

**Canadian Regional
Development**

A Critical Review of Theory,
Practice, and Potentials



**Développement régionale
canadienne**

Un examen critique du théorie, de
pratique et des potentiels

Regionalism and Regional Development in Canada: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials

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Outline

- Project Overview
- New Regionalism
- Methods
- Findings
 - Theme previews and cross-theme analysis

Project Goals

1. Undertake a critical assessment of the application and relevance of new regionalism in the Canadian context;
2. Seek Canadian innovations in regional development; and
3. Understand how these are evolving and if and how they are being shared across space in networks of regional development policy and practice.

New Regionalism(s)

- A reaction to increasing complexity and significant social-ecological change?
- A multi-disciplinary movement?
- A paradigm shift?
- “a loose bundle of ideas, an accretion of notions gathered together because they seem to resonate and point to broadly similar policy implications” Lovering (1999)
- “a macro-structure that is constantly renewed and nesting a complex combination of normative and theoretical approaches” Ortiz-Guerrero (2013)

New Regionalism(s)

- Regions as key spaces for socio-economic and political development and governance
- Regions multiple
- Networked, dynamic and open
- Structure + process, formal + informal
- Multiple actors, top down + bottom-up



Critiques

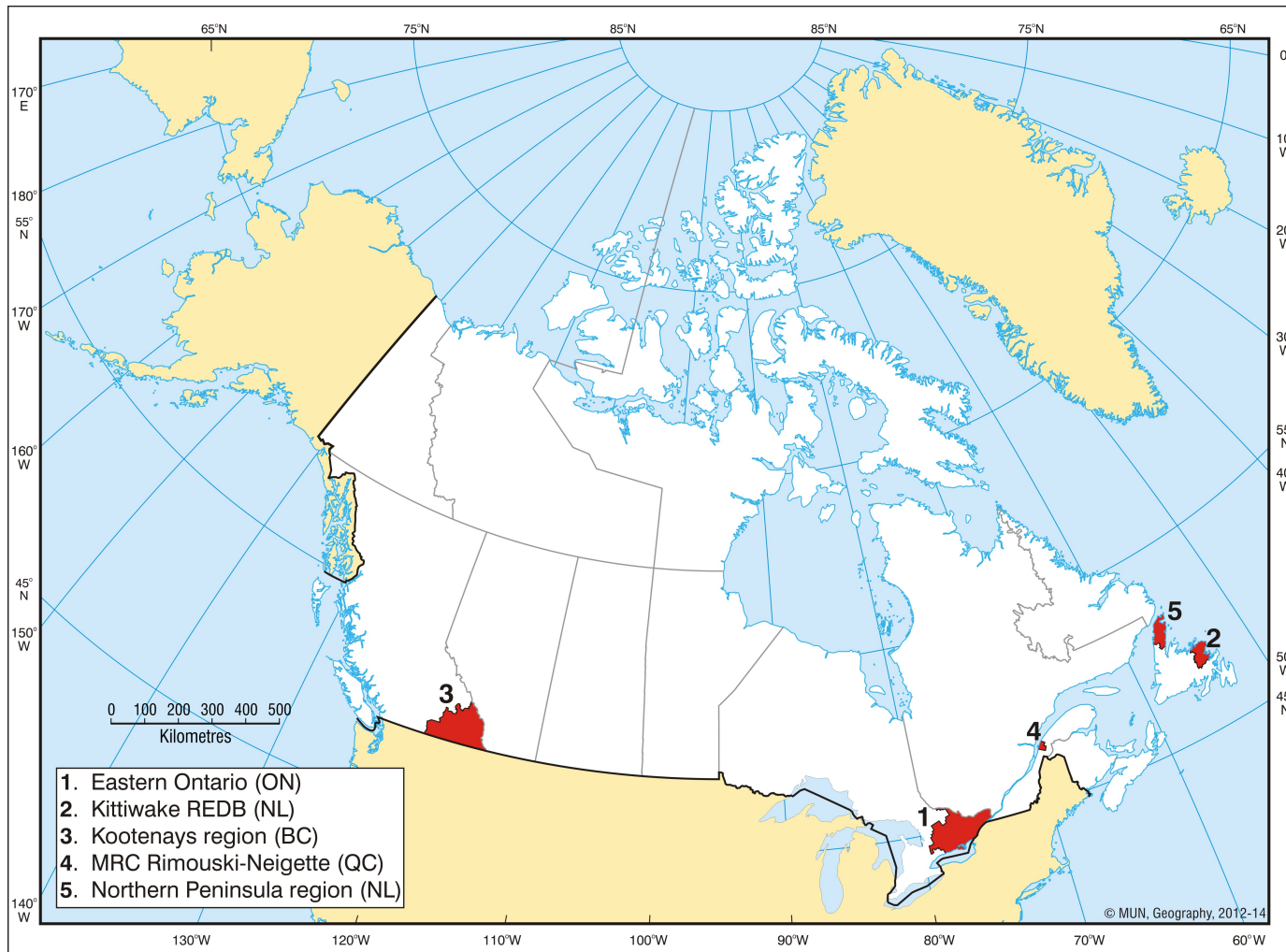
- ‘fuzzy concepts’ (Lovering 1999; MacLeod 2001; Peterson et al. 2007; Markusen 2003)
- weak empirical evidence (Lovering 1999)
- productivist and urban bias (Brenner in Scott 2007; Uyarra 2008; Moulaert and Mehmood 2010)
- ‘localist trap’, overplays the role of the region and downplays state and global forces (Coe et al. 2004; Harrison 2006; Uyarra 2008; Moulaert and Mehmood 2010; Doloreux 2008)

**To what extent have Canadian
regional development systems
incorporated 'new regionalism' into
their policy and practice?**

How? In what ways? What forms?

Methodology

- Multi-level (nested) case study approach



Methods cont' d

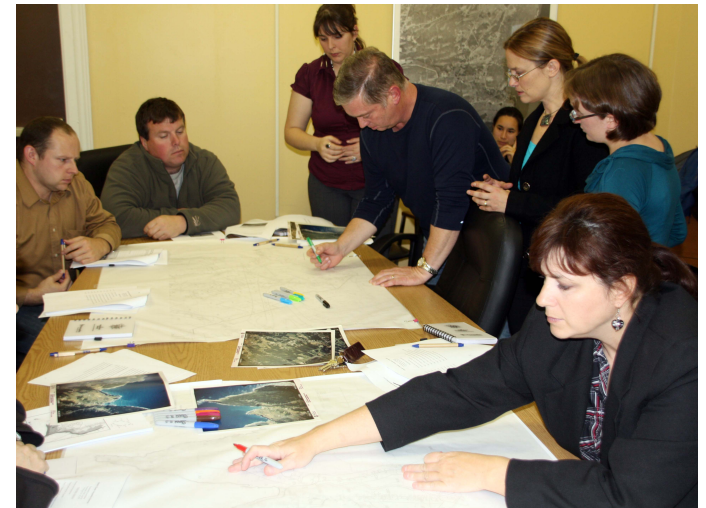
- Mixed methods, interdisciplinary
 - Document/literature review
 - Semi-structured interviews
 - (Participant) observation
 - Pattern searching and theme indicators
 - Multiple analytical “passes” with team dialogue and theme vs. provincial team cross-checking

Themes and Development Arenas

Arenas of Regional Development	Economic Development	Recreation	Water (watershed) management
<i>Themes of New Regionalism</i>			
1. Governance			
2. Rural-Urban			
3. Place-based			
4. Integration			
5. Learning, knowledge flows and Innovation			

To what extent is power and development decision-making shared among different groups at all levels?

- Regional governance and government, collaborative, multi-level
- New governance mechanisms present but many under threat (or lost)
- Partial and strategic/selective use of governance ideas
- **Hall; Breen and Minnes; Gibson, Hall Wed. 9 am**



Are development approaches integrated – across scales, actors, issues?

- 15 overlapping dimensions
- Strongest association with complexity
- NL – multidisciplinary, comprehensive analysis in planning, politico-territorial perspective, efficiency and effectiveness
- BC – alternative economic perspectives, operational
- ON – politico-territorial, comprehensive analysis
- *Overall limited association with most characteristics of an integrated approach*



Are policy makers and practitioners re-focusing on place as a starting point for development?

Place-based development:

- holistic, targeted, intervention(s)
- seek to reveal, utilize and enhance unique endowments within a particular location

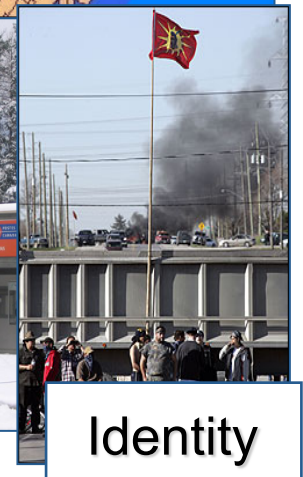
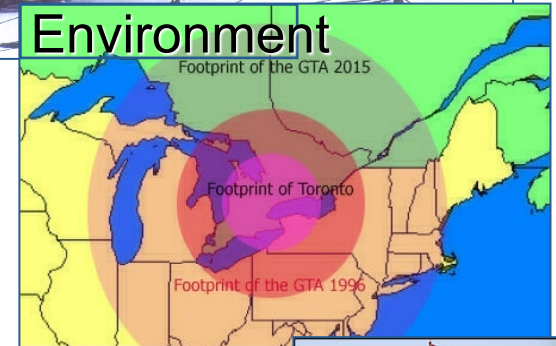
Identity – participation – mobilization

Markey and Breen, Wed. 9 am



How are rural-urban relationships perceived and managed?

- **Interdependence** or core-periphery?
- Local-local sharing of finances, ideas and information, goods and services common – also informal relationships
- Need for more collaboration but challenges due to downloading and added pressures
- Governance mechanisms slow to adapt to changing dynamics



What role do knowledge flows, learning and innovation play in the development process?

Innovation: the creation and diffusion of **new ways of doing things** (Dicken 2007)

Learning and k. flows –
adaptation and innovation

Carter, White, MacDonald
Tues. 3 pm



Overall Messages

- NR unevenly resourced and narrowly interpreted
- theory and rhetoric vs. policy and practice
- demonstrated potential of NR ideas
- facilitating local development institutions often lack policy support to fulfill this potential
 - NR model with a weak role for the state?
 - Ways to share lessons and scale up successes?

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This multi-year research initiative is investigating how Canadian regional development has evolved in recent decades and the degree to which “New Regionalism” has been incorporated into policy and practice. Five key themes of New Regionalism are examined: (i) place-based development, (ii) governance, (iii) knowledge and innovation, (iv) rural-urban relationships, and (v) integrated development. The project is funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development.

Website: <http://cdnregdev.ruralresilience.ca/>

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