



# **“New Regionalism” in Eastern Ontario**

## ***The Economic Development Implications and Opportunities***

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# Outline



- Project Overview
- “New Regionalism”
- Methodology
- General Findings – A First Look
- Eastern Ontario Findings – A First Look
- Discussion

# 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 a network of regional development policies and practice.

- Not an Evaluation or Assessment -

# 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)

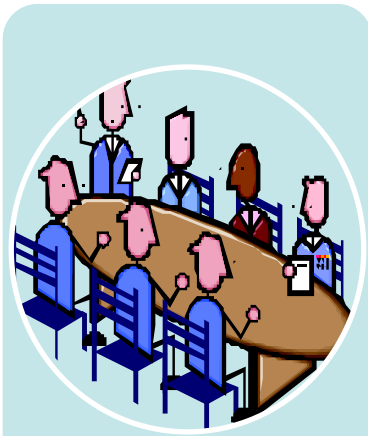


# New Regionalism(s)



- 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

# New Regionalism



Governance



Integration



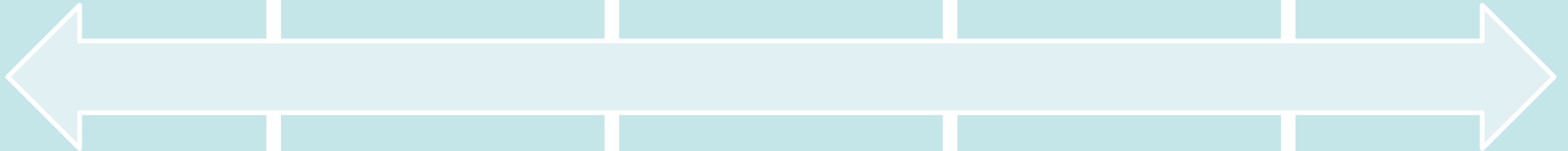
Placed-  
Based



Innovation  
and  
Knowledge  
Flows



Rural-Urban  
Relationshi  
ps



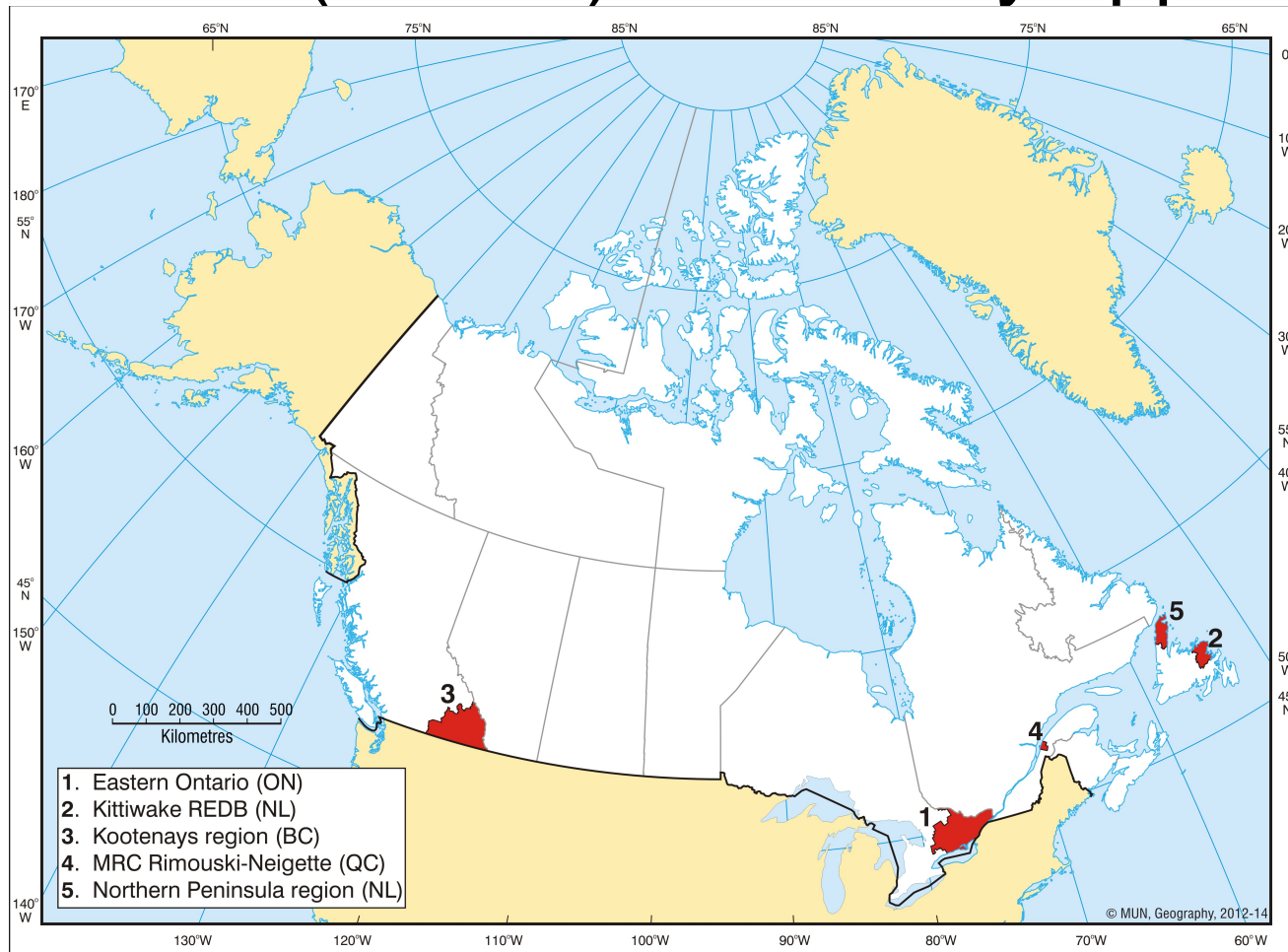
# The Project's Core Questions



- Have Canadian development policies and practices adopted the characteristics of this “New Regionalism”?
- If so, which characteristics predominate, and which are less evident?
- What are the theoretical, policy, practice and other implications?

# Methodology

- Multi-level (nested) case study approach



# Methodology

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

# Themes and Development Arenas

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

# Overall Messages

- NR unevenly resourced and narrowly interpreted
- Theory and rhetoric some distances from policy and practice
- Significant differences across Canadian regions
- 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?

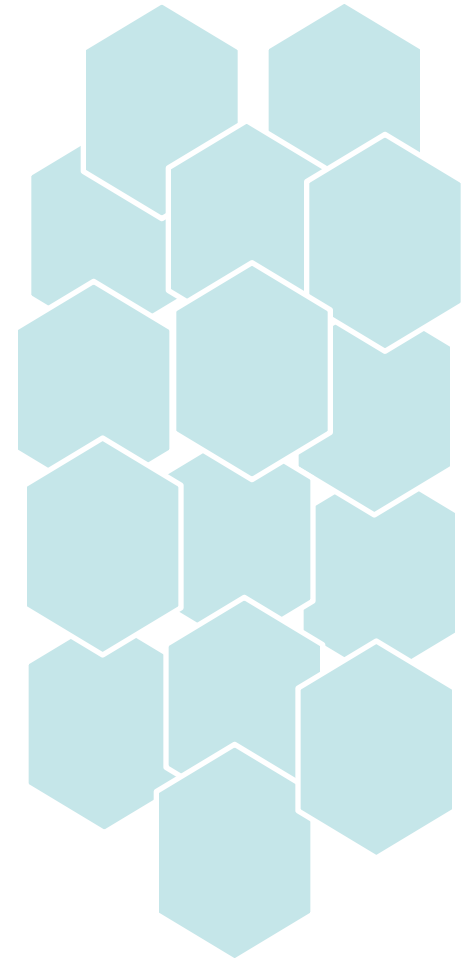
# Eastern Ontario Case Study

- 33 regional interviews (2011, 2012) - Counties, CFDCs, CoCs, CAs, RTOs, Twps., Towns, EOWC, OEEDC, others
- 4 Provincial Ministries interviewed (2011, 2013)
- 65 informants participated in the region
- The “Region” – Ottawa River from Prescott and Russell to Northumberland, to Peterborough and Haliburton, to Renfrew County – excludes Ottawa



# Integrated - 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*



# Integrated Approaches to Development



- Some Initial Findings
- Dominant Dimensions of Policy and Practice
  - Politico-Territorial 82%
  - Rational Comprehensive 79%
  - Complexity 73%

# Integrated Approaches to Development

- Some Initial Findings
- Mid-Level Dimensions of Policy and Practice
  - “Alternative Economics” 58%
  - Multidisciplinary 55%
  - Multi-Level 55%
  - Operational 52%

# Integrated Approaches to Development

- Some Initial Findings
- Lower Level Dimensions of Policy and Practice
  - Counter-Silo 33%
  - Growth and Equity 33%
  - Participatory 30%
  - Community Development 21%
  - Systems and Sub-Systems 21%

# Integrated Approaches to Development



- Some Initial Findings
- Rare Dimensions of Policy and Practice
  - Holistic 12%
  - Trans-border 3%

# 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 – assets - participation – strategic mobilization



# Place-Based Approaches to Development



- General Findings – First Cut
- New Regionalism not generally present
- Community identification – actively present
- Fuzzy boundaries and lack of regional affiliations
- Choices - Silo versus a territorial approach
- Jurisdictional tensions

# Place-Based Approaches to Development



- General Findings – First Cut
- Lack of capacity for co-construction
- Community versus Region
  - “Reluctant cohesion”
  - Zero-sum competitiveness
  - Historical patterns of (economic) isolation
  - Recognition of lack of collaboration is hurting
  - External motivators



# Place-Based Approaches to Development



- General Findings – First Cut
- Regionalism versus Rationalization
  - Infrastructure deficit
  - Services withdrawal
  - Legacies of amalgamation: irony of forced regionalism
  - Push regionalism

# Place-Based Approaches to Development



- Eastern Ontario
- Asset based development. Focus on: recreation, culture, heritage – place-based assets
- Numerous mentions of local festivals - social/economic (scale of place more community focused than regional)
- Sectoral as opposed to territorial focus

# Place-Based Approaches to Development



- Eastern Ontario
- More sophisticated economic approaches to area development (Cause: Urban proximity? Larger pop?)
- Ontario further ahead relative to other case studies on infrastructure - roads, broadband, etc.
- Partnerships with universities / educational infrastructure
- Buy Local is highly localized and sporadic

# 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



# Innovation and Knowledge Flows



- Some Initial Findings – Capacity Indicators
- Substantial institutional support for innovation through the Federal and Provincial governments.
- Support and investment are dominated by the economic development (e.g. enterprise development, exports, commercialization) agenda.
- Universities and Colleges important partners here.

# Innovation and Knowledge Flows

- Some Initial Findings – Capacity Indicators
  - Access to information technology is positive
  - System of urban centres is a supportive feature
  - Access to training is favourable
  - Resident post-secondary education levels a negative
  - Reported access to financial resources is mixed
  - Networking potentials are favourable

# Innovation and Knowledge Flows



- Some Initial Findings – Comparative Indicators
  - Average income comparatively low
  - Ontario productivity index = Canadian
  - Substantial applications traffic to Provincial agencies
  - Technology use – high Internet, others mixed
  - Patents – modest activity across most Counties

# Innovation and Knowledge Flows

- Some Initial Findings – Other
- Over 90% of respondents discussed this topic
- Evidence of “new” products, services, processes, etc. – 51%
- Overriding culture is conservative, prudent and somewhat risk averse
- Support for individual learning – 15%
- Benefits of Universities/Colleges – 48%
- Technological hubs cited – 6%

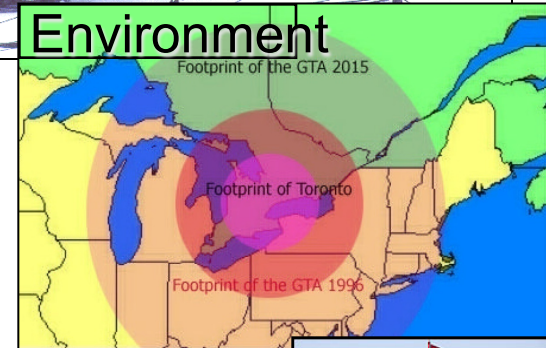


# Innovation and Knowledge Flows

- Some Initial Findings – Other
- Intergovernmental knowledge partnerships cited – 30%
- Knowledge partnerships crossing sectors – 70%
- Reflection/evaluation – 30%
- Sharing ideas, insights, intelligence – 45%
- Lessons search – 36%
- Barriers? – lack of trust (30%), demographics (33%), capital (33%)

# 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



# Rural-Urban Interdependencies

- Eastern Ontario - Some Initial Findings
  - Some functional interdependencies are recognized
  - Older culture of competition, conflict, polarization and zero-sum perspectives persists
  - Small towns and villages are usually seen as “rural”, where positive working relationships are general

# To what extent is power and decision-making shared?

- 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



# Multi-Level Governance



- Initial Findings for Eastern Ontario - To Come

# Implications for Development Policy and Practice? – First Thoughts



- A Regional Development Strategy? – Itself a strategic choice
- Much of the foundations for a Regional Development Strategy are in place
- Eastern Ontario a mixed development policy challenge – social and economic development, growth management, layered east-west, north-south and other spatial functional dimensions (identity and integration)
- Scaling up the nascent place-based development practice

# Implications for Development Policy and Practice? – First Thoughts

- Capital access - a region-based solution?
- New enterprise potentials - why not?
- PBD lack is an issue
- The urban-rural climate - what to do?
- Community Development – the costs of rhetoric
- Participation – does it matter?
- The old “chestnut” - replacing costs with investments
- ....

» *Discussion* .....

# Canadian Regional Development

A Critical Review of Theory,  
Practice, and Potentials



# Développement régionale canadienne

Un examen critique du théorie, de  
pratique et des potentiels

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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