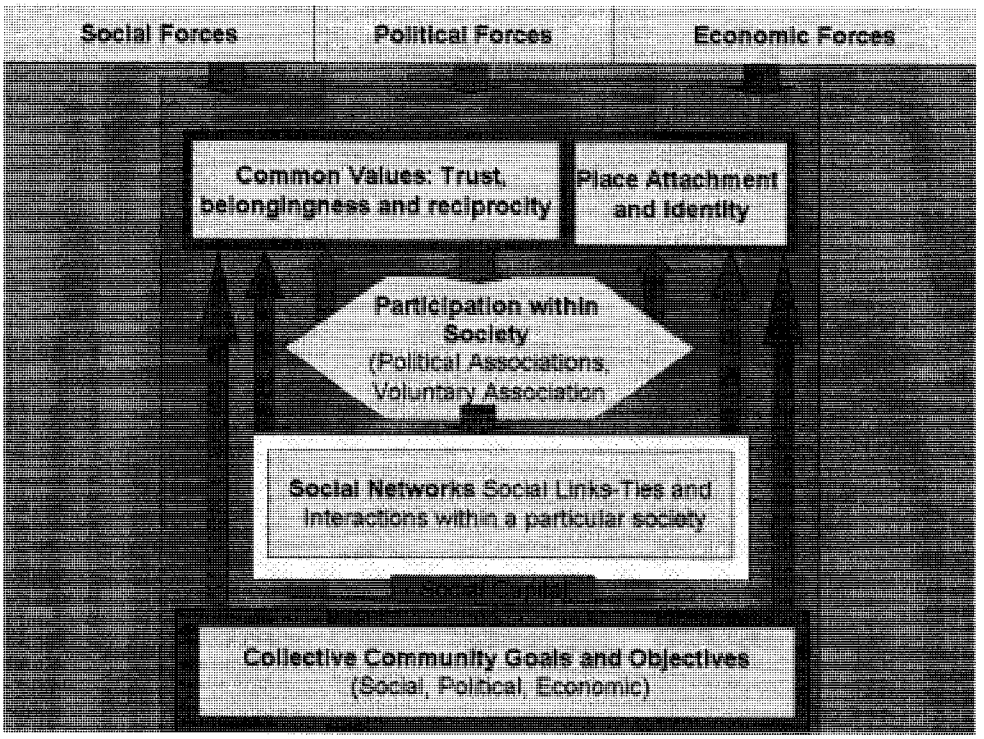

Figure 1. The on-going process of social cohesion

Kearns and Forrest (2000) that linkages between the constituent elements not only exist but also have an effect on each other. The elements of common values (including the notions of trust, reciprocity and belongingness) and place attachment and identity make up the social environment and can perpetrate a greater likelihood of participation among members within a society. This participation, through employment, volunteerism or other social occurrences, provides opportunities for social interaction. These interactions form the basis for bonds among individuals, and are produced and re-produced through interactions in daily life (Preston et al.,

2000). The bonds developing from interaction and participation further create connections among members and build the social networks and social capital of the community.

This correlation between participation and social capital is recognized by Putnam (1993) who argues that participation in society is a precondition for the accumulation of social capital. Nevitte (2000) furthers this by concluding "the civil society/social capital explanation asserts that declining levels of civic engagement leads to declines in social capital" (p. 86). The social networks that are developed through interaction create the social capital that is utilized to meet and possibly exceed the collective goals and objectives of the community.

Social cohesion is an on-going process in which each step within the model illustrated affects not only the step following it, but also those that precede it. For example, trust among citizens within a particular community can impact one's motivation to participate in society. Concurrently participation in society through a variety of activities and interactions can impact the level of trust among citizens. This is because social relations are responsible for the production of trust within economic life (Dayton Johnson, 2000). Community interactions provide an observable account of the trust that exists between the parties involved (Falk & Killpatrick, 2000).

The definition of social cohesion for this thesis, like much previous work in this area highlights social cohesion in a particular community; however, the definition of community is important to discuss, particularly since this thesis links social cohesion with tourism. A community is made up of people living in a geographically localized area, who share some type of common bond and interaction on a regular basis (Ramsey et al, 2002). This definition uses residency as a defining factor for a community. Social cohesion research has primarily followed this trend and applied the term to defined,

bordered settlements made up of residents within these regions. The elements discussed, such as place attachment, and social networks can be held by actors outside of these bordered communities, such as former residents and tourists. This thesis argues that these outside actors, by holding these elements play a role in the community and the process of social cohesion, despite a lack of residency within the community's borders.

Adding further confusion is the discussion of whether social cohesion is a cause of a particular outcome, or a consequence of a certain force. Beauvais and Jenson (2002) address this debate by analyzing past studies that see social cohesion as an independent or a dependant variable[1]. As a dependent variable (or a consequence), social cohesion has been described as being affected by forces that are both internal and external to society. Examples of this include Polyani's (1944) work where he warned of the societal implications that result from large scale economic changes. More recent work has emphasized how social cohesion is impacted by emerging technologies and globalization. For example, Mitchell (2000) and Burke and Shields (1999) argue globalization results in rising levels of economic marginalization, polarization and increased vulnerability. As seen in Figure 1, the impact of social, political and economic factors on the process can have a bearing on the entire process.

As an independent variable (or a cause), the primary focus is on the positive outcomes of social cohesion within a community. The positive correlation of social cohesion to educational performance, levels of health, rates of tax evasion and levels of self reported well-being have all been examined by past research (for an extensive review of this literature see Beauvais, & Jensen, 2002). These positive consequences of social cohesion must be recognized as they can be

[1] Although Beauvais and Jensen (2002) use of the terminology of independent and dependant variable that is commonly utilized within scientific research to denote causality, they caution that its use within this context denotes correlation rather than causality.

a major component alongside economic factors in improving quality of life (Berger-Schmitt, 2002; Deiner & Suh, 1997). Social cohesion can promote economic development and because of this neoliberal government policies that prioritize the promotion of fiscal stability over societal concerns may actually be counterproductive (Stanley & Smetlzer, 2003). Within the process presented, these positive outcomes are dependant upon the self-defined goals of the community, and as such social cohesion can be seen as an independent variable which acts on the dependant variable of the community's defined common goals and objectives.

Restrictions and limitations of social cohesion research have been the subject of much debate within academic research examining the term (Moulata & Moulatas, 2004). Social cohesion is not a concept in the strictest epistemological sense, but has been described as a tentative concept (Moulatas & Moulata, 2004), a second rank concept (LeGales, 2002), or a quasi-concept. These labels are based on the term's applicability in analyzing a particular situation, while maintaining a vagueness that is "flexible enough to follow the meanderings and necessities of political action day to day" (Bernard, 1999, p. 2). This vagueness is not a result of poor or contradictory academic work, but rather multiple conceptualizations of social cohesion exist, each with differing degrees of importance to varying groups. The confusion surrounding the term is confounded when these groups communicate their particular views of what social cohesion entails in an attempt to achieve their objectives (Moulata & Moulatas, 2004). Further to this, the manner that social cohesion has been presented suggests that a definitional agreement exists among scholars and politicians, which is not the case (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). This artificial consensus created the platform for the definitional discussion, leading to the need for the more inclusive definition of this thesis. Despite these criticisms concerning the validity of the term, social cohesion provides a useful framework as a discourse to investigate the social well-

being of the community used in this case study.

Due to the ongoing nature of social cohesion, a community continuously participates in this process in the pursuit of their collective goals and objectives. Accomplishing these collective goals can have a positive effect on the social environment and the production of social capital. Desjardin, Halseth, Leblanc and Ryser (2002) argue that social cohesion is highest when groups work together to achieve self-defined economic, social, political, or cultural objectives. Social cohesion can become a resource upon which people or groups might draw to achieve future objectives. Desjardin et al.'s (2002) argument that social cohesion is highest within this context suggests that it is a measurable condition within a community. With very little consensus about what defines social cohesion and its individual elements, it would be difficult to identify what it takes to measure social cohesion. This should not discredit the usefulness of the term, as Beauvais and Jensen (2003) argue this is common within the social sciences. They argue that this inability to specifically identify how to measure the concept in empirical means should be noted by researchers, but should not lead to abandonment of the term. By accepting that social cohesion is an on-going process and thus difficult to measure, I utilize the usefulness and flexibility of social cohesion as a discourse to understand the social environment within a particular community. In saying this, I argue that in contrast to Desjardin et al's (2002) argument, social cohesion is more efficient rather than higher, based on the effectiveness of a community's various social elements interacting towards the achievement of common community goals.

The ambiguity of the term social cohesion brings challenges for researchers that utilize the quasi-concept in their investigation. By redefining social cohesion based on past definitions, and the 5 constituent elements of social cohesion, the present case study is able to draw from the

extensive discussion and debate around the term in order to examine the social well-being of a rural community and how that is impacted by sport tourism.

To conclude this section, I refer to Osberg (2003) to use a sport metaphor in illustrating social cohesion at work. He does this by explaining that soccer teams that pass well will almost always dominate their opponents, if the other team are composed of individualistic glory hounds who hog the ball to maximize their personal goal scoring. Osberg's metaphor compares social cohesion to a soccer team by presenting the positive social environment on the team and how the activation of the social networks leads the team to the achievement of the collective objective of winning the game. Osberg's metaphor also illustrates how a breakdown of the process and lack of common values can detrimentally impact the achievement of these goals. Although simple, the metaphor of the soccer team paints a clear picture of the process of social cohesion and the desired elements that are present for the process to be efficient.

To properly investigate the research question which guides this thesis, and apply social cohesion to a rural community staging a sport tourism event, a discussion on rural communities, tourism and sport tourism follows.

Social Cohesion and Sport Tourism in Canadian Rural Communities

Defining Rural

Neoliberalism and globalization have had a detrimental impact on Canadian communities particularly those in rural regions. Much of the previous research on rural communities suggests that consequences of neoliberal action should negatively impact social cohesion within these communities. Research on the social environment in rural communities contradicts this logic, by showing how many of these regions maintain a healthy social state, despite economic challenges of these regions.

To set the rural context for the setting of this research, this section defines rural, examines the state of these regions and explores their link with social cohesion. Traditionally, geographic location and proximity to major urban centres defined the rurality of a community (Cloke, 1994). Following this tradition, Statistics Canada defines rural and small town Canada as "populations living in towns and municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (i.e. outside the commuting zone of centres with population of 10,000 or more)" (Duplessis, Beshri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2002). Definitions such as this present population size and proximity to urban centres as being indicative of a community's rural nature.

This emphasis on population size and geographic location looks at rurality through what Bell (2007) refers to as a first rural lens. The first rural is "fundamentally materialist, seeking an objective determination of the rural, rooted in the material presence, or lack of persons on the material foundation of the land" (Bell, 2007, p. 405). Thus, the first rural definition places an emphasis on space, with the objective of being able to map the location, and identify whether a region is rural or not (Bell, 2007). Alternative definitions mobilizing the first rural lens link rurality to surface level characteristics such as income sources or land use (Cloke, 1994). This simple approach emphasizes the materialistic qualities of given regions; however, Bell (2007) recognizes that further characteristics exist and presents them in his concept of second rural.

Bell's (2007) notion of the second rural stresses ideas and associations. This refers to the connections made between rural life and various items and activities such as food, cultivation, community and nature. Also included are the many contradictions associated with the rural, such as desolation, isolation, and dirt (Bell, 2007). Expanding on these ideas, a rural community can be defined by the association between a rural place and the strength of its social relationships (Desjardins et al, 2002). Rural population size creates an environment where everyone knows

everyone else (Cater & Smith, 2003). This kinship of relations linked to a particular rural place manifests itself in cooperative action towards collective objectives (Cloke, 1994). Many rural communities have a social environment where members are predisposed to participate within collective actions to help and support each other and this association should be recognized in a definition of rural.

Postmodern thought argues that the awareness of what constitutes rural is merely a matter of convenience and that abstract definitions are of little utility (Newby, 1986). Likewise, rural is seen as a category of thought and a social construction of what we believe to be rural (Mormont, 1990, p. 41). The first and second rural debate can not be settled within this thesis, nor is there a need to accept one over the other. The physical, materialistic elements of the first rural can be coupled with the ideas and associations that come with the second. Arguing that rural is a social construction is of little benefit for this research as it disregards the unique traits within these regions and any argument that these residents many face unique circumstances or challenges. The rudiments of the first rurality emphasizing geographic location and population size combined with the associations and ideas of the second rural are articulated within a definition adopted for this thesis. Cloke (1994) definition is utilized as he sees a rural community as:

> areas which are dominated by extensive land uses such as agriculture or forestry, or by large open spaces of undeveloped land; which contain small, lower-order settlements demonstrating a strong relationship between buildings and surrounding extensive landscape, and which are perceived as rural by most residents; and which are thought to engender a way of life characterized by a cohesive identity based on respect for the environment, and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape (pg. 536).

There is an emphasis here on the materialistic elements of the first rural, while still incorporating elements of the second. The association of rural with cohesion and a perceived relationship between the community and the landscape reflect the second rural lens. This multi-faceted

definition and the notions of the first and second rural are adopted for this research and enable the development of the present case study.

Canada's Rural Communities

Communities in Canada since the end of World War II have dramatically changed from a primarily rural composition to a highly urbanized nation due to the geographic dispersion of residents. In 1951, over 38 percent of Canada's population was situated in rural regions; however, by 2001 that number declined to 16 percent (Bourne & Rose, 2001). Rural Canada moved from a position of national centrality to the margin within a highly urbanized country (Troughton, 1995). This transition has raised concerns about the challenges that come with this population shift away from the rural such as the difficulty of a communities reliance on one particular struggling corporation or dwindling resource.

State of Rural Canadian Forestry Communities

The effects of globalization and neoliberalism since the 1970s have triggered the restructuring of manufacturing corporations in much of rural Canada. These corporations served as an economic base for these regions and their restructuring forced many plant closures and resultant increases in unemployment. These changes moved the rural regions of Canada from a countryside focused on production to one emphasizing the promotion of amenity land use (Che, 2003). This transition also saw a shift in government involvement in rural regions away from the welfare state, where governments acted as active partners, working closely with rural agribusinesses (farming, forestry) in order to maximize production. After the 1980s, governments were seen as consultants who provided marketing assistance and advice (Che, 2003). This hands-off government approach follows the ideals of the neoliberal paradigm, which seeks a decrease in government involvement and intervention with the market. Economic

challenges have particularly been seen in communities reliant on the extraction of natural resources (William, 1995). Rising resource extraction costs and a stagnant or declining resource market have added to the economic decline seen in much of rural Canada.

The challenges facing resource-dependant rural communities vary in scope and severity depending upon the resources extracted (Stedman et al. , 2004). Treating resource-dependence as a unitary problem is not sufficient, as each resource should be examined individually (Stedman et al., 2004). By mobilizing a community reliant on forestry as a case study, this research recognizes the challenges specific to this resource rather than attempting to generalize all resource-dependant communities.

Organizational restructuring within the forest products industry introduced more efficient technological advances than previous forestry production techniques. Many of the production facilities still remain within forestry communities, but they do not reflect the simple product focus of the past. Small woodlots, sawmills, and bush camps served as an economic base; however, these are replaced by vertically integrated corporations, vast timber reserves, long haul trucking and multinational corporations (Marchak, 1991). A declining resource supply in northern production regions of North America further challenges rural Canada; particularly, as low cost, fast growing trees in the southern areas of the continent are increasingly competing for market share (Barnes, Hayter & Hay, 1999; Marchak, 1991). These changes have dramatically impacted the demographic composition and the social support mechanisms established for the people within these communities.

Forestry and mining account for the lowest level of well-being and the highest level of poverty among resource-dependant communities (Stedman et al, 2004). It has been argued that the high wages paid by the forestry companies lead to limited entrepreneurial opportunities and

produce a labour force that is overly specialized in the skills required for resource extraction and processing (Freudenberg, 1992). This proves detrimental during difficult times as restructuring alters or eliminates the employment of these employees. As a result, forestry communities have recorded great community instability, as seen by high poverty, (Bliss et al., 1992) unemployment, (Howze et al., 1993), divorce (Drielsma, 1984) and crime rates (Force et al., 1993).

A further challenge confronting rural communities is the recruitment and retention of required services. Retail, social, health, education and infrastructure services provide an essential foundation for the daily activities in rural Canada. Services maintain a local quality of life and contribute to a community's economic base (Halseth & Ryser, 2006). Service provision plays a large role in the creation of flexible and innovative economic activity (Fitchen 1991), by filling an essential social void and playing a major role within the process of social cohesion. The local service sector serves the community in developing relationships and trust among residents, by providing support services and a required information base. As neoliberalism emerged, the closure or retraction of many services in rural and small town places occurred, eliminating the economic and social benefits that these services once brought to the community (Carter 1990; Reed 1999).

The provision of recreational sports is a service that holds great resonance in Canada's rural communities and directly relates to the case study at hand. The venues for sport participation have become major social centres for these areas as amateur sport maintains an important place in the lives of rural Canadians. Hockey arenas play a central communal function as the game cuts across occupational, religious and ethnic divisions unlike any other community focal point in Canada (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Hockey's importance was highlighted as

Canada saw memorial arenas built between the 1940s and the 1960s in small towns and rural areas across the country (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Today, the challenge for these communities is that since their construction, age and time have deteriorated these rinks and left many unusable or uninsurable.

The neoliberal downloading of responsibility to municipal governments places the onus for funding a new facility on the lowest level of government. The price tag for these venues can run into the millions of dollars and are near impossible for a rural town or village with an eroded tax base to fund. Fearful, these communities see the loss of the local arena as the beginning of the end for many villages and their way of life. To the people of the community, the arena that was a symbol of community development is becoming a symbol of community transformation and dissolution (Dryden & McGregor, 1989). The state of Canada's rural recreation facilities illustrates the challenge of service retention and its impact on rural communities.

Social Cohesion in Rural Canada

Neoliberal governments and globalization create great challenges for rural communities in Canada, furthering the concern for social cohesion within these regions. This worry regarding the social well-being of rural communities may not be warranted as many have argued that rural communities hold a higher level of social well-being. Dayton-Johnson (2001) suggests that the vision of social cohesion is that of the idealized tight-knit rural community or urban neighbourhood: A resident living in such a community who is faced with economic or social hardships is aided by his/her neighbours. This representation presents the notion that rural communities have a more efficient process of social cohesion. Rural communities are at a great economic disadvantage in maintaining a strong economic base, yet a social advantage may exist (Turcotte, 2005). This advantage is due to a higher knowledge and trust among residents and a

greater propensity towards volunteerism (Turcotte, 2005). These elements within the process of social cohesion are important to recognize as they can be utilized to counteract many of the challenges that rural communities face.

Providing opportunities for involvement in local activities enhances attachment to the community for rural residents (Halseth & Sullivan, 2003). These opportunities can be in the form of volunteer organizations and public services, which provide forums for rural residents to develop friendships. These connections can be considered part of the community's social networks and they can be mobilized to achieve community goals and objectives (Desjardin et al., 2002). The link between a positive social environment and greater rates of participation by rural residents illustrates the process of social cohesion in Figure 1. Neoliberalism contributed to an atmosphere of economic uncertainty in rural Canada, but research shows that many rural communities may hold a higher degree of the elements required within the process of social cohesion. Social cohesion in a rural community can create a positive environment for economic development, which rural communities should be able to exploit to their advantage (Stanley & Smeltzer, 2003). This exploratory research examines the process of social cohesion within a rural forestry community, and how sport tourism as a development strategy is mobilized within the process to achieve the various community objectives.

Sport Tourism in Rural Canada

Rural communities appeal to tourists, because of the cultural, historic, ethnic, and geographic characteristics that are unique to these regions (Edgell & Harbaugh, 1993). Many tourists seek rural destinations, which offer positive experiences related to the natural environment, historic heritage and cultural patterns of these communities (Butler & Hall, 1998). For tourism operators, small scale rural tourism can be developed with relatively little

investment, training or capital, unlike large scale programs or projects, which can bring high development costs and require the contracting out of large external firms. Rural communities can utilize the land and natural rural elements such as forests, ponds, lakes and trees to attract urban and other rural tourists (Wilson et al., 2001, p.132). As a result of the rural appeal to tourists, and the very limited resources that are required for delivery, these communities see tourism as a clean, non-resource dependant industry that can produce great economic benefits (Marcouiller, 1997).

For a successful tourism program to be delivered in rural regions, certain political, economic and social requirements must be met. According to Wilson et al (2001), these requirements include: good leadership; support and participation of local government; sufficient funds for tourism development; strategic planning; coordination and cooperation between businessmen, local leadership and tourism entrepreneurs; information and technical assistance; good convention and visitor bureaus; and, widespread community support (Wilson et al., 2001). The social requirements of rural tourism are central to the entire program and lay the groundwork for a required social infrastructure in rural communities (Wilson et al., 2001; Saxena, 2006). The advantage of greater knowledge, trust and participation provides the impetus for production of these social networks that can be mobilized towards the delivery of a rural tourism program.

A further factor to be considered within the delivery of rural tourism is the recent trend of using sport as a tourism development tool. Sport is not just a marketing tool to attract tourists; rather it is a powerful tool contributing to social and personal development (Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage, 2002). The Physical Activity and Sport Act reflects this by stating "physical activity and sport are integral parts of Canadian culture and society and produce

benefits in terms of health, social cohesion, linguistic duality, economic activity, cultural diversity and quality of life;" (Physical Activity and Sport Act, 2003). Internationally, governments such as the Netherlands use social cohesion-oriented cultural policy, which uses sport to improve social cohesion among residents, as it has been shown to have a positive impact on the social relationships and well-being of those who take part (Brinkman & Smithujisen, 2002). The Canadian and Dutch Governments through these initiatives, have recognized the positive relationship between social cohesion and sport.

Sport tourism is a growing area of research and a tool being used by various communities for economic and social development. For Canadians, sport related activities accounted for more than 38% of all overnight trips taken in 1999 (Canadian Sport Policy, 2001). In 2001, 25% of Canadian tourists participated in a sport or outdoor activity while travelling (Beshri, 2005). As an industry, sport tourism boasts annual revenues exceeding two billion dollars (CSTA, 2007).

Gibson (1998) defines sport tourism as "leisure based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, watch physical activities or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities" (p. 108). Emerging from this definition are three subcategories: active sport tourism, event sport tourism and nostalgia sport tourism. Tourists taking part in active sport tourism participate in sporting activities away from home. Travelling to watch sporting events is the defining activity for event sport tourism; where as nostalgia sport tourism involves the travel to sporting stadia, arenas, halls of fame, and other venues associated with the history of a sport (Gibson, 1998).

Through the application of Gibson's sport tourism classifications, Kulcyzki and Hyatt (2005) argue that the definition of nostalgia sport tourism can be expanded to those who travel to live sporting events to reflect on past experiences as sport fans. This argument is based on fans

of the defunct Hartford Whalers of the National Hockey League, who travel to watch Carolina Hurricane games to recapture the experiences of having professional hockey in their community. As the motivating factor for travel is nostalgia, the previously distinct classifications of event and nostalgia sport tourism become linked and coexist within the same activity. As this example argues, there is substantial overlap among the three categories and tourism marketers need to consider all three (Chalip, 2001).

As stated above, the traditional definition of nostalgia sport tourism is based on travel that allows participants to exact nostalgia from sporting objects like historic stadia, halls of fame and fantasy camps. Recent research recognizes these activities as object-based sport tourism (Gammon, 2002), and introduces group-based sport tourism as an emerging trend and a separate sub-category of nostalgia sport tourism. Group-based sport tourism derives nostalgic meaning from the social experiences connected to sport related travel. Participants in sport can extract memories from the social sporting groups that they belong to, because sport provides an essential social experience for its participants (Fairley & Gammon, 2005). The nostalgic experience from group based sport tourism attaches individualized meaning to a particular sport tourism product based on the social experience that one has among family members, friends, co-workers, and fellow participants during travel and participation.

Fairley's (2003) study on the motivations for travel among Australian football fans concluded that nostalgia was the motivating factor for fans to travel to their respective team's away games. Memories created through the social interactions during travel experiences were a greater motivation than the game itself. These social experiences of sport have the ability to transgress social norms (Green & Chalip, 1998).The delivery of a sporting event results in the participants abandoning their perceptions of the traditional elements of social class (Green &

Chalip, 1998). Turner (1974) describes this process as a liminoid state of communitas, in which individuals neglect to recognize their differences, and accept others as social equals. When this social state is present, participants behave as a unitary group and people escape from the stresses and pressures of everyday life to celebrate a common identity (Fairley & Gammon, 2006). It is this liminoid state that helps foster nostalgic meaning through social experiences related to sport.

Group-based sport tourism is still a new area of study, and as such, scholars within communication, sport management and sport sociology fields have yet to apply it to other social constructs. Group-based sport tourism has yet to be applied to social cohesion; however, I argue there are strong linkages which provide useful for sport tourism operators in urban, and particularly rural areas where a unique social environment may exist. The unique social environment of rural communities, complemented by using sporting events as a tool to foster social cohesion produces great potential for social cohesion, and the accomplishment of common community goals.

Research examining social cohesion traditionally places geographic borders around communities in order to examine the social environment. As the nature of tourism brings visitors from outside of the host community, limiting the findings to social cohesion among the residents of the community disregards the tourist's role within the process. As a result, this thesis discusses how actors internal and external can integrate themselves into the process and examines how the various elements correlate throughout. The unique social environment linked to sport and group based nostalgic sport tourism is applied to the process of social cohesion within rural communities, by using the community of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick and the World Pond Hockey Championships as a case study. In doing so this research addresses the research question of does sport's acknowledged ability to foster social cohesion contribute to the

existing social cohesion in rural Canada during the staging of a sport tourism event?

Research Design and Methodology

To properly investigate the research question, the research design and methodology adopted for this thesis had to provide the ability to interact and converse with research participants. On account of this need, a qualitative approach was utilized for this thesis, governed by the interpretive paradigm of social science research. The interpretive paradigm develops subjective meanings and feelings towards certain objects, through participants' cultural and historical experiences (Neuman, 2002). The adoption of this approach enabled the researcher to interact directly with participants, and in doing so understand the social environment through the feelings and personal experiences articulated by each of the participants. These narratives allowed the researcher to understand the feeling of the various participants towards the community and the event.

The nature of the data required for this study lends itself to the interpretive paradigm, as under this approach researchers seek to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in their natural setting. The adoption of this approach rather than the positivist and critical paradigms is important to consider. The findings of this research are not meant to provide a scientific explanation or uncover universal laws of human behaviour and as such the positivist approach can not and will not be utilized. Positivist researchers seek to be detached, neutral and objective in determining a cause and effect relationship from their data (Neuman, 2002), which is not the objective of this research. Critical social science researchers, on the other hand, attempt to critique and transform social relations as a means of empowering less powerful or poorer populations (Neuman, 2002). The rural population examined in this study has been severely impacted by a variety of economic and political factors and can be

considered a poorer community; however, this research did not intend to be a catalyst for change within that community. In fact, by utilizing the interpretive approach, this research sought to understand the social environment in the community and how other factors (such as sport and the adoption of common goals) empowered the community towards action.

Adopting an approach which relies heavily on the experiences of others and the researcher's ability to interpret those experiences brings limitations for the findings of the research. Primarily, meanings attached to a particular experience can be polysemic, meaning individuals interpret common experiences differently. As a result, the interpretive approach has received criticism; however, this is a challenge that most social scientists face and must be recognized as a limitation within the research design.

The interpretive approach was applied to the data collection and analysis to address the intended research question. This thesis examined, in depth features of a particular case and produced detailed, extensive and varied data of the qualitative form (Neuman, 2002). This collection of rich data from the case study strove to demonstrate a correlation between social forces and the production of results within a particular setting (Walton, 1992). In analyzing the data, the researcher connected the actions of individual people to the large scale social structures and processes of the case in question. This research sought to use Figure 1 as a theoretical basis emphasizing how the social environment in a community can result in the accomplishment of common goals and objectives. The application of Figure 1 to the case study allowed the researcher to examine the process of social cohesion in a rural sport tourism context and its impact on the common goals of the community.

Limitations of case study research are the boundaries of time, geography and activity that are in place around each individual case (Stake, 1994). These boundaries can impact how the

data can be applied to other cases and research. Limiting this study to a singular case reduces the finding's generalizability; however, as this thesis is exploratory and a relatively new application of social cohesion, it does provide a basis for future research.

A case study is not a synonym for qualitative research; however, "almost all qualitative research seeks to construct representations based on in-depth detailed knowledge of cases" (Ragin, 1994, p.92). Qualitative work is fundamentally interpretive and with that the researcher is allowed to view social phenomenon holistically. On account of this, this study is presented as a broad, panoramic view rather than a micro-analysis. Unlike the controlled environment used in scientific research, qualitative research allowed the researcher to interact and collect data in a setting that is natural to participants and outside of the constraints of the scientific method. In this setting, the researcher adopted multiple methods that were interactive and humanistic, allowing a rapport to be built between the researcher and participants.

This natural, humanistic approach is important for determining how the researcher approaches participants, as well in recognizing how the researcher impacts the findings of study. In qualitative work, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument, and as such it was imperative that the researcher identify his personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study (Creswell, 2003). The researcher In conducting the field work, the researcher was able to reflect on who he was in the inquiry and was sensitive to his own personal biography and how it impacted on the study. Although past experiences may bring certain biases to the study, these biases may shape the way that the researcher views the data and this contribution to the research setting can be useful and positive rather than detrimental (Locke, Spirduso & Silvernman, 1987). This is important to identify, because unlike scientific research, the qualitative approach does not seek to eliminate researcher bias, but recognizes that it does exist.

The researcher's past history and experiences being involved in sport and living in a Canadian rural community were recognized as potential biases.

Qualitative research does not follow a tightly pre-configured research plan like experimental research, allowing the research question to emerge from the field work (Rossman & Rallis, 1998). The case study of Plaster Rock, the WPHC and the general topic of social cohesion were identified prior to the visit to the site, but the research question emerged only during the field work. The circumstances leading up to the field work did not allow for the researcher to develop a predetermined research plan; however, this allowed for the research question to emerge and be developed through the field work. Unlike quantitative research which begins with a hypothesis and seeks to test that hypothesis, qualitative research allows the researcher to capture and discover meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data during the fieldwork (Neuman, 2002).

Qualitative research does bring challenges and criticisms, particularly with regards to establishing a relationship with theory. Unlike the scientific approach to theory which settles questions of meaning, a qualitative approach is an examination into meaning. Qualitative researchers are not concerned with having the right meaning, but with developing a complex picture of a situation or phenomenon (Shank, 2002). With the debate surrounding the definition of social cohesion among academics, it would be foolish to believe that a true meaning can be developed from the findings of this exploratory research. By applying the theoretical framework of social cohesion to a rural community staging a sport tourism event, this research sought to paint a rich understanding of the social environment that exists at the event and in the community.

Social researchers collect and analyze empirical data and carefully examine the patterns

in them to understand social life. The type of data required to properly discuss the research question can dictate the research strategies and methods employed (Neuman, 2002). The research question adopted for this case study requires the collection of soft data consisting of words, impressions and sentences of the research participants, coupled with the researcher's observations of these participants. This type of data is traditionally used in qualitative research and as such makes using hard data, in the quantitative form of numbers, inappropriate for this research study.

The application of qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to examine research participants in a natural setting and develop rich data to understand the social events and processes which took place at the event. This research does not discredit the positivist and critical paradigms, or quantitative research; rather it adopted an interpretive, qualitative approach as this design better addressed the objective of the research study.

Data Collection

Respecting the traditions of the interpretive paradigm and of qualitative research in general, an empirical methodology of triangulation was mobilized. Triangulation refers to the examination of a particular phenomenon by taking multiple types of measures (Neuman, 2002). For this thesis, the methods used in this triangulation consisted of: observation, interviews, and documentary analysis. The combination of these three data sources allowed the various elements of social cohesion to be identified within the data collected. Looking at a particular phenomenon from multiple angles gave the researcher a greater chance of seeing all aspects of it (Neuman, 2002). Much of the data was collected during fieldwork at the 2007 World Pond Hockey Championships held February 8-11, 2007 in the community of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick.

This research, like much qualitative work, focused on a particular case illuminating social

life rather than attempting to establish a sample's representativeness (Neuman, 2002). The research question emerged from the field work that took place during that weekend in February 2007, and as such a prior sample size was not established. This practice of non-probability sampling was warranted as the researcher had limited knowledge of the sample's larger population prior to the event (Neuman, 2002). At the event, participants were selected gradually within the specific context of the case, rather than developing a pre-planned approach used in quantitative research (Neuman, 2002).

The particular sampling techniques utilized were purposive, convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling recruits participants who match certain criteria, and are recruited using various methods. The criterion for this research was broad in that it sought participants involved in the WPHC. These stakeholders included: public officials, organizers, volunteers, local spectators, business people, participating teams and visiting tourists. Attendance at the event site by an individual signified participation in the WPHC for the researcher and as such identified them as potential research participants. This provided a convenient opportunity for recruiting interview participants from a large pool of stakeholders and may also be described as convenience sampling as the research setting provided access to most of the necessary participants. Convenience sampling attracts participants based on convenience for the researcher. This form of sampling can produce ineffective, unrepresentative samples (Neuman, 2002); however, as the intent of this research was to paint a rich, descriptive picture of the social environment during the event from the various participants, this sampling technique provided the data to do so.

The participant pool of over 480 players, 200 volunteers and 6000 spectators was ideal to carry out convenience sampling; however, this brought challenges in connecting with key

stakeholders involved in the event, such as primary volunteers, organizers and politicians. In response to this challenge, a snowball sampling technique was adopted, which exploits the links and networks among participants in the recruitment of further participants (Neuman, 2002). From conversations and interviews with research participants, an established social network was recognized which lead to key personnel at the event. By utilizing the contacts from the organizer of the event and prior personal knowledge of a participating team, a web of stakeholders was cultivated which provided access to the relevant research participants.

Initial conversations were conducted with prospective participants before the informal interviews took place. This provided all participants with prior knowledge of the research, its objectives and what their role was as a participant. This preliminary informed consent process ensured potential participants were aware and had a thorough understanding that their participation was voluntary. This open approach coupled with the non-injurious nature of the research reduced any ethical concerns they may have had.

The method of collecting data through informal interviews allowed the researcher to glean information about the social environment at the WPHC directly from the various stakeholders involved in the event. Within these interviews, the researcher conversed face to face with the participants in order to elicit views and opinions from the participants regarding the community and the event (Creswell, 2003). A semi-structured interview methodology was utilized by use of an interview guide (Appendix A) made up of a list of questions for each stakeholder group (Shank, 2002). This semi-structured approach gave the stakeholders freedom and control in answering their questions that would not have been available through a more structured approach (such as surveys). The interview guide directed questioning of the participants; however, further probing was utilized to produce the richest data and gain

clarification (Creswell, 2003). A probe is a neutral request to clarify an ambiguous answer, to complete an incomplete answer or to obtain a relevant response (Neuman, 2002).

The face to face conversations with a variety of research participants during the 2007 WPHC allowed the researcher to glean historical data about previous events that could not be established from observation alone (Creswell, 2003). The historical data collected allowed the researcher to compare and contrast the 2007 event with people's accounts of previous events. Also, conversing directly with participants cultivated a rapport between the researcher and the participants allowing for follow-up during the event.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and all participants were aware of this. The recorded interviews were transcribed following the event for analysis. Throughout the field work, multiple conversations were unable to be recorded and as a result field notes on those conservations were taken following the discussion. These unrecorded conversations were primarily a result of research participants whom the researcher had built a rapport with, returning to further discuss their views and experiences.

Aside from interviewing, a field researcher utilizes his or her senses to observe what is seen, smelled, tasted and touched and absorbs all the sources of information (Neuman, 2002). This is the basis for the non-participatory observation methodology that was employed. From these observations, the researcher recorded field notes about the activities and behaviours of the participants at the research site (Creswell, 2003). The observation of these activities and behaviours was useful in identifying and discussing the process of social cohesion at work. The observations were non-participatory in nature, since the purpose was not to actively participate in the event, but to understand the activities through the words and observations of the participants. The observations allowed for the researcher to gain first hand experience from participants and

allowed for these observations to be recorded as they happen through field notes (Creswell, 2003).

To supplement the data from the interview and observational methodology, an analysis of secondary data was employed. This process examined previously collected secondary information and applied it to the research question (Neuman, 2002). Previous television, magazine and newspaper reports on the WPHC as well as government documents, tourism publications and other WPHC related promotional material was collected and examined. This data source provided a wealth of information, which in most cases mirrored much of the primary data collected through interviews and observations. When this occurred, primary data was utilized in the analysis phases of this research. This data source completed the process of empirical triangulation.

The collected interview data was transcribed, and the process of coding allowed the researcher to begin to analyze this data. The process of coding sought to locate themes and assign initial codes to the data (Neuman, 2002). The coding process that was used involved the researcher reviewing the interview transcriptions, field notes and the supplementary materials. Within these materials the data was separated into particular themes based on the elements of social cohesion highlighted in figure 1. These themes were identified and separated for further review. Initial themes were based on the individual elements of social cohesion seen in Figure 1; however, the researcher was diligent in expanding on these themes and identifying new ones based on the data. Qualitative researchers during field work develop new concepts and refine old concepts based upon the data that they collect (Neuman, 2002). The new concepts were identified as the researcher continuously reviewed the data searching for new themes and links between all data and the literature. In the coding of the data, the social elements associated with

sport and sport tourism were recognized as important elements in the field work and were identified as such. In doing so, this expanded the coding themes and allowed the researcher to identify new linkages between the process of social cohesion and these social forces. These newly identified concepts acted as a thematic code which captured the qualitative richness of the phenomenon and was used in the analysis, interpretation and presentation on the findings (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 31). With the themes identified, the analysis of the data allowed the researcher to examine the relationship between the various themes and elements and present these findings in the forthcoming discussion.

Context of the Case-WPHC and Plaster Rock, NB

The case of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick and the World Pond Hockey Championships was utilized in this investigation into social cohesion and sport tourism in rural Canada. This hamlet in northwestern New Brunswick has a population of 1150 residents, who are primarily employed in the forestry industry (Statistics Canada, 2007). Plaster Rock in the early 1900s saw the Fraser Paper Mill built, bringing the initial migration of people to the community and remains the major employer to this day. Plaster Rock has an aging population with only 9.8% of the community falling within the 15-24 year old range, below the provincial average of 13.3% and the national average of 13.6% (Statistics Canada, 2001). The predominately anglophone community has an average household income of $32,656 and a 17% rate of high school graduation for residents over 20 years old (Statistics Canada, 2001).

The mill and the community have undergone dramatic changes since the early days when the Fraser Paper Company provided steady employment to the region and played a major role in providing services and infrastructure for the village. As the mill grew, the corporation built a community hall, a theatre and roads for its employees and other residents of the community. The

Fraser Paper Company still exists on the original site; however, engineering and technological advances in the forestry industry have transformed the mill into a modern, production-driven facility. Theses changes coupled with the external forces of neoliberalism, globalization and international competition have resulted in persistent lay-offs and temporary mill shutdowns. These corporate measures have created an environment of economic uncertainty within the community and the surrounding area.

To combat the community's reliance on the forestry industry, a push towards agriculture and tourism has been on-going throughout the community. The natural beauty of Plaster Rock and the surrounding Tobique Valley region allow tourism operators to market the destination to outdoor enthusiasts. These operators offer activities such as: camping, hiking, canoeing and kayaking in the summer, and snowmobiling, cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the winter (Plaster Rock, 2008).

The successful marketing of the outdoors is evident in the delivery of the WPHC. In the year 2000, the Tobique Valley Centennial Arena was deemed unsafe for use, as there was fear that the roof of the structure could not withstand the winter snowfall. In response, the community of Plaster Rock held Maritime Snowmobile Federation events on the Tobique River in 2000 and 2001 to raise money for a replacement arena. These events displayed the community as a tourist destination and provided great economic benefits for local businesses; however, failed to provide significant funds towards the goal of a new arena. As a result, the WPHC was created to kick-start a new fundraising campaign for the Tobique Valley. The name "World Pond Hockey Championships" was trademarked and the village of Plaster Rock, New Brunswick became the home of the first ever international pond hockey event in 2002.

The initial WPHC in 2002 featured forty teams from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia,

Prince Edward Island and the state of Maine (WPHC, 2008). This small event sparked the imagination of Canadians and hockey enthusiasts from around the world and has grown since to include 120 teams. The teams are now composed of players from every province in Canada, thirty-five U.S states and a total of fifteen countries from around the globe including Germany, Ireland, Egypt and the Cayman Islands (WPHC, 2008).

The community goal of constructing a new arena is the predominant objective of the WPHC; however, the organizers of the event have developed multi-faceted goals that hold varying cultural, economic, social objectives. The official goals of the 2007 WPHC were stated as follows:

I. To help maintain and promote the game of hockey as part of our proud Canadian heritage
II. To help promote Plaster Rock and surrounding area as a tourism destination point
III. To generate funds for local charities involved in providing for children (new arena)
IV. To bring people together in a fun invigorating environment, promoting healthy active living
V. To provide world renown maritime hospitality to everyone involved
VI. To provide participants with a visit back to their childhood

These multi-faceted objectives recognize the importance of a new arena for the community, but also emphasize the social environment and the cultural goals of the event. The responsibility for achieving these goals did not lie solely on the shoulders of WPHC organizers or the municipal government, but on a wide variety of stakeholders. Central to the delivery of event were the residents of the community who support the event through volunteerism and by making the sacrifices of time, money and personal space. More than 200 volunteers were mobilized in the staging of the event. This begins the discussion on social cohesion because of the important role that the social organization of the community has played in the growth of the event. The WPHC website states, "this phenomenal growth is a tribute to the persistence and dedication of a community and its legion of volunteers, who have embraced the challenge of bringing the world

to this small rural village" (WPHC, 2008).

The findings of this thesis examine the relationship between the process of social cohesion, the community's staging of the WPHC and sport's ability to foster social cohesion. In doing so, the following discussion examines the various elements of social cohesion in the community, and how they are impacted by the social, cultural and nostalgic factors linked with hockey and sport tourism. Further to this, the process of social cohesion is expanded beyond the traditional geographic borders of the village to incorporate tourists as well as those who have migrated out of the community.

Results and Discussion

The fieldwork conducted revealed the constitutive elements of social cohesion at the WPHC, with certain elements more evident than others. These elements -- place attachment and identity, social networks, common values, and common goals and objectives -- are investigated to understand the process of social cohesion at the event. Within the discussion, the stakeholders are separated based on experience and attachment with the region. The unique characteristics of sport tourism and the cultural and nostalgic components of the WPHC are also examined when discussing these groups. The WPHC case eliminates the traditional geographical community borders applied in social cohesion research and exemplifies how tourists motivated by a common identity are brought into the process. Visitor involvement within this process may or may not be limited to the weekend of the event; however, it is still significant in terms of expanding social cohesion research and its applicability to sport tourism.

Stakeholder Groups at the WPHC

The research participants had varying degrees of experience with the WPHC and the Tobique Valley region. This experience impacted their role in the process of social cohesion,

particularly when examining the place attachment and identity that they held and the social networks they were a part of. Within this discussion, the WPHC stakeholder groups are identified as experienced and inexperienced stakeholders. Experienced stakeholders refer to Tobique valley residents currently living in the region, those who have previously lived in the region, and teams and spectators with previous contact with the region. This classification is based on past experiences with the Tobique Valley, including past WPHCs. Inexperienced stakeholders are classified as a group that includes new participants in the tournament, and tourists visiting for the first time. The two stakeholder classifications are examined to discuss their role within the process of social cohesion development and how the social, cultural and nostalgic forces of the WPHC integrate the inexperienced into the process.

Place Attachment and Identity-Defining of Place

Place attachment and identity was a prominent social cohesion element observed at the event. Place attachment refers to bonds between people and places based on affection emotion, feelings, cognition, and practice (Low & Altman, 1992). Before furthering the discussion, it is important to identify the place that research participants had an attachment to. The particular place associated with the WPHC by stakeholders was the entire Tobique Valley region, not solely the hamlet of Plaster Rock. This distinction in place attachment is important and has a practical use for this research and the community, as the village relies on outlying areas for support. In the words of a local municipal councilor, "you have to remember that many of the volunteers not only come from the village but also the surrounding area. We count on the surrounding area for volunteers. We are probably talking about a population of 4-5000 that we draw on in the surrounding area." With this expanded attachment to the region, residents of Plaster Rock and the outlying areas were able to identify with the WPHC. Experiences at the

event for these residents furthered their attachment to both the event and the region. During the opening ceremonies, one male spectator summed up his feeling towards the region by stating "We love our area. This is the Tobique. This is a great time". A local politician reiterated the attachment that the local residents held by stating "I think it is the small community; I think it is friendly and people just enjoy coming to the Tobique". Through quotes such as these there appeared to be a connection that the local people had with the Tobique Valley, representing their place attachment with the region.

The intent of this thesis was to examine social cohesion in a Canadian rural community, but one of the primary elements of this process must be expanded beyond the geographical town borders. Gieryn's (2000) triad of location, material form and meaning does not stipulate a place's size and therefore may have varying spatial scale (Gustafon, 2002). One cannot assume that a person's attachment lies within particular spatial boundaries such as a town or village. It must be recognized that places have varying sizes to different people, thus altering the ascribed significance to an individual. The limited resources of the village of Plaster Rock were supplemented by the entire Tobique Valley region, which expanded the process of social cohesion to this larger geographic area. This place attachment towards the Tobique Valley for stakeholders at the WPHC contributes to the positive social environment and can act as a motivation for participation at the event. This was particularly evident when discussing motivations for experienced stakeholders to volunteer and make sacrifices for the benefit of the event.

Volunteers and Sacrifices

The volunteer base of over 200 current and former residents accounted for the most visible sign of community support and participation at the WPHC. Volunteers -- clothed in bright

yellow hockey jerseys -- performed a variety of tasks required for the execution of the event. This volunteer visibility could be utilized as a measure of community participation at the event; however, this does not represent the totality of the volunteer base given that much volunteering occurred well before the event. The event organizer explained this by stating:

> you know we have been out on the lake since basically Christmas time [event takes place early February]. There are work parties going on in buildings throughout town for three and four months leading up to it: building bleachers and putting equipment together that we need and, repainting things. It is something that they have really taken ownership of it, lot of pride in what they do and they do a phenomenal job at it.

As described by the organizer, each of the volunteers took on a position in delivering the WPHC, which involved that they make significant sacrifices for the event. The volunteer work that takes place at the WPHC demonstrated the community's social capital, as the social organization of community members placed each citizen within the WPHC network and gave each resident a particular responsibility related to the event. These responsibilities required residents to make sacrifices for the benefit of the WPHC and the community.

The Tobique Valley with established social networks among current and former residents appeared to display a strong accumulation of social capital, coupled with a common attachment to the region. As Barry (1989) argues, the social networks required for social capital can positively impact a human's likelihood to make sacrifices for the benefit of others. The sacrifices of comfort, time, space and money made by the people of the Tobique Valley highlight the important role that the residents played in the delivery of the event.

For the volunteers at the WPHC, the weather conditions required the sacrifice of personal comfort while assisting with the outdoor event. The temperatures during the 2007 WPHC ranged from a daytime high of minus twenty degrees Celsius to a low of minus thirty. In addition the brisk winter winds produced an even colder wind-chill factor creating an uncomfortable

environment for participants, spectators and volunteers. The master of ceremonies of the event described the harsher conditions during the 2006 WPHC and the resiliency of the community and volunteers:

> Last year, the first night we had snow and the volunteers, just local people who came to watch the games, grabbed shovels and cleared the ice. The next day we had rain, they played in the rain and National Geographic was here taking pictures of them playing in the rain. Then we turned around and went from rain and we had a 40-50 degree change in weather. Saturday, it was freezing cold and then Sunday it was cold, but we did not have the wind. Why these people have come back to volunteer after all this, I do not know. You have to be a little crazy, but I think at the end of it, there is a sense of "we were a part of it".

The unpredictability of the weather created uncomfortable conditions for volunteers and spectators alike, requiring stakeholders to make the sacrifice of their personal comfort. With many required to remain outdoors in frigid conditions for four to eight hours a day throughout the duration of the tournament, these volunteers made this significant sacrifice for the benefit of the event.

The sacrifice of time for many volunteers is a year round commitment, extending beyond the four days of the event. Prior to the WPHC, the transformation of Roulston Lake into 22 individual rinks required significant time and physical effort from local volunteers. This work was purely voluntary as the WPHC does not have a paid staff, aside from the organizer who holds a prominent position with the municipal government. Some of these volunteers, already facing economic uncertainty at the mill, took vacation leave from their positions to prepare for the event. The sacrifice of time for the people of the Tobique Valley is imperative for the preparation and execution of the WPHC. In fact, it appears that some plan and prioritize their disposable time (including vacation time) around the event.

The sacrifice of personal space by residents was required as hockey players, friends, family, media and tourists flocked to the community of Plaster Rock during the event. As a result, the commercial motels in the village and the surrounding area could not provide adequate lodging for the sudden influx of visitors. To combat the lodging deficit, many residents billeted these visitors by providing room for teams, sacrificing personal space in their homes. The organizer of the event described how many tourists find lodging for the event:

> Everyone wants to be close, so the hotels and motels fill up the day that they find out they are in. A lot of homes, people billet teams, lots of cottages, it is kind of an outdoor recreation area with the rivers and the lakes and the woodlands. A lot of the cottages get used in Perth-Andover and Grand Falls and the motels and rest stops as well. We always get some communication from teams that they were not fortunate enough to get into one of the hotels and then we [say] well are there any homes available? So we have a little program set up where people specify what kind of accommodations they have available. And I will just steer and direct. I do not get involved in any kind of negotiations. I just put them in contact and they work out the details.

The arrangement and type of accommodations varied; however, the teams appeared to be treated with a high level of hospitality, which extended beyond the provision of lodging. As the organizer noted, many local people approach him about billeting teams, and therefore there is little to no recruitment of homes for visitors from an organizational perspective. In volunteering in this manner, local homeowners sacrifice their space and open their doors to visiting participants and tourists, many of whom they have never met for the benefit of the event and the community.

Along with accommodations, community members commonly supplied food and recreational opportunities for their guests. A southern Ontario team described how their billet prepared multiple meals, purchased alcohol and provided access to their personal snowmobiles throughout the duration of their stay. Quoting a similar experience, an Alberta team explained

the sacrifice that their billet made in accommodating them for the weekend: "the tournament organizer lined us up with a family in town that moved out of their house for the weekend... we moved in. [It] couldn't be better "facilities absolutely perfect". These examples demonstrated the persistent spatial and financial sacrifices made in billeting these teams. In some cases, a fee was charged in exchange for lodging; however, this fee varied from a small monetary charge, an in-kind gift for the billet or no fee at all.

The Social Environment in the Tobique Valley

The aforementioned sacrifices of personal comfort, space, time and money made by the people of the Tobique Valley were imperative in staging the WPHC. In recognizing the high participation rate and sacrifices of Tobique Valley residents, the question that emerges is: what is it about the social environment within the region that facilitates these actions for the benefit of the event? Rural residents can have a greater knowledge and trust of their neighbours than those in urban centres (Turcotte, 2005) and throughout the fieldwork the people of the Tobique Valley appeared to confirm this claim. Discussions with residents, politicians and volunteers at the WPHC presented a close knit community thriving on trust, commonality and reciprocity.

One female spectator from Riley Brook, New Brunswick (25 minutes outside of Plaster Rock) described the common values of the community by stating, "That is just the way this community is. It doesn't matter who wants something, whether you are an enemy or a foe they will help you. If you need some help they are there." This statement suggested that there are inherent common values of trust and commonality which creates a positive social environment in the community. The trust and knowledge among residents was explained by another female spectator who claimed that, "Everybody is just friendly around this area. Everybody knows everybody's business". The knowledge of personal matters was not seen by this resident as a

negative invasion of privacy, but a positive declaration of the social environment and the strength of the community's social networks. These local spectators articulated the perceived elements of trust and commonality that the people of the Tobique Valley held among each other. These elements as articulated by these spectators appeared to contribute to their participation as spectators and their attendance at the event.

The master of ceremonies of the event jokingly attributed the community's support of the WPHC, to the volunteers "being a bit crazy"; however, this does not provide an adequate explanation for community participation. For experienced stakeholders who currently or formerly resided in the region, the positive social environment of the community provided great motivation for participation. The desire to contribute to the event and make sacrifices was strengthened by residents adopting the common goals and objectives of the Tobique Valley community, which is discussed in the following section.

Common Goals and Objectives of the Tobique Valley

The official goals of the 2007 WPHC represented the event objectives of the municipality of Plaster Rock as a governmental institution and not necessarily the common goals of the community. In response to economic difficulties, the prominent common goal of the experienced stakeholders was to produce a healthy, thriving community for the region's residents and a new hockey arena was seen as a major component of this. Similar to the Dryden and McGregor's (1989) narrative about the importance of the hockey arena to a rural Saskatchewan town, the deteriorating hockey arena in Plaster Rock represented a significant threat to the well-being of the residents of the Tobique Valley and the future of the community. To combat this threat, one male volunteer explained that "we are looking at building this arena and arenas cost money. Every community is thinking how do we get our share of the money to pay for it? Big cities are

struggling with that. Small communities like this, "are saying we are going to raise it". This declaration of the need for a new arena was reiterated by multiple experienced stakeholders. These statements illustrated the common challenge facing the Tobique Valley and the common goal of the region's people as expressed throughout the field work. The acceptance of this common goal seemed to activate the community's support mechanisms and drive residents to assist at the event.

The organizer of the event attributed the support and volunteer base to the recognition of the common objective of the new hockey arena as he stated, "once they have gotten involved in this event they have kind of grown with the event and they take a tremendous amount of pride in what they do. They are just phenomenal in terms of commitment and dedication they have towards it". The need for a new arena acted as a volunteer recruitment tool for the organizers as each of the volunteers adopted this common goal. He recognized this by offering, "I just kind of steer the ship a little bit and get out of the road and they take things and run with it". This demonstrated that with the adoption of the common goal, the volunteers felt they had an inherent duty to assist in achieving this goal with no persuasion or coercion to participate.

Economic and Social Health of the Community

Recognizing the need for a new arena as a common goal for the community's residents created a catalyst for the process of social cohesion, as it activated the positive social environment and created an opportunity for participation for residents. The loss of the arena was a product of the unfavourable economic conditions in the community, having been impacted by neoliberalism and globalization. These forces had detrimental effects on the community and the industry that the community relies on. In June and October 2006, the Fraser Paper Company temporarily shut down their Plaster Rock plant, with the high Canadian dollar and low demand

for forestry products cited as reasons for these corporate measures. This resulted in 340 workers being temporarily laid off during this time (CBC, 2006). These challenging economic times were discussed by a female volunteer who observed that, "we have a community that is based around the lumber industry and the mill has been closed quite a bit this year, and it has hurt the morale of the community". Moreover, the community's reliance on forestry and the Fraser Paper Company resulted in a population with specialized skills, particular to that industry. One volunteer, when asked his motivation for volunteering reaffirmed this in noting, "well, it is a community based event and we are a part of the community. We don't have any real specialized skills so we just do what we like to do. I am the garbage collector." This brought great challenges as the complex execution of an event like the WPHC, required a large number of volunteers to carry out the duties for the event. This was overcome as the volunteers chose duties based on their personal skill base, in order for the event to be delivered effectively.

Times of economic hardship as seen in the Tobique Valley bring concerns for social cohesion (Beauvais & Jenson, 2002); however, the findings of this field work contradict these claims. A male volunteer articulated this contradiction by stating:

> this time of the year we are kind of in a lull and it brings great camaraderie and it is nice to see the faces that you have made friends with over the last couple of years that have come in from other provinces, states and countries that have come in over the years

The lull in the Tobique Valley presented by these volunteers appeared not to threaten the social environment of the community. A local volunteer somewhat jokingly stated, "I know people who when you lose the mill or lose whatever, you don't leave town, you have to keep the community relationship. Maybe there is something in the water or the women are good looking, I don't know". Indeed, the community's response to economic trouble helped the WPHC as it activated the positive social environment of the Tobique Valley towards accomplishing the common goals

of offsetting these economic problems. An experienced stakeholder's place attachment plays an important role in the adoption of the community's common goals, and as seen in the next section this includes former residents.

Experienced Stakeholders-Former Residents of the Tobique Valley

Rural Canada has seen a steady stream of residents migrating out these regions, and this phenomenon has particularly affected Atlantic Canada. Between 1966 and 1996, the population in rural and small town Canada decreased from 7.8 million to 6.3 million (Rothwell, Bollman, Tremblay & Marshall, 2002). For residents, the experiences living in these rural regions built place attachment toward their home community. Upon migrating out, the place attachment that was developed towards their previous home remains. Maintenance of this attachment preserves a connection to their former home and a role in the process of social cohesion. The recollections of various research participants in the Tobique Valley demonstrated the challenge of out-migration for the region and how place attachment was maintained for these former residents. A municipal councillor born and raised in the Tobique Valley described his life growing up in the region, living in various areas of Ontario and the yearning to return that brought him back to the valley to retire. This desire to return to the region was common among various stakeholders, even if only for the duration of the WPHC.

The return to the Tobique Valley by former residents represented a physical manifestation of continued place attachment after migrating out. The WPHC provided a homecoming for those who have left the region for a variety of reasons, including employment and education. Tournament participants, volunteers and spectators from all over Canada and the world described their upbringing in the Tobique valley. These former residents used the WPHC to return to see friends and family, and re-establish their connection to the region. The team

Pharaoh's Global Connection was lead by a Plaster Rock born captain, who resides and works in Cairo, Egypt. This participant, who had competed in the WPHC for three years, magnified the sacrifices that former residents of the Tobique Valley made in order to return to the region during the event. This connection was common since many tournament participants had previous experiences with the Tobique Valley. These previous experiences built place attachment and developed social networks through past interactions with those in the region. These elements developed in the Tobique Valley provided motivation to return for former residents of the region, particularly during the WPHC.

One local spectator and volunteer described the social importance of the event for former residents by noting, "a lot of this is a second homecoming. People are actually coming back at this time of the year and you can see people you haven't seen in 10 years". Another local spectator described how the event has become a platform for his family to reunite during the WPHC, "our brother, my sister is here, we have one sister who can't make it, but it brings us together and we had a family dinner last night and it was nice. That is what it is all about". The WPHC acted as a venue for the celebration of past and current social relationships among current and former residents of the region. Further it was an opportunity for former residents to re-establish their relationship with the Tobique Valley region.

Those who once lived in the Tobique Valley also composed a portion of the volunteer base, furthering their opportunities for participation at the event. One male volunteer described his motivation for volunteering at the WPHC, "My family is originally from the Tobique Valley and anything that can help promote this area, I would be more than happy to help out. Seems like a good event. Support rural New Brunswick and help out. It is good to find things to do outside in the winter". Out-migration did not seem to sever the ties, the social networks and the place

attachment of these former residents and community members. Particularly for former residents, place attachment and social networks represented essential elements for participation. A local female described how these elements were mobilized to recruit teams:

> Well if you do any research and look at the people that are on the teams a lot of the people have connections to somebody that is from Plaster Rock or lived here or knew somebody who lived here. If you look at the people, and look at the names on the shirts like Schofield and Ward; people that are from here and then somebody told somebody that told somebody.

This word-of-mouth advertising mobilized the existing social networks and place attachment as a conduit to market the event to former residents of the Tobique Valley. These examples demonstrated how the process of social cohesion was not limited to the residents who physically live in the specified geographic area of the Tobique Valley, and that place attachment and social networks are maintained for those who have migrated out of the community. These actors, because of their connections with the people and the region, had a role in the process of social cohesion, particularly during the event. Because of this, these residents mobilized the WPHC as a means to maintain and strengthen these ties through a return visit.

Place attachment to the Tobique Valley and the common goal of a new hockey arena combined to increase participation at the WPHC by experienced stakeholders who currently live or previously lived in the region. The importance of the game of hockey when discussing the event's success extended beyond the objective of a new arena. In fact, the cultural importance of the game and significance of its vernacular traditions enhanced the social environment of the event and assisted in the development of a WPHC common identity among all stakeholders, as seen in the next section.

Nostalgic Meaning Created by Sport

The vested interests, existing place attachment and positive social environment among

experienced stakeholders, motivated participation for the betterment of the Tobique Valley. Inexperienced stakeholders with no previous experiences at the WPHC had no such motivation. Nostalgia and the celebration of a WPHC common identity provided motivation for participation among this group. In doing so, these stakeholders were integrated into the process of social cohesion at the WPHC.

Hockey's vernacular traditions on a frozen pond extract nostalgic feelings for many Canadians. It is these feelings that were exploited by the organizers of the WPHC when marketing the event to new participants. Nostalgia is a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or a fondness for possessions and activities in the past (Holbrook, 1993, p. 245). Almost never associated with negative sentiments, nostalgia refers to positive feelings towards the past, infused with beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness and love (Davis, 1979).

In developing nostalgia, past sporting experiences serve as reference points for sport oriented people to extrapolate meaning from their lives. These reference points are based on a collective meaning linked to a particular sport entity or on an individual's personal sporting history. A collective meaning is shared by a particular society and celebrates sporting victories, events and personalities of the past (Higham and Hinch, 2005). The proliferation of this meaning is a result of its ideas being conveyed by popular media and sporting institutions. A prominent Canadian example of collective meaning was Canada's 1972 Summit Series victory over the Soviet Union. Through tremendous media coverage and celebration, this victory brought "an orgy of congratulation about the triumph of the Canadian virtues of individualism, flair and character" (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p. 263). Although most Canadians were not involved directly in the game, it was the victory and resultant media coverage that created a collective

meaning, as well as a story of nationalism and pride for most Canadians. Individualized meaning on the other hand, is linked to a person's direct sporting involvement and their sporting identity at various points in their life. This meaning is a result of the personal sporting experiences an individual endures (Higham & Hinch, 2005). Both the collective and individualized meanings associated with the game of hockey provided motivation for participation at the WPHC for inexperienced stakeholders.

Nostalgia and the Frozen Pond

The feeling of nostalgia at the WPHC was developed as a result of both an individuals' past hockey experiences and the collective meaning associated with the game of hockey in much of Canada and the northern regions of the world. A central component of much of this nostalgia is the outdoor rink. The professionalization of the game of hockey, in particular the success of the National Hockey League has created a sense of nostalgia around the outdoor hockey venue. Hockey's transformation from an amateur game to a professional spectacle in the late 19th century created a modern commercialized spectator sport (Mason, 1998). As a result, the indoor professional game gained popularity and in the 1960s Canadian cities constructed indoor rinks to accommodate the demand of burgeoning hockey leagues (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006). During this time, outdoor rinks remained an important part of community life; however, they were predominately used for non-structured practices and pick-up games. In contrast to the indoor arenas used for the formalized games, the recreational activities on the outdoor rink evoke nostalgic feelings, resulting in a return to the days before professionalization. In a rural setting such as Plaster Rock, the outdoor rink- "whether a frozen pond, backyard rink, or outdoor community recreation facility"- has remained a facet of northern recreation heritage (Falla, 2000, p. 54). The outdoor rink is unique in comparison to other sporting venues in that it is not

geographically situated in a particular location and thus the nostalgic images and feelings that are conjured up are not unique to one particular locality (Ramshaw & Hinch, 2006).

Ramshaw and Hinch (2006) associate the nostalgia of the outdoor rink to the factors of the environment, fantasy and Canadian nationalism. The environment refers to the romanticization of the cold climatic conditions in Canada, which are required for the creation of a frozen pond. The naturally occurring elements of cold temperatures, ice and snow serve as unique aesthetic elements for the venue (Bale, 1993). These elements work in conjunction with the fantasy factor, defined as an individual's ability to recall childhood memories related to the frozen rink. This nostalgia is easily cultivated when an individual holds a linear sense of time, dissatisfaction about the present and a tangible material culture from the past (Chase & Shaw, 1989). In other words, nostalgia is more likely to be developed when an individual is unhappy with the current condition of a particular aspect of their life or cultural surroundings and looks to the past to recall more pleasant times. In a time when the game of hockey is increasingly professionalized, the fantasy factor returns an individual to his or her childhood experiences with the less formalized game. Further to this, Canadian nationalism evokes nostalgia from pond hockey for many Canadians as the game is seen as a central element of a Canadian national identity. This correlation between hockey and a Canadian identity that citizens share is a collective meaning built on the nation's rich hockey history.

Ramshaw and Hinch's (2006) nostalgic factors of environment, fantasy and Canadian nationalism were prevalent motivating factors for participation by experienced and inexperienced stakeholders. A female volunteer, when asked about her motivation for volunteering replied, "For Pond Hockey? Oh my lord the whole town is out for pond hockey". Further to this, she continued "well, it is hockey. Canadians love hockey and small towns thrive on hockey. That is

what we have. Recreation is basically what we have. Every family seems to be involved, they have to be". The same question posed to a male volunteer resulted in the response of, "well you look at Hockey:A People's History [referring to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's documentary on the game of hockey]. This is where it all started. It started here on the ponds. Not just in New Brunswick, but all over the country. People just love to do it because even if you lose by 15 goals you are still a winner". Additionally, the other volunteer stated, "all of us here playing here and across the country remember playing on this lake 20 years [ago]. On Sunday the whole town of Plaster Rock will be down here skating and playing hockey"[referring to the community skating after the tournament ends]. One local spectator discussed his experience of playing pond hockey on the Tobique River, "we were all down by the river. You cleared it off when the snow came and you played. I remember when we played, the goalie had Sears catalogues that they used for pads". As these recollections describe, the experienced stakeholders were able to remember and celebrate their individual hockey histories in the Tobique Valley and celebrate the collective meaning they share of the game. As experienced stakeholders with a past in the region, these cultural motivations were coupled with an already established place attachment to the Tobique Valley.

For the inexperienced stakeholders, Ramshaw and Hinch's (2006) factors provided great motivation as one tournament participant stated, "it goes back to the roots of hockey around here. When I was young we would go and clear the beaver pond off and play hockey. Didn't have much for skates or much for anything else. Build a bonfire at the one end of the pond and play hockey. That was our pastime". The factors of environment and fantasy were further articulated by an American participant describing his experiences playing as a child:

> They [the team] grew up in the suburbs playing on the ponds, I grew up in the city and we used to skate on the roof of a garage. Some of my friends

> would plug up the drain and it would freeze and that is where we would play... Pucks would fly off and we would break windshields every once in a while so we would jump down with our skates on and get out of there. Another place we would play was at an old carpet factory with a huge puddle, so I got a call one day that this is where we were playing. We would put on full equipment and get out and play pond hockey. Just playing outside.

The positive childhood recollections of the game and the environmental conditions associated with an individual's past were recreated at the WPHC. This nostalgic compilation of fantasy, environment and Canadian nationalism provided motivation for new visitors to the region. In the previous example, the factor of Canadian nationalism for the American participant held little resonance; however, fantasy and environment were reaffirmed as contributing factors of nostalgia for this participant. The cultural significance and nostalgic feelings towards the game and the frozen pond are contributing factors to the development of a WPHC common identity that all stakeholders involved in the event were seen to form. Complementing these factors is the unique social environment developed at the event. Together these forces form the WPHC common identity, which integrated inexperienced stakeholders into the process of social cohesion

Social Environment at the WPHC

During the WPHC, the social environment of the Tobique Valley is altered by the unique social characteristics of sport and group-based nostalgia sport tourism. Group-based nostalgia sport tourism uses sporting events to evoke nostalgia from the social experiences that take place through travel and participation at the event. Central to this, is the ability of sport to create an environment where people can come together to celebrate a common identity (Green & Chalip, 1998). As is described by the following, in Plaster Rock, all stakeholders come together to form a WPHC common identity during the event.

A WPHC common identity was developed as the event provided opportunity for social interaction, allowing memories to be created among stakeholders. At the WPHC, interactions occurred at two levels: the social group and the wider subculture. The social group refers to interactions that took place between members of individual teams of friends, family or co-workers; while the wider subculture level consisted of the WPHC as a large social group encompassing interactions with all stakeholders involved with the event (Green & Chalip, 1998). Donelly (1981) defines subculture as "a collectivity of groups and individuals who possess common cultural characteristics and who interact with each other, or who have the potential and the ability to interact with each other either directly or indirectly" (p. 570). All stakeholders at the WPHC with the common ideas of and experiences with the game of hockey and the event were part of a WPHC subculture or what I refer to as the WPHC community.

Social Groups

Teams at the WPHC generally consisted of four males[2] with a common history through family, work, school or friendship. This common history was celebrated through travel to and participation at the WPHC. The event acted as a venue for the exchange of stories and for dialogue about common experiences. The camaraderie created through these interactions was explained by an Ontario participant who stated that he doesn't ever play hockey except, "just once a year at this thing so it is all about getting away with the boys and having a good time". This notion was furthered by a participant from Prince Edward Island who said, "I saw it on TV and thought this isn't a golf weekend lets get the boys together and go drink some beer". For these teams, their motive for participation in the event was not the competition of the tournament, but the social opportunity provided by the WPHC for their social group. This social experience celebrated and strengthened an already established common history and friendship

among the team members. The social group interactions are an important social activity that takes place at the WPHC; however, to discuss social cohesion at the event, greater emphasis is placed on the interactions at the wider subculture level.

Wider Subculture

On a larger scale, the social group, which was formerly defined as the individual teams, was expanded to the wider subculture, representing the social relations among the entire WPHC community. This community was composed of all stakeholders (experienced and inexperienced) involved in the event and is seen as the community involved in the process of social cohesion at the WPHC. The conduct of the tournament participants illustrated various elements of the process at work. This process is seen by examining the interaction between the various stakeholders at the event.

The delivery of the tournament formalized the vernacular origins of the game by developing rules and instituting a Championship title; however, the conduct of the participants did not reflect the competitive nature of a professional, formalized game. The common value of sportsmanship extracted from the vernacular roots of the game added to the social environment at the WPHC. This dynamic was explained by a Prince Edward Island participant who said:

> We played five teams this weekend and everyone we have played are here for the right reasons, we barely kept score and we had a lot of fun they have been absolutely great. We give the other teams we play shirts, but they have to wait until after the game because they have to be "shirt-worthy".

The provision of gifts as a sign of sportsmanship for the opposing team was a common practice, as many teams provided tokens of friendship reflecting their home towns. For example, a team from Tennessee provided their competition with a locally produced bottle of barbeque sauce after each game.

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[2] One all female team did compete within the tournament

The importance of sportsmanship and camaraderie further illustrated that it is not competition or physical activity that is the primary attraction for participants, but rather the social experiences. The games were competitive; however, this competition played a minimal role in the experiences of many participants. The competitive nature of the event was summed up by a participant from Connecticut who said "we lost 24-7 and we had as good of a time as when we won 23-21". A participant from California described his experiences by saying:

> First game we lost 36-5; second game we lost 46-0 against a bunch of real charitable guys who obviously don't understand the philosophy of the tournament. I guess they are spiritually challenged...But then we got better we played a better first game today against a bunch of boys from Ontario and the team we played here were a bunch of local throw togethers. We're here to have a good time, we are over 40 none of us are serious.

This particularly poignant comment suggested that an unwritten tournament philosophy dictated that the way games should be played with sportsmanship holding the highest of importance over competition. The common values of sportsmanship and camaraderie were imperative to the social environment as a motivator for participation. The cultivation of these common values helped to influence the social environment at the event among all stakeholders. This environment was also complemented by sport's ability to transcend individual differences among all stakeholders, which is discussed in the next section.

WPHC-Liminod State of Communitas

The geographic origins and the socioeconomic status of all involved in WPHC community varied greatly. Among the blue collar workers of the Tobique Valley were participants of low, middle and high socioeconomic classes from all over the world. Many tournament participants that took part in the fieldwork held highly regarded occupations, namely judges, doctors, lawyers, movie producers and international journalists. These varying social

classes coexisted and interacted while participating at WPHC with what appeared to be little discussion of their professional life as much of the discussion that took place revolved around past and present tournaments and experiences with the game of hockey. Traditional identity characteristics such as profession, class and age were ignored in favour of the WPHC's common identity. In other words, this case represented an example of Turner's liminoid state of communitas. In this state, stakeholders disregarded differences among those involved, ignored disparities and accepted each other as social equals (Turner, 1974). The organizer of the event noted, "we get CEOs doctors, and dentists and heavy equipment operators all sprinkled amongst the teams, but when they are here they are just another hockey player and they have a great time here together". All stakeholders through interactions both on and off the ice developed and celebrated a common identity around the WPHC, rather than discussing their professional identity. Fairley and Gammon (2005) argue that sport tourism participants are not solely motivated by the sport or the travel experience, but also the camaraderie and friendships that occur in this liminoid space.

The unique social environment of commonality and equality provides a venue for participants to remove him or herself from the stresses of their careers. Fairley and Gammon (2005) argue that the sport tourism experience separates participants in both space and time from their everyday life. A Maritime participant articulated this claim when he stated:

> It's going back to the roots; I mean we grew up playing hockey on a pond. You do it as kids, but is not so often that you do it as adults you can do it because everyone is so busy all the time with work and school so it is hard to get the same group of guys together.....Some of our buddies all came together from Edmonton, Fort Mc[Murray], Halifax, so it is good to have all the guys back together

Regardless of place of origin, the collective memories produced at the tournament and the social interactions among all stakeholders allowed the participants to develop an attachment to the

region as the community played host to all stakeholders (Higham & Hinch, 2005). This allowed the visitors to separate from their professional and personal life and focus and the event and other stakeholders. The master of ceremonies of the event articulated this when he stated "we like to think that for this weekend everyone that arrives here wants to be, at least for the weekend, a Tobiquer". Socioeconomic status and class varied at the WPHC; however, the working class culture of the Tobique Valley was celebrated and incorporated into the WPHC common identity. In fact, the emcee of the tournament described the event as "World class hockey for the working class man".

Building and Strengthening a WPHC Common Identity through Social Interaction

The liminoid state of communitas at the event produces an environment where participants disregard traditional status markers and socializing is made easier. The establishment of the WPHC common identity was dependant on the social events that took place during group-based nostalgia sport tourism. This is because group formation is made easier by the liminoid state that interactions takes place in (Fairley, 2003). The social opportunities created during the event produced a WPHC common identity and integrated the inexperienced stakeholders into the process of social cohesion. Repeat participants came together to travel to the event and from this memories of previous trips became particularly salient as experienced stakeholders discussed and shared stories of past tournaments. In doing so, the inexperienced became aware of the activities important to the group (Fairley & Gammon, 2005). The constant story telling from past events acted as a socialization tool for new participants, while reinforcing and strengthening the nostalgic feelings towards the WPHC. The common identity built around the event linked the new participants with repeat participants, volunteers, spectators and billets as the exchanges of narratives further promoted the identity among all involved. Indeed, it can be argued that the

experienced stakeholders sought to provide positive experiences for the inexperienced stakeholders by socializing them into this group.

This practice of recalling narratives was exemplified by the experienced 2007 stakeholders who recalled the 2006 event. In 2006, participants experienced intense cold weather and torrential rainfall, creating an uncomfortable environment for all. As a result, many participants experienced wet equipment, frostbite and even skates frozen to their feet. The stories surrounding these events emphasized community hospitality in dealing with these situations. A team from the Ottawa region described their 2006 experiences:

> Last year we had the rain on the Saturday; it just poured down rain. And we are sitting in our hotel room and a knock came on the door and it was one of the women in the community and she said, 'listen I know you are in the pond hockey because that is the only people renting anything this weekend so if you have any wet clothes or anything like that we will take them home and dry them for you and bring them back in an hour'. They came right to every hotel room and made the same offer to every team that was there.

The message of community hospitality was mirrored by a participant from Calgary who described their experience with a community member whom they had never met:

> Last year we had rain and had a gentleman say afterwards, "[participant name] why don't you get your guys together and follow me out I got a big heater out in the garage. I am about five miles out of town, but lots of room and lots of cold beer" So we went and spent the rest of the afternoon warming up and getting our stuff dried up...unbelievable. You can't have this many people without room and board and [because of this] people are opening up their homes.

These stories of previous events were often retold, reminding those involved in the past of these events and informing new participants of what had previously occurred. By incorporating newcomers into the process of creating narratives at the event and sharing the old, inexperienced stakeholders developed and strengthened their WPHC common identity and their place attachment to the Tobique Valley. By building these elements among inexperienced stakeholders, they were integrated in the process of social cohesion.

In short, the WPHC common identity was the culmination of two components: the cultural importance and nostalgia associated with the game of hockey and the outdoor rink, and the unique social environment created by the Tobique Valley, hockey and group-based nostalgia sport tourism. These elements all interacted in a unique liminoid state of communitas created by sport, where individual differences were disregarded.

Figure 2 visually depicts how these cultural and social factors interact to form a WPHC common identity amongst stakeholders. Within this figure, the WPHC common identity is deconstructed into its contributing factors of the cultural importance of hockey and the social environment created at the event. The cultural importance of hockey refers to the individual participants and his or her feeling towards hockey as well as his or her common history with the game. The social environment identifies the elements of the unique social environment, including: the liminoid state of communitas, the common values of sportsmanship and camaraderie, the nostalgia that has been derived from the stakeholder's event history and the opportunities for social interaction. These social elements are developed and strengthened by the recollection of experiences and memories of past WPHCs. Combined the cultural importance of hockey and the social environment at the event foster a WPHC common identity among all stakeholders.

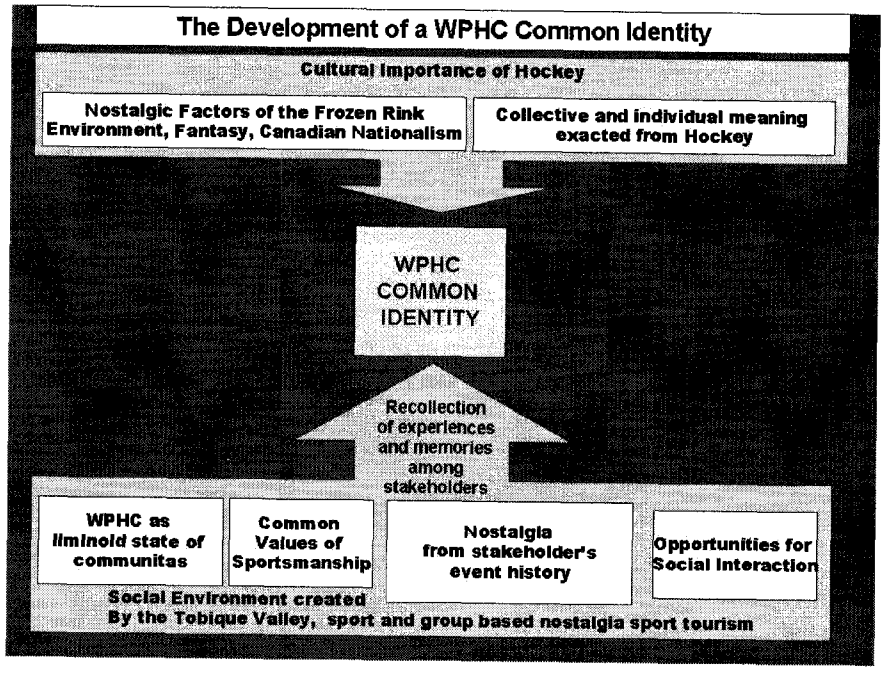

Figure 2.The development of a WPHC common identity

The common identity developed among stakeholders was dependant upon interaction, and particularly the interaction between the experienced and inexperienced. This is a result of the experienced stakeholders integrating the inexperienced into the WPHC community.

WPHC Common Identity and Social Cohesion

Figure 1 illustrated the various elements of social cohesion and how they interacted. The past experiences in the community placed experienced stakeholders in this process in the Tobique Valley, as they had established social networks in and place attachment with the region. Through these interactions, the elements in the social environment were positively reinforced. The process of social cohesion at the WPHC includes all stakeholders at the event including the residents of the Tobique Valley and visitors from outside of the region. By involving these new actors, the process expanded to the WPHC community. For the inexperienced stakeholders, Figure 3 integrates the new element of the WPHC common identity and this stakeholder group into the process of social cohesion.

The inexperienced stakeholders based their initial participation on their identification with hockey and the nostalgia that they derived from the game and the event. This cultural element of the WPHC common identity acted as motivator for inexperienced stakeholders to participate, along with the common values of camaraderie and sportsmanship adopted by all at the event. Participation in the event for the inexperienced had two results: it integrated newcomers into the WPHC community by building the event's social networks, and initiated the formation of a common WPHC identity by allowing for first hand experiences with the event. Central to these experiences were the social interactions among all stakeholders. The lessons which emerged from these conversations positively impacted an individual's personal experiences as it activated the WPHC common identity and created a sense a belonging within the community.

Figure 3 recognizes the two distinct stakeholder groups and illustrates the conversion of an inexperienced to an experienced stakeholder. Experienced stakeholders participate in the WPHC social cohesion, because of participation in past events and thus are active contributors towards the communities common goals. For inexperienced stakeholders, participation is motivated by the cultural element of the WPHC common identity and common values of sportsmanship and trust. From this participation, social networks are connections are developed between experienced and inexperienced stakeholders and these inexperienced are integrated in the process of social cohesion. It is important to reiterate that Figure 3 does not represent the process of social cohesion for the Tobique Valley community but rather the WPHC as a community itself. It can be argued that an efficient process of social cohesion in the Tobique Valley, consisting of residents with dense social networks and a predisposition to contribute to the accomplishment of community goals was imperative in the WPHC community, because the

common actors and setting played an important role in the event. Although Figure 1 and Figure 3

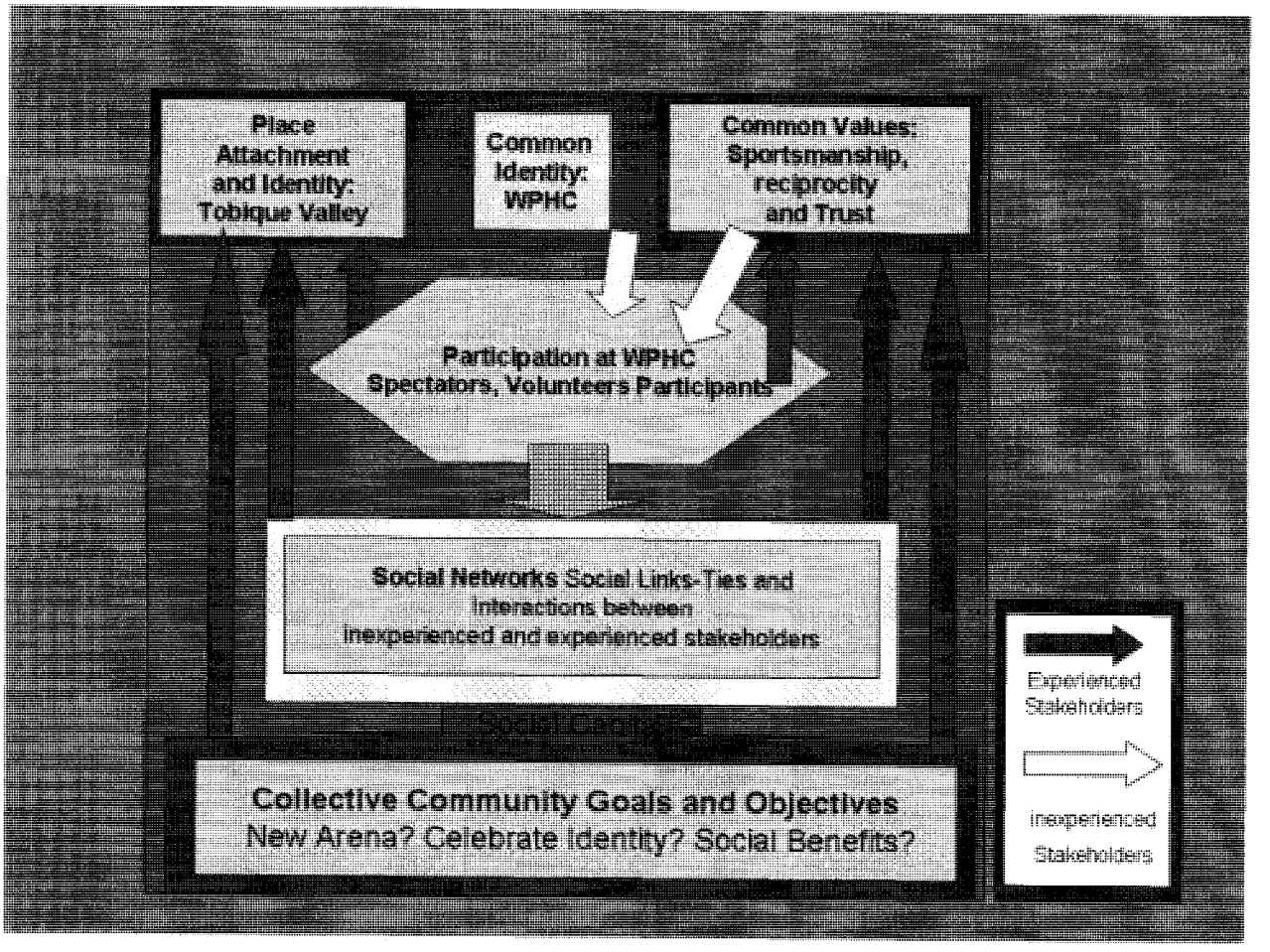

Figure 3. Social cohesion-WPHC community

were similar, differences regarding common goals and objectives, and the duration of the process did exist. These differences will be discussed in the next section.

Common Goals and Objectives-WPHC Community

The common goals and objectives of the WPHC community differed from those of the Tobique Valley as the process integrated actors from both inside and outside of the region. For the residents of the Tobique Valley, the aforementioned objective of the WPHC as a fundraiser for a new arena existed; however further goals reflected the larger population of the WPHC community. The common goals and objectives of this community were: to raise funds for a new

arena and community centre, to celebrate the game of hockey and to create a positive social experience for all associated with the event. Each of these goals are now discussed.

The initial goal for Tobique Valley residents to raise money for a new arena remained an objective for much of the WPHC community. A participant from the local town of Perth Andover attributed the success of the event to the recognition of this goal by stating:

> The community gets the money back so you get the volunteers. So it works like clockwork. It started with a need: they needed a new arena in town. The arena is in very poor shape and it started as a fundraiser and I think it just snowballed. It became more successful and they realized they can raise a lot more money.

This objective was furthered by a volunteer from Grand Falls who stated "I think the objective of getting the arena for the kids was my main motivation". This adds to the claim that the local stakeholders maintained a primary goal of raising funds for the new arena. With an established attachment to the area, local residents had a vested interest in the construction of a new arena as its construction provides a venue for their use. This goal was not lost on visitors from outside of the region. A participant from Prince Edward Island noted, "I am here first of all to support the town to build a new rink. I played in a bad rink my whole life". This objective was recognized by many stakeholders in the WPHC community; however, for the entire group, it seemed tertiary to the celebration of the game of hockey and the creation of a positive social environment[3].

The second common goal and objective for the WPHC community was the celebration of the game of hockey and the recognition of the vernacular form of the game. A local spectator at the event stated, "This is hockey at its best. That is what it is all about. I watch the NHL with all the money there and there is no money involved here." A tournament participant from

Vancouver, when asked about the success of the tournament responded, "I think it is part of the Canadian culture. We are outdoors, we are playing hockey... I mean it is a sport that we all have some sort of a connection with it. It is outside, it is natural". Lastly, the volunteer emcee of the event stated:

> Pond hockey. What more basic can you get than pond hockey. Basically what you are looking at is pure Canadiana. You are taking along the most primitive style of hockey and you are bringing together 120 teams, 480 people and you are putting them out there and letting them play like kids. We like to say that we turn 40 and 50 year olds into14 and 15 year olds. And we do have one guy out there that is 57 years old played every game so far.

Whether participating, spectating or volunteering, the event provided a platform to celebrate the game of hockey for all stakeholders. The social experiences at the WPHC allowed stakeholders to experience and celebrate Ramshaw and Hinch's (2006) factors of environment, fantasy and Canadian nationalism and the religious status that hockey holds in Canada (Gruneau and Whitson, 1994). This was accomplished as participants were able to extract the nostalgia they hold for the game through their experiences at the event.

The predominant objective of the WPHC community was the development of a positive social experience for all stakeholder groups. The deputy mayor recognized this common goal by stating that their objective was to, "get people into the community and let them have a good time and let them see some of the hospitality here in the community." This was furthered by another local female spectator who said:

> I think what makes it so successful is the people. I mean look around. Everybody is just having a great time. This is all done by volunteers. No one is getting paid. It is fun, it is just a really good time. We get to get out in the winter time when everybody is blah and you get to see everyone that you wouldn't see until summer. We are just looking forward to the whole thing.

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[3] This research is unable to gauge how the goals and objectives have changed over time, and it should be considered that the monetary success of the past and the fact that the arena is being built may impact the objectives of the community. There was a sense that the revenue is now being taken for granted as they assume it will be raised.

The people of the Tobique Valley saw the value and benefit of tourists visiting their community and recognized the role that they could play in ensuring that this positive social experience is achieved.

The development of a positive social experience was an important objective for those visiting the Tobique Valley as well. When asked about what motivated his team, a participant from Ontario stated, "[we] got looking at it at work and found out more about it, just decided that it looked like something that we wanted to do...it looked interesting and a lot of fun". A female spectator from Fredericton explained what brought her to the tournament by saying "I just come along for the ride...we are all friends and we work together and we just come up for the weekend and watch some hockey and have a great time". When asked about what makes the event what it is, a participant from Los Angeles, California, stated:

> The people here are amazing. You know, you just feel the spirit of all these people. They get out here and work this hard. Everybody is nice, all the places you go to people are just very happy to have you. You know it is a long way for us to come. For us to go 0-5 last year and come back again this year, that should tell you how much we enjoyed ourselves.

Most research participants throughout the field work communicated the objective of creating an environment where all stakeholders had a positive social experience during the event. For the people of the Tobique Valley community, the correlation between a positive experience for all and visitor revenue going towards the construction of the new arena was recognized and seen as a motivator for their participation.

The existing social order of the Tobique Valley gave each citizen of the region, past and present, a role in delivering the WPHC. For the residents of the small community, the common goal of a new arena is not within reach without visitor revenue. By enhancing the experiences of visitors, the residents sought to accomplish the WPHC

community goal of a positive social experience for all. An employee at the local grocery store described what role his hospitality plays in the delivery of the event by saying:

> It is just fantastic. I work at the local Save-Easy and the boys come in and you treat them nicely and we have a little wall up there with their pictures and we make them sign the wall. It is funny-- they come back every year to sign it. We have met a lot people through that way. And of course it is good economically.

The experiences of this local grocer illustrated how Tobique Valley residents and businesses recognized the importance of creating a positive social experience, which in return garners economic benefits for the community. In saying this, the people of the Tobique Valley, by ensuring a positive experience for all and participating in the celebration of the game of hockey, further supported the region's common goal of a new arena.

Duration of the Process of Social Cohesion at the WPHC

Since the process of social cohesion in Figure 3 illustrated the WPHC community rather than the Tobique Valley community, this discussion must address the longevity of the process outside of the weekend that the event took place. As active players in the WPHC community, the residents of the Tobique Valley continued their participation before and after through planning and preparation for the upcoming event.

For the stakeholders who lived outside of the region it was more difficult to ascertain whether they maintained participation within the process; however, there were signs of this occurring. The key elements which extended stakeholder participation outside of the WPHC weekend were the social networks and the place attachment towards the region developed during the event. The opportunities for socialization at the WPHC fostered cohesion among all participants as high degrees of social interaction within communities can produce a cohesive society (Kearns and Forrest, 2000). These interactions maintained the stakeholder's role within

the process of social cohesion despite an absence from the region. The social networks that were developed during the WPHC were powerful ties, which established a relationship between tourists, residents and the Tobique Valley. Although it was not feasible to measure the strengths of the relationships among all stakeholders, Henning and Lieberg (1996) argue that even weak ties among people can provide a sense of identity, security and feeling of home. This is important when arguing that despite the limited timeframe for all stakeholders to form social ties during the event, a WPHC identity can and still was developed.

The experiences of a team from Rhode Island exemplified these relationships and how they extended outside of event weekend. Competing for the third time at the WPHC, one participant from Rhode Island when asked about his experiences with the people in the region responded with, "I would say the kids have been great since Day one. We kind of got friendly with the first kid we met who carried our Rhode Island flag and it just grew from there". This team brought gifts every year for the young flag bearer, as he remained a fan of the team from their first year participating. Within our discussion, the most persuasive sign of a strong social relationship was when the participant mentioned the boy's grandfather, who had suddenly passed away just prior to the event. The sympathy was obvious as the participant emotionally explained how the relationship with the young boy had introduced them to his entire family, including the grandfather. The emotions conveyed when he explained the grandfather's passing illustrated how the WPHC built and strengthened relationships and networks between tourists and residents of the Tobique Valley. These relationships extended beyond the four days of the WPHC, and demonstrated how the event linked tourists to the region and its residents year round. Pahl and Spencer (1997) recognize these weaker, yet still important social networks. They argue that weak-ties of friendship may be growing in importance, as kinship links may be less easy to

maintain. These social networks which they argue are the essence of social cohesion may be spatially diffuse. The participants of the WPHC who travel to the event interact and form ties with the people of the Tobique Valley and as Pahl and Spencer (1997) argue the social links between the people of the Tobique and the tourists can still remain, despite the geographical difference outside of the weekend. The team from Rhode Island are a glowing example of this.

Attachment to the Tobique Valley Outside of the WPHC

The social environment in the Tobique Valley was built on the trust, reciprocity and belongingness among residents, as well as a very strong place attachment towards the region. This positive social environment created an atmosphere where residents were committed to the betterment of the community, and they saw the promotion of tourism as a means to do so. A trend in discussions among local residents demonstrated a commitment to all initiatives that promoted the region to tourists. Aside from the WPHC in the winter, the summer season sees the 'Fiddles on the Tobique' and the 'Fiddlehead Festival' held in the community (Plaster Rock, 2008). The residents at the WPHC were as enthusiastic when speaking of these events as they were about their winter event. A local male described the summer tourist season by stating:

> The fishing, we have an event called Fiddles on the Tobique which draws people from all over the world again. The hunting season in the fall, the park is full in the fall with hunters who are here and camp. This is a great area to come and visit. We may be a small community, but we are the friendliest community in the world.

This commitment to the region's tourism industry outside of the WPHC suggested that for the people of the Tobique Valley, the strength of their place attachment and social networks motivated their participation at the WPHC and in the promotion of their summer events. The tourism events in the region-including WPHC and Fiddles on the Tobique-assist in the betterment of the community and the residents of the region recognized this. The residents of the Tobique Valley, through hospitality and social interaction, strove to build the place attachment

and social networks of tourists in order to motivate return visits during times other than the WPHC.

The place attachment with the region and the social networks developed by interactions among visitors at the WPHC were argued as key elements in the development of a WPHC common identity. In terms of social cohesion longevity outside of the WPHC weekend, the absence of the event during the remainder of the year appeared to negatively impact tourist motivation to visit the Tobique Valley. Based on the discussions with local people and politicians, the cultural and social elements of the WPHC common identity seem to be less prevalent outside of WPHC weekend, which appears to impact tourist motivation for travel. A local municipal councillor explained how the event had not translated into return visits outside of the WPHC, by saying that "that is something that we really have to work on. We have to get some of these people back in the summer time. They have to come back and see the pond that they play hockey on". This statement recognized the limited window that the Tobique Valley residents had to entice tourists back to the region outside of the weekend in February. Further, this demonstrated the strength of the cultural and nostalgic elements of the WPHC that motivated participation and travel to the event. Regardless of this, residents seem to either not be aware of this challenge or chose to ignore it. These residents remained committed to the cause of creating a positive experience for all to increase the place attachment and the social networks of the tourists.

The process of social cohesion in the WPHC community was at its most efficient state during the event, as all actors were in attendance and the social, cultural, and nostalgic forces of the event interacted towards the community's common goals by developing a WPHC common identity. Outside of that weekend, the place attachment and social networks developed at the

WPHC still remained; however, the unique cultural, social and nostalgic characteristics of the event did not, at least not to the same extent. For tourists, these elements were primary building blocks of the WPHC common identity and motivators for travel to the region. The residents of the Tobique Valley during the WPHC attempted to facilitate the building of social networks and place attachment by the tourists in order to draw them back to the region after the event. As is seen in the Rhode Island team example, there was strength in the place attachment and social networks of the tourists; however despite immense effort by Valley residents, it did not seem strong enough to extend participation within the region outside of the WPHC weekend.

Conclusion

The Tobique Valley has seen the deleterious effects of neoliberalism and globalization greatly alter the economic base of the community, ultimately eliminating many required services in the region. A reliance on the declining forestry industry created an atmosphere of economic uncertainty; however, the efficiency of the region's process of social cohesion appears not to have been affected. The condemning of the Tobique Valley community arena may not have impacted the social cohesion of the community, but it did provide the catalyst for community support and the impetus for the WPHC.

For the people of the Tobique Valley the process of social cohesion is imperative to the delivery of the WPHC. The immense place attachment to the region, the existing social networks and the values of trust and reciprocity translate into participation and volunteerism at the event. The WPHC was developed to provide a fundraising vehicle for the new arena and they have utilized the community's existing elements of social cohesion to achieve this goal. With the WPHC comes unique social and nostalgic characteristics associated with the game of hockey and group based nostalgic sport tourism. These characteristics and the meanings behind them create

a community around the WPHC that consists of all participants of the event, including tourists, and former residents of the region. This WPHC community, like the Tobique Valley region participates in its own process of social cohesion.

The process of social cohesion for the WPHC is based on the elements and actors seen in Figure 1 (pg. 21) and includes the integration of tourists from outside of the region, who adopt a WPHC common identity (see Figure 2, on pg. 72). As the process of social cohesion is expanded to include all stakeholders at the event, the common goals and objectives must reflect this expanded group. These goals and objectives reflect the need for a new arena; but they also incorporate the objective of producing a positive social experience and celebrating the Canadian traditions of hockey. By providing a positive social experience for all and celebrating the game of hockey, the people of the Tobique Valley participate in the WPHC community and further the goal of constructing a new arena.

The last point to be highlighted is the uniqueness of the case and how this may impact the findings of this research. The data has shown how the existing social cohesion within the Tobique Valley, in conjunction with the cultural and nostalgic importance of the game of hockey, combined to deliver the WPHC and achieve the goals of the local and event communities. What is particularly poignant with the WPHC is that the Tobique Valley community's common goal of a new arena and the WPHC community's celebration of hockey rely heavily on feelings and nostalgia towards the game. The joke surrounding the event is that "we are playing hockey outdoors so that we can play hockey indoors". This common dependence of the community and the event on hockey is important to recognize, as the success of the event and accomplishment of the goals illustrates hockey's power as a cultural and social tool. Without the cultural and nostalgic forces of hockey and the social environment at the event,

the resultant accomplishment of the common goals would be drastically impacted.

Future Research

As an exploratory research thesis, the findings of this research begin to examine how cultural and nostalgic elements of sporting events can impact a community's process of social cohesion and create a community based around the event. This research is limited to one rural region in Atlantic Canada, and as such future research could contrast the WPHC with similar events in other parts of the maritime region and across Canada. Variances in the existence of social cohesion elements could be examined in rural regions across the country and how they are impacted by sport tourism initiatives that take place. In suggesting this, I argue that the Atlantic Canadian setting of the WPHC may be unique with regards to the presence of certain social cohesion elements and their relation to the tourism industry. In Atlantic Canada, although statistically poorer than other areas of the country, the people are proud of what they perceive as a higher quality of life than elsewhere (Chestworth, 2006). This attitude over time has morphed into a "culture of niceness, where Atlantic Canadians are regarded as being predisposed to being hospitable to tourists". The findings of this research were not meant to examine this predisposition that Atlantic Canadians have towards assisting in the delivery of tourism initiatives; however, it does provide a starting point to do so. With this being said, future research should examine similar events in Atlantic Canada, across the country and worldwide to compare and contrast how the various elements of social cohesion and the cultural and nostalgic forces interact in a different setting.

Aside from different geographic regions, alternative cultural and sporting events should also be examined. Within the Tobique Valley, the summer events "Fiddles on the Tobique" and the "Fiddlehead Festival" would provide an effective venue to contrast the cultural and nostalgic

forces of the WPHC with an alternate event in the same area. The findings of this research show the impact of sport on social cohesion; however, Matararsso (2000) argues that art events such as the "Fiddles on the Tobique" can have the same effect. He argues that participation in arts programs can bring people together, encourage partnerships, promote intercultural understanding, and reduce fear of crime by promoting neighborhood security. Secondly, arts participation can build a community's organizational capabilities by allowing residents to gain control over their lives and actively participate in regenerating neighbourhoods. Lastly, this participation positively impacts the image of the community as it allows for the celebration of local culture and traditions (Matarasso, 2000). Matarasso's findings suggest that participation in arts programs, like sport can also have a positive effect on a community's process of social cohesion.

The findings of this thesis show that the social environment in the Tobique Valley motivates residents to participate in the community as they work towards common goals. The region's signature summer event "Fiddles on the Tobique" is an art and cultural event; however, the success of that event from the limited data collected at the WPHC could to be based on the existing social networks and place attachment, rather than the cultural importance of the event. Although the people of the Tobique Valley are as enthusiastic about the summer event as they are the WPHC, "Fiddles on the Tobique" may not be able to rely on the strong cultural forces of the event to motivate tourists from around the world to attend like they can with the game of hockey during the WPHC.

The factors of fantasy, environment and Canadian nationalism articulated by the various stakeholders of the WPHC showed the strength of the cultural and nostalgic impact that pond hockey holds in the area. The quasi-religious status that hockey seems to have in Canada

represents a collective meaning among many Canadians that is capitalized upon by the organizers of the WPHC (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993). This mass appeal of the game of hockey in Canada cuts across occupational, religious and ethnic divisions (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993). This is in contrast with arts programs which are seen as open only to those within the higher socioeconomic classes of society and cannot be appreciated without previous knowledge or education (Hughes, 2000). The arts are associated with refinement and can be perceived as activities that the ordinary man or woman cannot appreciate without previous training or education (Tusa, 1999). The blue collar mass appeal of hockey at the WPHC contrasts with the refined, educated demographic of the arts provides the basis for further research on the impact of cultural events on a rural community's process of social cohesion.

The findings of this research show how sport can be utilized as a powerful social tool that can be exploited for the accomplishment of the community's goals and objectives. Despite economic hard times, a rural community's pre-existing positive social environment can motivate residents to support common endeavours, including the delivery of tourism initiatives. The existing social networks and place attachment in the region manifest themselves in participation in the community by residents. As seen with the WPHC, rural communities can integrate tourists and other visitors into a process of social cohesion by creating a common identity centred on the cultural significance and the social and nostalgic forces of sport. By creating a community around the event and integrating tourists and other visitors, the residents of the Tobique Valley were able to accomplish the common goals of this new community, while still attaining the common objective set out by the people of the Tobique Valley region.

Limitations of Research

This research begins to examine the correlation between social cohesion and sport

tourism; however, it is not without limitations. As this investigation was conducted within the constraints of a Master's thesis and without external funding, the inability of the researcher to fund large scale fieldwork over an extended period of time is a limitation. Field work that took place before, during the event and perhaps at multiple events would have provided a more complete picture of the social environment at the event. A more ethnographic approach that was not feasible within the constraints of this thesis could have been used where data was collected over a prolonged period of time or over multiple events. This would have allowed the researcher to analyze the community and the event in much greater detail.

The limited time frame also affected the researcher's ability to absorb the wealth of information as such must be recognized as a limitation to this research. Much of the interview data was recorded through a digital recorder; however, the observational data and the field notes that were acquired may only reflect a small representation of what actually occurred at the event. If adequate resources were available, multiple researchers would be utilized in order to capture the highest quality data as well as the ensure validity and reliability of the data.

In addition to this, limiting the research to one particular case does bring challenges as the WPHC is bound by the constraints of time and geography. This thesis emphasizes the role that tourists and other non-residents play at the event and because of this, post-event follow-up with a large number of participants was not feasible. Contact information was collected from key personnel involved in the event and follow-up was conducted.

The application of the social forces brought by sport and sport tourism to social cohesion research is a relatively new idea. Social cohesion as a theoretical framework is a useful quasi-concept that allowed the researcher to examine the social relations of the Tobique Valley during the WPHC. The ambiguity of the term social cohesion and the on-going debates of its use and

definitions must be recognized as potential limitations, but basing the definition for this case on past research did allow for previously recognized elements of social cohesion to be considered. Although this research study within the constraints of an MA research thesis does bring its limitations, it begins to examine and discuss the relationship between social cohesion and these forces, while setting the stage for future research.

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Appendix A-Interview Guide

Participants

- Where is it that you have travelled from to be here for this event?
- Is this your first time participating in this event?
- If No? Can you describe what your first exposure to your event was like?
- What is it that encouraged you to participate in this event?
- What is the atmosphere amongst the participants here at the participants?
- What are you feelings on the village of Plaster Rock and its hosting of this event?
- Where do you find accommodations when participating in the event?
- Do you find yourself utilizing the businesses within Plaster Rock and the surrounding area when attending the event?

Spectators

- Where is it that you have travelled from to be here for this event?

Local?

- What is you motivation for attending this event?
- As a local citizen what is it that this event means to you?
- What do you think the event does for the community?
- Is there anything about that event that you believe is negative?

Out of Town?

- What is it that motivated you to attend this event?
- Why is it that you travelled here to the event toay?
- Is this your first time attending the event?
- If no? what is it that made you come back?
- What are you feelings on the village of Plaster Rock and its hosting of this event?
- Have the people of Plaster Rock been welcoming to you as a tourist?
- Are you here for the day or for the weekend? All weekend? Accomodations?
- Do you find yourself utilizing the businesses within Plaster Rock and the surrounding area when attending the event? If so which ones?

Local Business People

- How do you feel about the World Pond Hockey Championships being held here in Plaster Rock?
- How does the staging of the event affect the city?
- How does the staging of the event affect your business?
- Is there anything about that event that you believe is negative?
- What has been done amongst the local business community in order to prepare for the

event?

Volunteers

- Where is your hometown?
- What is it that motivated you to volunteer at this event?
- Is there anything that you get out of volunteer within this event?
- What does this event mean to you?
- Why do you think that this event has grown and become so successful?
- How would you define a successful event?

Organizers/Local Officials

- What perceived benefits does the city of Plaster Rock receive from the hosting of this event?
- What different parties are responsible for the delivery of this event?
- Why do you think that this event has grown and become so successful?
- How would you define a successful event?