



**Abstracts accepted for presentation (3)
Canadian Sociological Association Annual Conference
University of British Columbia, Vancouver
June 3-6, 2019**

**Mary Aspinall, PhD Candidate, Sociology
University of New Brunswick**

Manufacturing Consent for Rural Compliance with Corporate Development

Almost 50% of the Atlantic province of New Brunswick identifies as rural, yet a dominant ideology exists in Canada that rural communities are in decline. Common perceptions are that urbanization, inclusive of technology and greater intelligence, is inevitable yet others argue that social distance between urban and rural residents support inaction towards rural needs (Florida 2003; High 2009; Kratke 2010).

As news media is considered an influential tool towards public perceptions, we performed content analysis of editorials in New Brunswick's monopoly news context, Brunswick News (BN). We coded for themes of rural communities as disappearing versus resilient, and corporate versus local community development. Results demonstrated that 87% of the editorials backed claims of rural disappearance, and 43% supported claims that corporate development of extractive industries provides the much-needed economic boost to rural regions of New Brunswick. In contrast, only 17% mentioned rural community development initiatives and only 20% portrayed rural communities as resilient and innovative.

We speculate that the heavily one-sided argument of BN encourages rural residents to identify themselves as citizens aligned and compliant with corporate development. These perspectives contribute to the move to urbanization and ultimately to perceptions that community-based rural development is unsustainable.



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**Amy Savile, PhD Candidate, Sociology
Tracy Glynn, PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies
University of New Brunswick**

**Environmental activism in a monopoly news media setting:
Social movement media in a rural Canadian province**

New Brunswick presents a strong example of a restricted news media setting. In this rural province, all English-language daily newspapers and most weeklies are owned by the same family corporation that dominates resource extraction in the region; a situation unique in the Global North (Couture 2013; Poitras, 2014; Walker 2010). By censoring and even censoring voices that argue against corporate resource extraction projects, Brunswick News, privately owned by the Irving family, creates a public consensus that prioritizes promises of rural jobs over community-led initiatives, environmental concerns and even ethical imperatives.

Alternative media help social movements to articulate and publicize the themes they consider important and enable political actors to receive the movements' messages more clearly (Melucci, 1996). Using content analysis, our study focuses on the ecosystem of rural activist media produced in New Brunswick to challenge dominant codes about resource extraction and environmental degradation by offering opportunities for counter-narratives, scientific evidence, and Indigenous perspectives. Whether mirroring the journalistic norms of mainstream media or more rooted in positions of critical advocacy, our focus is on the presentation of three pertinent themes: fracking, forestry, and climate change. We contribute new analysis to the important project of challenging dominant codes about environmentalism.



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**Susan O'Donnell, PhD, Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick**

Rural communities adapting to climate change: a socio-political analysis

Rural Canada is an important site for food production, energy generation, clean water and air, resource extraction, historical significance, societal values, cultural development and environmental stewardship. New Brunswick's rural economy, and the provincial economy as a whole, is strongly tied to resource extraction. Corporate resource extraction activities have placed considerable stress on rural environments.

Climate change events are placing additional stress on rural communities in the province. How rural communities will adapt to climate change is crucial for their sustainability and future survival. Our study is based on a survey of community leaders and staff of communities in a rural region of New Brunswick. We identify the major challenges facing the communities related to climate change. Our critical analysis develops an understanding of how rural communities are responding to climate change within the larger socio-political context. Rural communities must be active participants in planning and investing in their own futures. If not, rural areas become sites of tension and conflict that create economic, social and political upheaval.