

**Canadian Regional  
Development**  
A Critical Review of Theory,  
Practice, and Potentials



**Développement régionale  
canadienne**  
Un examen critique du théorie, de  
pratique et des potentiels

# The 'New Regionalism' Approach and What it Means for Rural Policy and Practice?

Dr. Heather Hall

Postdoctoral Fellow

Department of Geography and

The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development

Memorial University of Newfoundland



# Research Team



## **Memorial University**

Kelly Vodden

Ken Carter

Jen Daniels

Ryan Gibson

Kyle White

## **Concordia University**

Bill Reimer

Craig MacKie

Matthew Brett

Luc Bisson (Université du  
Québec à Rimouski)

## **University of Guelph**

David Douglas

Sarah Minnes

## **Simon Fraser University**

Sean Markey

Sarah-Patricia Breen

# Outline



- What is 'New Regionalism'?
- Translation into Policy and Practice
- 'New Regionalism' Trade-Offs
- What it Means for Rural Policy and Practice?

# Introduction

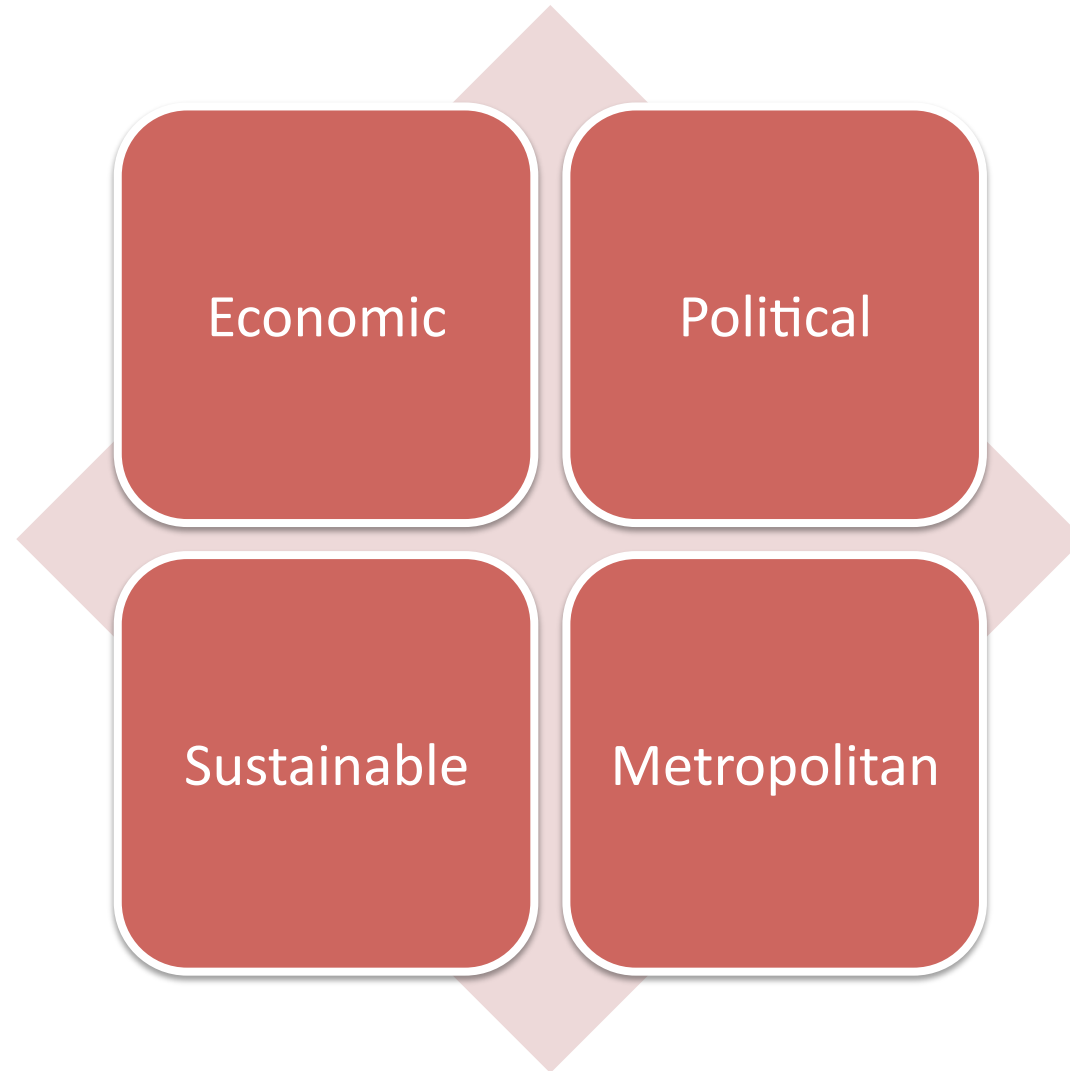


**“Something funny happened in the early 1990s. The region, long considered an interesting topic to historians and geographers, but not considered to have any interest for mainstream western social science, was rediscovered by a group of political economists, sociologists, political scientists, and geographers”** (Michael Storper 1997: 3).



# **WHAT IS NEW REGIONALISM?**

# 'New Regionalisms'



# Economic New Regionalism



## Main Argument

- Regions are the key territorial unit for economic development

## Key Concepts

- Embeddedness (Mark Granovetter 1985)
- Institutional Thickness (Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift 1994)
- Untraded Interdependencies (Michael Storper 1997)
- Learning and Regional Innovation Systems (Philip Cooke and Kevin Morgan 1997)

# Policy Approach to Regional Development



“...building the ‘wealth of regions’ (not the individual firm), with upgrading of the economic, institutional and social base considered as the prerequisite for entrepreneurial success” (Ash Amin 1999: 370)

## **Amin’s (1999: 370-374) Four Areas of Action**

- Build clusters or regional innovation systems
- Encourage learning and adaptation
- Create/strengthen regional institutions
- Promote regional social inclusion and empowerment



# Political New Regionalism



## Main Argument

- Regions are the key territorial unit for political action

## Key Concepts

- Functional restructuring
- Institutional restructuring
- Political mobilization (Michael Keating 1997, 1998)

# Policy Approach to Regional Development



“Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government ... [and] ... governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide” (Gerry Stoker 1998: 18)

- Regional Governance and Regional Government
- Collaborative and Multi-Level Governance

# Sustainable New Regionalism



## Main Argument

- Regions are the key territorial unit for sustainable integrated development

## Key Concepts

- Bio-regions; Sustainable development; integrated development; Leader; Regional Resilience

# Metropolitan New Regionalism



## **Main Argument**

- City-Regions are the key territorial unit for planning, governance, and to compete globally

## **Key Concepts**

- Smart Growth; New Urbanism; Regional Planning; Regional Transportation; Regional Service Provision; Economic competitiveness; Efficiency

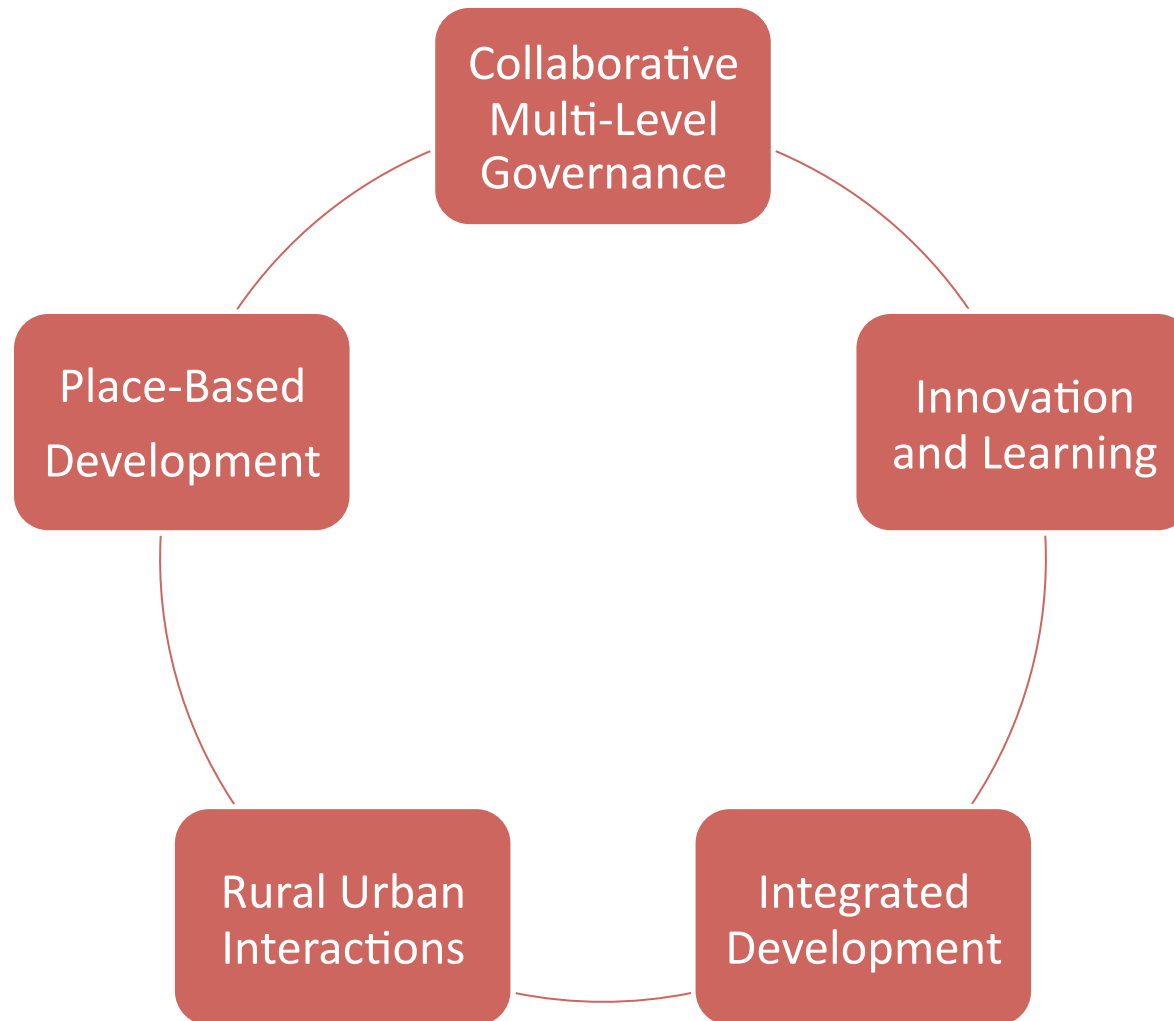
# Policy Approach to Regional Development



- Regional Governance
- Regional Cooperation and Partnerships
- Rural-Urban Interaction
- Integrated Perspective

# Summary of Key Concepts

---





# **TRANSLATION INTO POLICY AND PRACTICE**

# UK Examples



## **Includes the establishment of:**

- the Scottish Parliament; elected Assemblies for Wales, Northern Ireland and London; and the regional development agencies in England (recently abolished)

## **Opportunities**

- it empowers local knowledge;
- it allows regions to design and deliver policies that are attuned to their own needs; and
- it helps to create the conditions for a more locally accountable and more effective system of governance (Kevin Morgan 2006: 193-194).



# Canadian Examples



“every postal code in Canada now has access to a federal regional economic development agency” (Donald Savoie 2009: online)

## Federal RDAs

- Competitiveness; Innovation; and Productivity
- Innovation-related strengths of all regions; policy alignment; ‘go big or go home’ transformative projects; policy learning between regions; benchmarking; and collaborative governance (David Wolfe and Neil Bradford 2010)

# Canadian Examples



## Greater Golden Horseshoe

- Identify where and how growth should occur to help guide provincial infrastructure investments

## Northern Ontario

- Pilot 'regional economic development areas' (REDAs)



# **NEW REGIONALISM TRADE-OFFS**

# Challenges and Trade-offs



- Defining the region and the politics of regionalism
- State retrenchment versus increased regional democracy and empowerment
- Regionalization versus regionalism
- Rural development versus rewarding the urban superstars

# Opportunities



- Strength in numbers
- Efficient and more effective management of resources
- Environmental management
- Unified voice



# **WHAT IT MEANS FOR RURAL POLICY AND PRACTICE?**

# Examples



- Ad hoc rural regionalism in the U.S. (Elisabeth Hamin and Daniel Marcucci 2008)
- Reluctant rural regionalism in Ontario (Peter Hall and Pamela Stern 2009)
- Resistance regionalism in Australia (B.M. Taylor 2012)

# Challenges




- Human resources
- Geographical constraints
- Trust/Strong local identities
- Economic 'milieu'
- Local financial resources
- State austerity measures
- City-regional dominance



# Opportunities



- Manage economic challenges and shifts
- Manage environmental concerns
- Stronger political voice
- Infrastructure and service provision
- Share human resources and/or best practices



“Far from being merely the hinterlands to metropolitan areas [...] **these places have the potential to engender new, authentic, and lasting rural regional identities.** This hints at a different future for rural regions. **Rather than being isolated places of resource use, these regional identities describe communities enmeshed in distinctive regional cultures that are connected to local and more sustainable production of knowledge and goods as well as their rural landscapes”** (Elisabeth Hamin and Daniel Marcucci 2008: 476)

**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.wordpress.com>



**Canadian Regional  
Development**  
A Critical Review of Theory,  
Practice, and Potentials



**Développement régionale  
canadienne**  
Un examen critique du théorie, de  
pratique et des potentiels

---

**THANK YOU AND QUESTIONS??**

# References



Amin, A. 1999. An Institutional Perspective on Regional Economic Development. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 23: 365-78.

----- and Thrift, N. 1994. Living in the Global. In A. Amin and N. Thrift (eds.), *Globalization, Institutions, and Regional Development in Europe* (pp.1-22). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bradford, N.. and Wolfe, D.A. 2010. *Towards and Transformative Agenda for FedDev Ontario*. Toronto: Mowat Centre for Policy Innovation. Available [www.mowatcentre.ca/pdfs/mowatResearch/16.pdf](http://www.mowatcentre.ca/pdfs/mowatResearch/16.pdf) (accessed 6 November 2010).

Cooke, P. and Morgan, K. 1998. *The Associational Economy: Firms, Regions, and Innovation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Granovetter, M. 1985. Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3): 481-510.

Hall, P. and Stern, P. 2009. Reluctant rural regionalists. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 25: 67–76

Hamin, E. and Marcucci, D. 2008. Ad hoc rural regionalism. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24: 467–477.



Keating, M. 1997. The Political Economy of Regionalism. In M. Keating and J. Loughlin, *The Political Economy of Regionalism* (pp.17-40). London: Routledge.

-----, 1998. *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial Restructuring and Political Change*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Morgan, K. 2006. Devolution and Development: Territorial Justice and the North-South Divide. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 36(1): 189-206.

Savoie, D. 2009. For every region, regional development. *The Globe and Mail (Plus)*, May 11th: online.

Stoker, G. 1998. Governance as theory: Five propositions. *International Social Science Journal*, 50, 17–28.

Storper, M. 1997. *The Regional World: Territorial Development in a Global Economy*. New York: Guilford Press.

Taylor, B.M. 2012. Regionalism as resistance: Governance and identity in Western Australia's Wheatbelt. *Geoforum*, 43: 507-417