

Place-based Policy: A Rural Perspective

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Table of Contents

1. In what ways does place matter? 3

2. Why is place-based policy so challenging? 4

3. What makes rural insights special for place-based policy? 6

4. How can we manage the process of developing place-based policy?..... 8

5. How can we be strategic about implementing place-based policies?..... 11

Conclusion..... 13

Appendix A: Annotated list of key references

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Bill Reimer and Sean Markey

This annotated bibliography provides insights for place-based policy emerging from rural-focused research. We did not limit our scan to rural research, however, since the topic does not lend itself to a strong rural-urban division. Instead, we have included several references which set the stage for place-based policy in general – so long as they are relevant to the special characteristics of rural places. In addition, we have not included many useful discussions on the meaning and measurement of rural in general, preferring to highlight those which address the special relevance of rural to issues of place.

This brief introduction will guide you to some of the key insights we gained from this review of the literature. It reflects our understanding of the relevance of place from a rural point of view but should be used as a stimulus and invitation to explore the literature yourself. We have organized it in terms of a number of questions that directed our reflections on the material. Our responses to those questions provide a starting point for your own exploration of the literature. As is so often the case, there are many ways to read and organize such rich material. We hope you will enjoy the journey as much as we have.

1. In what ways does place matter?

- Recognizing local assets
- Providing services in place
- Governance of place
- Identities formed in place

There are many responses to this question to be found in the literature.

Our **assets** occur in *places*, for example. In Canada this should be most obvious with respect to our natural resources since patterns of settlement have always reflected the geography of natural resources from fish, timber, fertile soil, mineral, and climate, to the oceans, rivers, and lakes that have structured the ways we get to those resources (Innis, 1995). As we redefine our understanding and identification of assets, the relevance of place changes. This is reflected in population shifts as our interests moved from fish to fur to grain and it continues to influence our choices as we recognize new asset values of our natural vistas, heritage, knowledge, and global climate. Each of these has particular significance for unique places and each of them would be jeopardized if our policies did not take their place-related characteristics into account. We are reminded by many authors that assets are more than natural or physical phenomenon, however.

Our **services** are delivered in *places*. Health, education, justice, welfare, and sectoral policies are all applied in specific places to name a few. A general policy for improving cardiac response times and treatment, for example, is inevitably faced with the greater distances in rural areas, the availability of specialists (or lack of specialists) in particular places, and the local priorities and capacities for ambulance or fire prevention services. Each of these is especially pertinent in rural areas. Similarly, education policies for job-sensitive training are particularly ineffective if the jobs chosen do not reflect

an appropriate balance of general and local demands. Both health and education policies are jeopardized if the related personnel are not 'in place' or burnt out from local needs (Halseth & Ryser, 2006). Without accommodating such local conditions in policy and program development, the policies will fail.

Our **governance** occurs in *places* – in the city halls, boardrooms, and kitchens of our communities. Although we may assume that all boardrooms or kitchens are the same, many of the case studies found in the literature remind us this is not always so. Some towns have no boardrooms, so discussions about buying, selling, and strategy must take place in coffee shops or legion halls – without the usual communication and fiscal infrastructure of corporate offices. Policies that assume similar resources for small places and large are bound to put the small ones at a disadvantage. The social networks and institutions that lie at the base of our governance are also a reflection of their place. In rural areas, the networks tend to be more informal, for example, with less specialization of roles and more constrained by communication and transportation infrastructure (Jacob *et al.*, 2008; Jean, 2006). Governance structures that do not recognize this diversity and resistance to mobility are liable to be relatively inefficient in their inclusion, implementation, and accountability.

Our **identities** are also formed and reinforced in *places*. Globalization and mass culture have not eliminated the importance of family, ethnic, cultural, and local ties for peoples' understanding of the world and their place in it (Swanson, 2001b; Castells, 2004). The tragic failures of Canadian Aboriginal integration and community relocation programs, and the tenacity of many rural communities in the face of economic decline provide strong testament to the strength of these identity-based processes. It is reinforced by the extensive research on adolescent suicide in rural areas – research that demonstrates the intimate connection among place-based narratives, identity sustainability, and personal and community capacities (Chandler *et al.*, 2003). Policies that fail to recognize how places and people-in-places form an important basis for our sense of self, view of the world, and our capacity to act in it, are liable to undermine the social and human capital on which those policies rely.

2. Why is place-based policy so challenging?

- Policy rooted in individualism
- Sectoral organization of government
- Economic restructuring
- Definitional obscurity
- Confusion of location-sensitive and place-based policies

Policies, by necessity, are formulated in general terms. In modern governments, they guide the organization and actions of large bureaucracies to effectively reach desirable outcomes in a complex environment. As such, they not only reflect the heritage of values and goals we have inherited from those who came before, but they provide a strong justification for the institutions constructed in their development and the interests they serve. Changing the policy focus, therefore, not only means changes in the formulation of those policies, but also a challenge to the understandings and frameworks on which they are based and the institutional structures they reinforce. Understanding that heritage, therefore, is important to enacting rational transformations where necessary. A variety of factors

identified in the literature help to understand the shifts in policy focus and the overall challenges of adopting place-based approaches.

First, most of Canadian public policy is rooted in long traditions of individualism. Our institutions reflect it in their focus on individual rights, commitment to private property, and individual freedom (Marchak, 1988). We even treat private corporations as legal *persons* in many aspects of corporate law. Place-based perspectives, like community-focused ones, are a challenge to this system since they create the possibility of geographically defined places acquiring rights that might supersede those of individuals in general (Bradford, 2004). Our history of dealing with claims for Québec separation, Aboriginal self-government, multiculturalism, and ‘reasonable accommodation’ have made Canadian governments wary of relaxing the focus on individuals over collectivities.

Second, place-based policies challenge the institutional structures of most of our governments. Sectoral divisions based on natural resources (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining) have kept policy-makers apart where inter-sectoral issues arise. This is matched by the institutional separation of social concerns (employment, welfare, health, education, justice), thereby making it difficult to recognize and act where they converge and conflict.

Most of this convergence occurs in *places* and where the vitality and social cohesion of places is important. Managing and developing places involves wrestling with issues that include multiple sectors and social issues – and as the research literature suggests – will only be successful if the resulting complexity is recognized and addressed. This is one of the main reasons that the role of place in policy development and implementation has become an important concern today. It is no surprise, therefore, that social cohesion and place-based policy have arisen in tandem within European policy (OECD, 2006).

Third, a key structural challenge to the adoption of place-based development concerns overall patterns of economic restructuring. Economic restructuring impacts rural communities in two fundamental ways. First, the demand for increasing flexibility in industrial production systems has deconstructed the trilateral industry-labour-government agreements that facilitated large scale development and high wages in rural areas during the post-war period. This trend, combined with the labour-shedding properties of technological advancement in all forms of production, have severely impacted rural communities since they tend to be less economically diverse and more reliant on the resource sector (Bollman, 2007). Second, the nature of competitiveness in the new economy now demands high quality services and infrastructure amenities (Markusen and Glasmeier, 2008). Kitson *et al.* (2004: 992) provide a straightforward definition of territorial competitiveness, “as the success with which regions and cities compete with one another in some way – over market share or capital and workers.” New approaches to competitiveness place an added burden on the capacity of communities and regions to construct high quality and flexible forms of infrastructure (OECD, 2006). From a rural perspective, the capacity of communities to respond to the amenity and other infrastructure demands of the new economy (in terms of attracting and retaining both capital and labour) is limited (Markey *et al.*, 2006; Bryant and Joseph, 2001).

Fourth, the definitional obscurity and diversity of literature dealing with place-based approaches exacerbates much of the suspicion with which place-based policies are treated (Blank, 2005). For some authors, it is used in a descriptive way – identifying the special characteristics of particular locations and the ways in which general policies may relate to them. For others, ‘place’ is considered as one of a number of driving factors in the production or maintenance of poverty, unemployment, or some other outcome. Still others treat it as a rallying cry for building local capacity or power in the face of changes and challenges.

Finally, Kraybill and Kilkenny (2003) point to a confusion of location-sensitive and place-based policies as a barrier to implementation. They identify how separating them can help to clarify some of this confusion. Place-based policies are those where the “location of the beneficiary is a key criterion for eligibility” whereas location-sensitive ones are those where general policies are “tailored to local conditions”. They argue that location-sensitive policies are largely non-controversial – with virtually full agreement among theorists that local conditions must be considered when general policies are implemented. Provision of a person-based policy such as universal health care, for example, must accept the fact that local conditions will influence the nature of the services offered, their location, and provision. In each case, the objective is to ensure the services are equally accessible to each person.

Place-based policies, on the other hand, target locations – accepting the principle that different places will receive different levels of services or resources. They may even be part of people-based policies where local conditions significantly undermine equity for individuals. Health care policies, for example, frequently provide special services to remote locations in recognition of the place-related challenges they face in delivering people-based policies. People and place-based policies are not incompatible.

There are, however, conditions where locations themselves may be the objects of policy. Kraybill and Kilkenny (2003) identify four circumstances of market failure where place-based responses may be justified: where product differentiation is desirable, where social group characteristics benefit individuals in their local vicinity (positive spatial externalities), where knowledge spillovers occur, and where national efficiency might be improved. Other social scientists add the consideration of place-related power relations and identity to this list.

There are only a few studies which explicitly include separate measures of individual and place or locational effects within the same study. In most cases they focus on poverty or employment as the primary outcomes – reflecting the economic focus of most of the authors. These studies reinforce the perspective that both individual and place-level factors play a part in producing those outcomes, but so far provide little elaboration of the processes by which this occurs. This is clearly an area for further research since the elaboration of the interaction of individual and place characteristics will go a long way to getting the right balance of policy initiatives.

3. What makes rural insights special for place-based policy?

- Rural is not the same as “not urban”
- The rural condition
- Rural capacity: pros and cons

- Social cohesion

In Canada, much of the debate regarding place-relevant policy has emerged from a focus on urban centres. However, there is much to be learned from the extensive work looking at rural areas – often providing insights about place that are significant for both urban and rural-focused discussions.

Distance, density, institutions, social norms, populations, and heritage are different within rural as opposed to urban areas. This has meant that rural researchers have been particularly sensitive to the way in which the economy, employment, labour, and services have been modified by the extra demands on transportation, networks, and capacity within these regions. It is manifested in a number of ways within the literature.

First, rural characteristics have led to concerns about the negative impacts of general policies when they are not appropriately adapted for rural and remote regions (Fluharty, 2002). This is most apparent with respect to health, education, and justice services. Rural research has documented the impacts of population-based approaches to the allocation of health and education services, for example, both with respect to outcomes for access to these services and to the local actions which have emerged in response to them (Hanlon and Halseth, 2005). Researchers have shown how the provision of these basic services is more than an issue of access, but in the context of small towns it undermines community resiliency to changing economic conditions, social cohesion, and capacity. This research makes some of the strongest cases for the interdependency of policies in place – and thereby serves as a key rationale for place-based policy itself.

In the USA much of this literature focuses on the way in which these effects are reflected in poverty. Poverty and employment are clearly related to human capital, it seems, but it is also responsive to community and regional characteristics that are independent from these individual level effects. Partridge and Rickman (2008), for example show how peer effects, economic-role models within the region, and knowledge spillover effects appear to have a positive impact on poverty and employment. Several of these types of effects are best addressed by policies directed to places over people.

The inevitable conflagration of multiple processes in rural communities and regions has also made their interdependence visible in spite of our institutional divisions. In many of these towns, for example, the local business-person may also serve in the volunteer fire department, municipal council, and church. The specialization of roles found in larger centres that creates barriers to inter-departmental collaboration is missing under these circumstances, thereby making challenges and opportunities visible that would otherwise go unnoticed. Much of our research in the new Rural Economy Project (<http://nre.concordia.ca>) has documented how multiple roles facilitate innovation in economic and social action (Devareennes, 2006). In many cases, this includes innovation in the mixing of resources from various institutional programs that cut across their traditional jurisdictions (Halseth & Ryser, 2006).

Rural communities also provide a rich source of information regarding the role of place and identity formation. Many of them are steeped in a history of cultural homogeneity which drives much of the collective resiliency and individual capacity (Matthews & Young, 2005). We also know how this history may just as easily foster dependency and despondency. Understanding the conditions contributing to

each of these will not only inform us about the rural context, but is likely to be extremely valuable for identifying processes which operate in all social contexts. Research related to community, place, and identity has already informed us about the importance of place for suicide, social networks, social capital, and social cohesion – all elements of policy consideration that go far beyond the rural context.

4. How can we manage the process of developing place-based policy?

- Access the rural context
- Re-conceptualize local assets
- Find the right scale
- Adopt appropriate roles for senior governments

A place focus increases and expands access: access to local assets and configurations, access to local governance structures, access to local services, access to local forms of entrepreneurship, and access to local commitment and motivation. This is reflected in the literature regarding the importance of local knowledge about all these elements (Pezzini, 2001). Harnessing local knowledge of place and priorities produces efficiencies in the policy process and helps to ensure the appropriateness of selected interventions.

Allowing local knowledge to drive the policy process represents a realignment of control within the policy process. Senior governments may maintain budgetary control and forge the necessary regulatory and facilitative frameworks to guide the policy process, however, place-based policy demands that local initiatives drive the organization of inter-institutional relations (Markey, *et al.*, 2005). In this way, a territorial focus allows for a harmonization of different policy areas based upon local priorities and assets, rather than isolated departments working independently (at best) or at cross purposes (at worst).

Adopting a place-based approach facilitates the identification and re-conceptualization of rural assets in new and innovative ways. This may refer to natural resources, but it also includes human, social, cultural, and environmental assets that can be recombined and redirected in response to changes at local, regional, national, or international levels. Identifying or redefining those assets is a key first step (Pezzini, 2001).

In a context where competitive advantage has become more important than comparative advantage and where complexity and change predominate, the ability to reassess local assets is critical. Urban areas do not have a monopoly on this capacity. Rural research illustrates numerous ways in which local community groups redefine and reorganize their forests, products, and social networks to meet changing conditions and opportunities. Most of this recognition could not be done from a distance. In Matawa, it was a local entrepreneur who redefined the waste cores from a plywood mill as valuable inputs for a business manufacturing bowling pins. In Cap à l'Aigle, it was the local municipal council who recognized the local liliac club as a basis for an annual festival, and it was the local citizens in Warner who realized they could turn their unoccupied arena into an international hockey school for girls. In all these cases, it was the local knowledge about the place, the people, the assets, and the networks in it which lay the basis for success.

These cases also illustrate how a place focus avoided the sectoral separation which so often gets in the way of innovation and flexibility. To the Matawa entrepreneur the distinction between forestry and manufacturing was irrelevant. The citizens of Cap à l'Aigle were not hampered by the distinctions among municipalities, tourism, finance, or trade – in fact, they made use of all of them when developing and implementing their strategies. The concurrence of assets, skills, networks, and knowledge in the same location necessarily created the conditions for inter-institutional collaboration.

Similar examples exist for addressing the scale of policy (Bradford, 2004). Evidence from provincial comparisons, for example, suggests that strengthening the capacity of municipalities includes strengthening the regional structures in which they operate. This is clearly illustrated by a comparison of Quebec and Alberta's response to municipal development. Both of these governments champion a bottom-up approach and encourage local municipalities to engage in an expanded mandate over local decision-making - moving beyond the maintenance of roads and water to include economic development and environmental stewardship. However, the institutional contexts of these two provinces are considerably different – reinforcing the importance of institutions for defining 'place' (Singleton, 2002).

During the early 1990s, Québec established a number of regional county-based boards and equivalent territories grouped into 86 *municipalités régionales de comté* (MRC) and 18 equivalent territories (TE). These boards provide county and some city-level venues for municipal officials to meet, debate, and decide issues including territorial planning, economic development, and employment assistance. The emphasis is typically on regional development – across sectors and inclusive of social development. They are in turn grouped into 17 administrative regions responsible for the distribution of development funding and intra-level collaboration.

In Alberta, the approach is more *laissez-faire*. As a result of several provincial initiatives, in 2000 they established a mechanism whereby municipalities may join into Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDA). At present there are 14 REDAs throughout the province in which over 250 communities are involved. These organizations are self-selected alliances among governments, businesses, and local institutions with the primary objective of economic development. The provincial government plays a supportive role through advice and financing based on proposals and business plans.

The results have been dramatically different at the local level. In Québec there are many examples of regional initiatives – tailored to local conditions and themselves providing a basis for second-order activities in small places. They are frequently broad-based – including economic, social, health, environmental, and cultural elements in independent or coordinated activities. Over the 20 or so years of their operation within this new regime, local municipalities have learned how to use the regional structures to voice their concerns, debate, negotiate, compromise, and collaborate with other municipalities, and in turn, to negotiate with the provincial government on behalf of their region and village or town. In turn, the provincial government has discovered the value in subsidiarity – now allocating responsibility to the regional boards for a wide range of economic and social policy and programs, and (most importantly) showing confidence in the decisions and accountability of the MRCs.

In Alberta the situation is very different. The 14 REDAs have been established involving about 75% of the provincial municipalities. Many of them have ongoing projects, primarily focusing on business retention and growth, marketing, opportunity identification, and investment attraction (REDA Overview: http://www.albertacanada.com/documents/RD-RED_REDAOverview.pdf). Even the discussion of community development has a distinctive focus on economic issues over social or environmental concerns (<http://www.albertacanada.com/regionaldev/1216.html>). Many municipalities, on the other hand, were unable to get beyond their protectionist traditions to reach agreements with their neighbours around the complex challenges they faced – either denying that conflicts of interest existed or refusing to discuss them in any but the most limited terms. In the end, the provincial government simply made the decisions for these municipalities, pointing to the failure of regional collaboration, lack of accountability, and the pressure of time as a justification for top-down management.

There are two lessons which emerge from this comparison. First, the rhetoric of subsidiarity and collaboration needs to be critically assessed in terms of the results. Both provinces have remarkably similar articulations of their regional policy, but the implementation of those principles is considerably different. Second, a policy of bottom-up development can only work within an institutional context which supports it. Québec established the regional boards with a broad interdepartmental mandate and sufficient resources to make them work – at both municipal and regional levels. Alberta created the opportunity for regional alliances to form, but with a relatively narrow focus and resources with conditions that matched that narrow focus.

Finally, the institutionalization of local and regional capacity and redirection to place-based development does not mean that senior governments may then abandon the rural development process (Goldenburg, 2008; Bradford, 2003; Bryant and Joseph, 2001). Rather, place-based development challenges all levels to identify appropriate roles for senior governments. One of the central lessons we draw from the literature is that effective rural development must include a partnership between top down state actors and bottom up community interests. Bryant (forthcoming) conceptualizes this process as senior governments and local actors collaborating to “co-construct” appropriate patterns of territorial development. The continued participation of the state is crucial not only because they have jurisdictional responsibility over critical public policy levers that can facilitate local and regional change, but they are mandated to act on a broader scale and thus are responsible for a wider body of supports and tools to facilitate local development. It makes little sense to talk about local development options without recognizing the senior government policy levers needed to realize their potential.

In addition to leveraging and facilitating rural development opportunities, the challenges facing rural communities require the scale and coordinating capacity of senior governments. For example, the impacts of the pine beetle epidemic throughout northern BC require the scale and coordination capacity of senior governments to steer an effective transition and to help foster regional collaboration. This and other issues (e.g. Aboriginal development and treaty, resource industry restructuring, resource depletion, climate change, and trade issues) are of a structural nature that supersede the capacity of individual communities and regions to confront effectively.

5. How can we be strategic about implementing place-based policies?

- Adopt an investment orientation
- Build local capacity
- Support rural service delivery
- Listen to rural voices
- Recognize place-based critiques

Being strategic about implementing place-based policy means designing collaborative processes and interventions that use limited resources (both state and local capacity) to achieve the greatest impact for rural development. First and foremost, this requires a shift in thinking in our approach to rural development issues. Political and economic restructuring processes in Canada have, over the past thirty years, viewed rural areas as a source of resource wealth, primarily used to fund processes of urbanization. Evidence from rural areas indicates that this extraction system is very much dependent on rural infrastructure investments made in the immediate post-war period. This 20th Century infrastructure is currently collapsing, jeopardizing rural communities and the broader wealth and benefits we receive from rural regions (Mirza, 2007). Senior governments must once again view rural investments as just that – investments, in the maintenance and expansion of rural well-being and wealth creation at all levels rather than expenses that undermine urban vitality. The question becomes how do we prioritize and organize necessary investments in order to reconstruct robust foundations for rural communities? And, how can we target place-based policy to ensure that generalized processes of rural renewal become embedded in the specificities of different rural contexts?

First, despite the complexity and variability of the literature on place-based development, one area of significant convergence regarding the efficacy of the place-based approach concerns the need to build the capacity of local actors and organizations to manage and implement development objectives. Rural places face a variety of capacity barriers, such as access to information, limited staff resources, small pools of expertise, and limited financial resources that place an extra burden on innovative development processes. The question remains then, how do we prioritize and organize necessary investments to build local capacity? Again, the focus here is on being strategic with limited resources, which means spending wisely and ensuring integration across various investments.

Evidence from the rural literature points to a variety of capacity-building approaches. When the communities of Néguaac and Burnt Church faced the loss of their recreation centre, they made good use of their informal networks to cut across the traditional barriers dividing the private, public, and civic sector to put together a package of financing and volunteer work that not only provided a new centre, but created social cohesion across economic, language, and cultural barriers (Devarennnes, 2006). Because the citizens of Cap à l'aigle knew of the liliac club in their midst, they were able to turn this into an asset which supports their economic and social life through an internationally recognized annual festival (Morin, 2005). Citizens of Springhill, NS have redefined their local mining assets from ore to geothermal heat and tourism, using multiple place-specific resources. In all these cases, it was the recognition of local natural and social assets that made the innovations possible – recognition that came from local knowledge and experience.

Second, perhaps the biggest impact associated with political and economic restructuring process in rural areas has been felt by the service sector. Government withdrawal, combined with a severing or weakening of industrial ties to community have placed significant pressure on the ability of rural areas to maintain standards of service delivery (health care, education, business services, postal services, etc.). This places rural areas in a spiralling catch-22 whereby they lack the funding infrastructure to support rural services, and once these services disappear, they are no longer capable of attracting or retaining the necessary capital to support service delivery (Hanlon and Halseth, 2005). Researchers have pinpointed service sector support as a critical platform upon which to base other forms of rural development.

Importantly, rural people understand that the form and degree of access to rural services may be different than in urban areas. Rural places are not seeking to revive the strict and largely failed equity objectives of early national regional development programs that sought to deliver standardized services regardless of community and regional condition. However, the demands of a more competitive economy mean that rural places must seek innovative solutions (and models) to deliver services that will attract and retain both capital and labour. Senior governments can play important roles in supporting research, conducting pilots, and then scaling-up successful approaches. Examples of innovative rural services drawn from the literature include the following.

When the town of St Paule, QC realized they were in danger of losing their school they looked around their region to assess their options. Combining the high quality of their school infrastructure, teaching, and community organization, they marketed their school as a desirable place for parents to send their children – including parents in the nearby city of Matane. They successfully reversed the usual direction of bussing by bringing sufficient children from the city to their rural community to keep the school open. When the farmers in Wood River SK faced the prospect of long drives to truck their grain after the close of their railway, they purchased the rail, and built a rail loading facility for grain in a public-private co-operative arrangement. The facility now draws farmers from miles around – reducing their costs and contributing to the local town. Facing the loss of its hospital and associated medical facilities, the town of Springhill, NS developed a campaign for the attraction of a nurse-practitioner. This has now become a very successful initiative – providing services to the community and teaching opportunities to students in the medical field.

Being strategic in place-based development requires efficient and effective models of facilitating the co-construction process that links senior governments with communities and regions (Bryant, forthcoming; Bradford, 2007; Blank, 2005). The tolerance and willingness of both community and state actors involved in the policy transition process to engage in discussion, experiment with different models, and accommodate shifting external forces depends on good process. In the absence of good process, actors become frustrated and less willing to re-visit collaborative initiatives for fear of failure. In essence, good process and models of governance lead to more effective implementation. Best practices highlighted in the literature include the following.

The highly successful approach of the Community Futures Program is well recognized internationally for getting the basics right. With 22 years of experience the program demonstrates the value of local initiation and participation; flexible supports – both financial and organizational; cross-sector and cross-departmental collaboration; close and respectful relations among the various levels of government; and long term commitment. When Seguin councillors faced resistance from their seasonal residents to increased taxes and local development, they decided to actively recruit those seasonal members to municipal committees and councils. They discovered that this inclusive approach not only dramatically

reduced the resistance to tax increases for development projects, but the newcomers brought with them expertise and networks that increased the local capacity substantially. Tweed's long time resistance to collaboration with its neighbouring communities was eventually overcome when they were unable to meet their commitments to organize a national conference. In desperation, they established a working committee with three other communities in order to accommodate the guests and provide adequate services. The success of this collaboration encouraged them to work together on other regional projects – eventually collectively identifying themselves as “Comfort Country” and creating a strategic development plan for the whole region.

Finally, the literature offers a variety of cautions against idealizing local or community-based strategies. The demand for greater local control and broader policy objectives related to participation and buy-in are worthy objectives within a place-based policy framework. They have also proven to be effective and to deliver a variety of positive externalities to the policy process related to empowerment, efficacy, efficiency and long-term sustainability. However, the complexity associated with mixing place and people-based strategies, combined with concerns about the capacity of rural communities to sustain policy processes and to achieve a semblance of equity means that we must temper this localist enthusiasm. A number of researchers have highlighted a variety of cautions associated with implementing place based approaches at community and regional scales (Reddel, 2002; MacLeod, 2001; Swanson, 2001b; Lovering, 1999; Polèse, 1999), including:

- Devolution to local development authorities may create a democratic deficit where un-elected individuals determine regional priorities;
- Place-based promoters tend to under-represent the continued importance of the state;
- Local development creates a danger of elitism, parochialism, and loss of ability to enforce the broader public interest;
- Interpersonal conflicts at a local level may become more influential and stall policy progress;
- Local and regional development authorities often lack effective sanction abilities – and are therefore ignored; and
- Place-based approaches may conflict with established jurisdictions and require broader institutional restructuring and/or power sharing.

Conclusion

Rural conditions and rural research provide insights about place-relevant policy that can contribute valuable lessons for both rural and urban contexts. In some cases this means challenging or reinforcing urban-focused discussions and in others it means introducing new perspectives and data into the mix. As with the integration of a place-inspired focus in general, we can learn more by considering all of these points of view.

Rural research illuminates the limitations and failures of sector-specific and institution-specific perspectives. By virtue of the fact that rural communities are relatively small and their administrative capacity is usually stressed, the contradictions and obstacles of sectoral approaches become visible. In response, many rural places provide useful examples of the ways in which cross-sector and cross-institutional collaboration might occur. By taking advantage of bridging social networks and expanding their capacities beyond formal relations, many communities have been able to overcome conflicts of

property and social rights (Ste-Françoise), integrate traditional and bureaucratic approaches to organization (Carcross/Taglish), and create venues in which conflicting interests can be expressed and compromises sought (QC). These are all useful lessons for urban as well as rural places.

Rural places also teach us that the process of collaboration and change is a long term one. Only with the assurance of continued engagement can compromise emerge as an acceptable strategy. This means, therefore, that specific venues for this engagement become a high policy priority and that the processes must be tolerant of experimentation, failure, and breakage – personal, social, and physical. Promising examples of the processes involved emerge within the MRCs of rural Québec and the land and governance negotiations with First Nations groups, but the lessons are just as relevant for the Downtown East Side of Vancouver or the committee rooms of Ottawa.

Place-based policy is not just about local places. Rural municipalities appear to work best when they are integrated with others in their region, where that integration is across institutional divisions, and where those regions are in turn integrated into provincial or federal governments. We expect that the same lessons would apply to urban centres – where neighbourhoods, boroughs, and cities serve similar functions for local recognition and support, regional venues for addressing conflicts and opportunities, and central institutions for coordination and capacity-building.

As Bradford (2003) reminds us, place-based policy is not a panacea for rural, community, or economic revitalization. Instead, we need to get the balance right. This means tailoring the power of our individual-focused institutions to the special requirements and opportunities of particular places. It means reorganizing those institutions so they are sensitive to local conditions, supportive and nurturing of growth in local capacity, and able to respond to the many opportunities emerging from local initiatives.

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