

Rural Innovation and Sustainability: Adaptations of Firms on the Northern Peninsula, Newfoundland

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Project Background

Canadian Regional Development

A Critical Review of Theory, Practice, and Potentials



Développement régional canadien

Une recension critique des théories, des pratiques et des potentiels



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

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THINKING OF THE WORLD

Outline

- Review of innovation
- Identification of the problem
- Social and natural services
- Study area
- Case Studies
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations for moving forward
- Future research
- Questions

Review of Innovation

- Innovation: “The introduction of new phenomenon or the phenomenon itself” (Gregory et al, 2009: 364)
- Introduced by Torston Hagardstrand (Ibid)
- Modified by business academics and economic geographers
- Studies include: clusters, green innovation, systems, networks, enablers, and limitations
- Extends into fields of regional development such as governance, policy, productivity, and planning

Problem: Only a social-economic issue?

- Advances in technology
- New products
- Marketing strategies
- Novel production methods
- Networking strategies
- Research and Development
- Market demands
- Collaboration
- Response to change

(White et al, 2012; Westley et al, 2011)

Natural and Social

Inspired by the work of Per Olsson and the researchers at the Stockholm Resilience Center

Social-Ecological Innovation

- Green energy
- Wildlife and resource conservation
- Limited yields
- Green production
- Modifying traditional harvesting of resources

(Westley et al, 2011; Cooke, 2008)

The Great Northern Peninsula

- Population: 13,140
- Largest community: St. Anthony
- 17,483km²
- French, British, and Aboriginal heritage
- Strong fish, mining, and timber industries
- Inhospitable climatic conditions
- Study region for MUN's innovation research



(White et al, 2012)

http://www.google.ca/search?hl=en&sugexp=les%3B&cp=13&gs_id=1e&xhr=t&q=northern+peninsula&bav=on.2,or_r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&bpc=35277026&biw=1366&bih=667&um=1&ie=UTF-8&tbn=isch&source=og&sa=N&tab=wi&ei=ecZ-UI-AKYWC9QST94G4BQ

Case Studies

- Innovative businesses
- Sustainable processes
- Survey and interview provided a who's who of innovators in the region
- 30+ interviews
- Non-profit organizations
- Government
- Firms
- Only two firms were selected for this study

Holson Forest Products Ltd.

- Timber industry
- Located in Roddickton-Bide Arm
- Lewis Logging: harvesting
- Sawmill: processing
- Pellet plant: waste management
- Allowed for extraction, processing, and marketing of the resource
- 250 seasonal employees
- Decreases in forestry in Newfoundland



(www.holson.ca)

Holson Forest Products ltd.

- Forced to adapt in order to survive and maintain the timber industry in the region
- Incorporate technological initiatives into their processes which were unique to the region
- Never produce more than the market demands
- Do not over-exploit the resource; only take what is essential
- Has expanded and diversified production to compete in the international market
- Potential for economic feasibility but challenges remain

Dark Tickle Company



- Located in St. Lunaire- Griquet
- Began as a general store
- Started selling berries and value-added products
- Pursued innovation programs to fund new initiatives
- Incorporated technology new to the region into their processes
- Produce jams, wines, vinegars, knitted work, etc.
- Trained through a Swiss Chocolatier
- Emphasize the value of gaining exposure to other regions (see also Cooke, 2001)

Dark Tickle Company

- Berries are hand picked by 100+ independent suppliers
- Traditional picking methods combined with new techniques
- The resource cannot be exploited by such basic means of extraction
- Technology ensures minimal waste during production and produces a high-value product
- Expanded their markets nationally and internationally
- Maintain an economically strong company while utilizing sustainable practices

Lessons Learned

- Traditional Newfoundland and Labrador industries
- Connection to the natural environment; respect the resource
- Innovation does not neglect the natural environment
- Technology is key to sustainable processes (e.g. green energy)
- Ensures the industries continuation on the Northern Peninsula
- Exceptional business practices that can educate others in the industry
- Strong self-reliance in these cases

(White et al, 2012; Cooke, 2008)

Recommendations

- Government department: IBRD
- Encourage sustainable practices and provide support for innovative/sustainable firms
- Integrate sustainable measures into existing innovation programs
- Create new programs that specifically target sustainability
- Educate firms about sustainability and resource appreciation
- Work with firms to develop green business plans and strategies
- Advertise these sustainability initiatives

(White et al, 2012)

Future Research

- Quantitative methods: does sustainability work
- Conduct this analysis in broader regions to develop a holistic understanding of sustainability, innovation, and resilience
- If implemented, analyze programs that focus on innovation, sustainability, or the combination of the two
- Assess the impact small scale sustainability has on the broader region (e.g. Holson and Dark Tickle on the Great Northern Peninsula)

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Thank You!

- www.ruralresilience.ca

Questions????