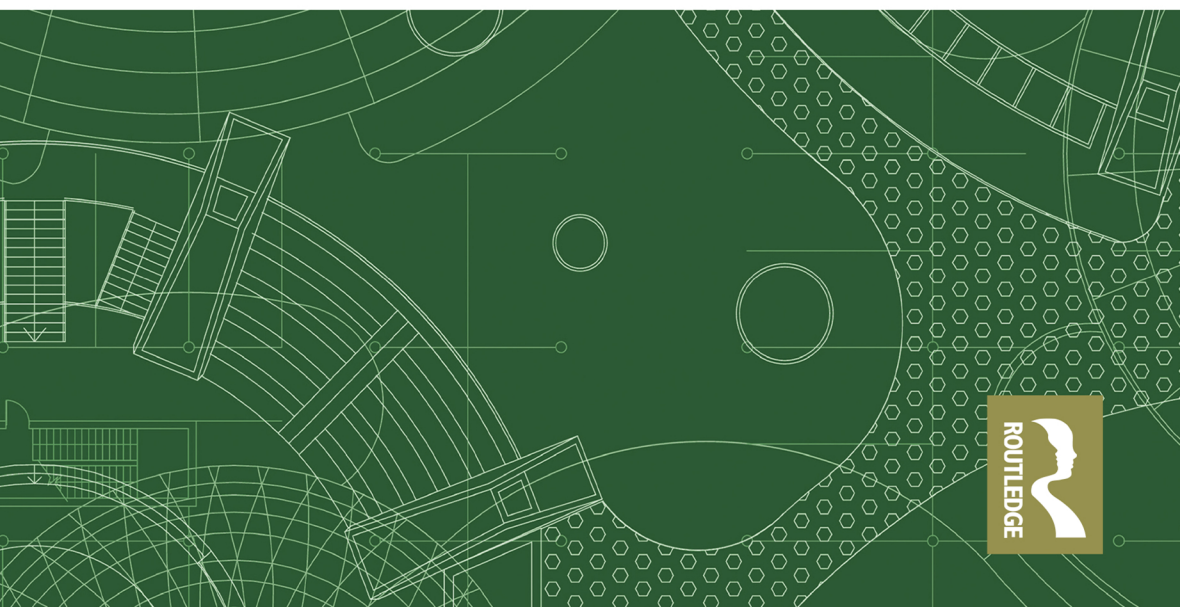
Perspectives on Rural Policy and Planning

SERVICE PROVISION AND RURAL SUSTAINABILITY

INFRASTRUCTURE AND INNOVATION

Edited by
Greg Halseth, Sean Markey and Laura Ryser



Service Provision and Rural Sustainability

Access to quality services and community infrastructure are vital parts of supporting sustainable and resilient rural and small town places. Renewing outdated infrastructure and supporting the delivery of services in rural communities present significant challenges from the constrained fiscal and policy realities of the 21st century.

Drawing upon contributors from five Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, this book describes innovative service delivery and community infrastructure models that are appropriate to the contemporary rural and resource-dependent regions of developed economies. The examples show that an entrepreneurial approach to service delivery and infrastructure provision by local organizations and governments is needed. Critical economic and community development supports are crucial to assist creative and innovative sets of solutions that work for small communities. Chapters in this book argue that community development foundations for resilient rural and small town communities and regions must be co-constructed and co-delivered in partnership by both local and senior government actors, in terms of both policy and committed resources.

This volume will be extremely valuable for students, scholars, and community development practitioners exploring policy-making, government initiatives, and community service provision in rural and small town places.

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Edited by Greg Halseth, Sean Markey and Laura Ryser

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Our friend Don Manson,
Your continuing commitment to rural and small town communities inspires us and our work

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Lastly, we pay tribute to our long-term colleague and friend Don Manson. Over the years, he travelled thousands of miles to our small communities, making himself available anywhere and at any time for the people he met. As an original team member of 'the board', he has been an adamant champion for supporting sustainable rural communities, a terrific colleague for so many years, and the host of many 'second breakfasts' along the roads of northern BC.

Perhaps most importantly, we draw our strength from our families. 'Thank you' will never be a large enough expression!

Greg Halseth, Sean Markey, and Laura Ryser
September 2018

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Part I

Introduction

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1 Introduction

Greg Halseth, Sean Markey, and Laura Ryser

Introduction

Discussion and debate about the future of rural and small town places within developed economies have focused upon the need to create and support more sustainable economies and more resilient communities (Brown and Schafft, 2011; Halseth *et al.*, 2010; Halseth and Ryser, 2018; Markey *et al.*, 2012; OECD, 2010, 2014). In study after study, it is clear that rural and small town places have a promising future in the new global economy, but it is equally clear that poor public and private-sector policy choices, and the application of outdated program and funding solutions, are not supporting this transition to more sustainable economies and resilient communities. As a complement to the literatures on rural and small town transformation, this book devotes its attention to the delivery of needed human services and the infrastructure to support those services.

One of the longstanding and most critical elements to successful rural and small town communities is the availability of an appropriate suite of services and service infrastructure. This edited volume takes up the challenge of human services provision in rural and small town places in developed economies. It calls upon researchers from four OECD states who are experienced in rural and small town services/infrastructure provision and invites them to share critical stories, bound by common themes. The motivation for the volume concerns the continued viability of rural and small town places in a 21st-century political and economic context. The organizing premise is that older models of service delivery, and the supporting infrastructure for that service delivery, are not appropriate in a 21st-century context. As so often happened through the mid-20th century, individual services and the supporting infrastructure of buildings were created as single-purpose entities to deliver only that service in isolation from other services and community needs. Renewing and replacing outdated single-purpose infrastructure and supporting the human delivery of services in small places are significantly challenged by the fiscal and policy realities of the 21st century.

The chapters in this volume work to identify innovative and creative service delivery models that are appropriate to 21st-century rural and small town places. Each contribution highlights how the case studies advance our understanding of, and the potential for, rural service delivery (processes and/or products). The

chapters note how different models and modes of service delivery have emerged out of the challenges confronting more traditional service models. In their case studies, authors share details about the impetus behind new service models or initiatives, as well as the factors that supported or hindered the implementation of the new models. They also discuss the transferability of new models and the roles of various levels of government.

Taken together, the opportunities and challenges of rural service provision within a policy framework marked by 'reactionary incoherence' raise important questions. Throughout this process we have challenged the authors in this volume to address important analytical questions and bring coherence, and a common foundation for discussion, to their contributions. They are also important for readers to keep in mind as they approach different parts of the book. These questions include

- What challenges are facing rural and small town services and service delivery?
- What are the key features that help to identify and define rural and small town services as being 'innovative' and 'creative'?
- What aspects of rural and small town service provision are more suited and appropriate to the realities of the 21st century?
- What if renewed service delivery models are not delivered? What will rural look like then?
- Whose responsibility is it to push for, and then deliver, these new or innovative models of service delivery?
- What policies exist to support rural service provision?
- How transferable are the models being explored and shared in this book to other locations outside the case countries?

Rural places and rural services

As noted, one of the critical elements to successful rural and small town communities is the availability of an appropriate suite of human services and accompanying service infrastructure. While 20th-century models of service delivery supported post-war rural and small town places, including the expansion of many resource-dependent places along the development fringes of a number of OECD states, the social, political, and economic restructuring that emerged in waves after the early 1980s disrupted those older models. In this section, we outline two issues of context. The first concerns the different ways by which rural and small town places are defined across the case studies. The second concerns a generalized model for understanding the transformations that have impacted rural service provision over time.

Defining rural and small town

Definitions of rural and small town places vary considerably in the literature and between national contexts. In Canada, definitions build on the work of the

national statistical agency – Statistics Canada – which has developed a wide range of definitions of different types and levels of geographic groupings of populations (du Plessis *et al.*, 2004). Statistics Canada's 'census rural' definition refers to individuals living in the countryside outside centres of 1,000 or more population. In turn, the 'rural and small town' definition refers to individuals in towns or municipalities outside the commuting zone of larger urban centres (those with 10,000 or more population). This would include those enumerated under the census rural definition. These rural and small town locations may also be disaggregated into 'zones' according to the degree of influence of a larger urban centre (MIZ or 'metropolitan influenced zones').

In other jurisdictions, the 'numbers' assigned to definitional categories differ according to the uniqueness of each national settlement context. In many contexts, rural areas are simply the 'residual' areas and populations not captured by more sharply defined 'urban' areas. For example, Statistics New Zealand identifies two non-urban categories: 'rural centres' and 'other rural'. Of these two, only rural centres are defined. They are settlements 'with a population of 300 to 999 in a reasonably compact area that services surrounding rural areas' (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). Statistics New Zealand also incorporates measures of urban influence on those rural areas through a four-tier scale – high urban influence, moderate urban influence, low urban influence, and remote.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) also starts its 'geography' of population data with a defined set of urban categories and leaves 'rural' as the residual (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The ABS identifies 'major urban' centres with populations of 100,000 or more (transitioning in name to 'significant urban area'), 'other urban' centres with populations between 1,000 and 99,999, 'bounded localities', and the 'rural balance', which represents the remainder of a state or territory. As part of recent changes, the classification 'urban centres and localities' is now in use and represents 'areas of concentrated urban development with populations of 200 people or more ... primarily identified using objective dwelling and population density criteria using data from the 2016 Census'.

In the UK, the separation of urban and rural begins with a much higher threshold – 10,000 people (UK Office of National Statistics, 2017). There are then six sub-categories of 'rural', including 'town and fringe', 'town and fringe in a sparse setting', 'village', 'village in a sparse setting', 'hamlets and isolated dwellings', and 'hamlets and isolated dwellings in a sparse setting'.

Beyond strict statistical interpretations of rural and small town, researchers have presented a variety of alternative definitional frameworks that include community characteristics and perceptions of identity. For example, Cloke (1977) describes a settlement continuum with 'rural' at one end and 'urban' at the other. Similarly, du Plessis *et al.* (2004) present the concept of 'degrees of rurality', which nicely accommodates various interpretations of rural and allows for community identity to be mixed in with numerical population, distance, or density thresholds.

Interest, whether from research, applied, or policy directions, in how rural and small town communities are transitioning under social, political, and economic

change has led to a search for broader and more inclusive understandings of places. There is, for example, a need to incorporate both the spatial setting and social behaviours within that setting. This links well with efforts by researchers such as Cloke (1989, p. 173), who bridges the empirical and social definitions by suggesting that 'rural' involves: a) extensive land uses, b) small and generally low-order settlements, and c) a way of life which recognizes 'the environmental and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape'.

From a policy perspective, definitions of rural and small town places carry political implications in the allocation of funding and responsibilities for services provision. Per-capita funding models or evaluation metrics especially affect decisions on a wide range of service delivery issues (Sullivan *et al.*, 2014). Under urban-centric or neoliberal policy frameworks, the unique context and needs of rural and small town places can be lost. More broadly, the discourse that serves to define conceptualizations of rural is essential for understanding and wrestling with the nuances of place. This matters because without a nuanced understanding of rural or small town contexts, the design of programs, policies, and funding frameworks can easily miss the mark. Instead, research increasingly highlights how supports for rural and small town services must be developed within a place-based framework.

Rural and small town services

Most developed nations have followed a similar pattern with respect to the provision of rural and small town services (Halseth and Ryser, 2006). Prior to World War II, individual rural places were more or less on their own aside from major state or private infrastructure such as roads and rail lines. This resulted in a great deal of unevenness in service delivery and availability. Wealthier rural areas were able to support a wider range and a better quality of services – something that had recursive benefits as better quality health and education services created better community futures.

In contrast, the 30-year post-WWII period was characterized by extensive welfare state service investments (in, for example, health, wellness, education, transportation, communication, and recreation), which greatly expanded the range of services available in rural communities and regions. This acted to level the service 'playing field', as these investments also came with the expansion of national standards for the many different types of services being delivered to all state taxpayers. It was under this framework that many new resource-dependent towns were created in resource frontier settings. The central challenge embodied by this period of investment, however, was that each individual service was delivered separately – usually through completely separate infrastructure, and under separate government ministry or agency jurisdiction.

Since the 1980s, we have witnessed social, political, and economic restructuring under a neoliberal framework (characterized by market-oriented, deregulatory, and non-interventionist government – see below). This has included an aggressive roll-back of public services. For rural areas, the roll-back has been especially

problematic. With the loss, closure, or regionalization of services, there have been losses in local jobs, human capital and expertise, and the spending or use that supported the local economy and other local services. These service changes have impacted the very viability of rural places as those who need access to services are forced to leave. These 'eras', and the interlinkages between them, have had profound impacts on the range and quality of services and infrastructure now available in rural and small town places.

Theoretical foundations and development eras

The theoretical foundations for this collection build upon the critical transformations in industrial and public policy approaches that have impacted rural and small town areas since the 1950s. The immediate post-WWII era was marked by Fordist industrial and Keynesian public-policy approaches. After the early 1980s, extensive restructuring resulted from the shift to flexible-accumulation industrial models and neoliberal public-policy approaches. More recently, economic collapse and the unevenness of globalization have created periods of reactionary incoherence in both industrial models and public-policy approaches. Under the auspices of neoliberalization, for example, we also find many significant cases of neo-Keynesian market interventions by the state. While this period of reactionary incoherence creates many contradictions and challenges for rural development through temporary and/or ill-conceived policy and program interventions, it also creates opportunity, as the recent era is also marked by an openness to, and willingness for, countenance, innovation, and experimentation. This edited volume seeks to bring some consolidation to this period of change/opportunity and highlight themes of convergence and coherence around the future of rural service delivery.

In the following section, we briefly outline three eras of rural development in the post-WWII period to the present. The regime eras are situated within a Western industrialized historical setting. While there is tremendous variability between regions, these phases are well documented in the literature to capture macro industrial and ideological shifts which impact conditions in rural regions. For each era, we provide a brief description and highlight characteristics of rural regional investment.

Era 1: staples-based Keynesian

The adoption of a Keynesian public-policy approach, especially its economic stimulus component, coincided in the immediate WWII period with the need to address two imperatives. The first was employment, and how to re-employ the millions of soldiers returning from the war effort – a great many of whom just six or seven years earlier were the unemployed masses of the Great Depression. The second was how to address the massive infrastructure deficits that would be required to allow the wartime experience of industrial production and global supply-and-distribution chains to transition into the efficient post-war production of consumer goods.

In Canada, senior governments during this period followed a public-policy approach based on a model of industrial resource development (Williston and Keller, 1997). This led to a 25–30-year period of rapid economic and community growth across the rural regions in the country (Halseth *et al*., 2004). High-quality local infrastructure was used to attract a stable workforce (and their families) to rural resource industry centres (Davis and Hutton, 1989; Horne and Penner, 1992). Similar policy actions during this era supporting the extension of industrial resource development into rural and hinterland regions are found across other OECD countries such as Australia (Argent, 2017), New Zealand (Connelly and Nel, 2017a; Nel, 2015), and Finland (Tykkyläinen *et al.*, 2017).

Overall, the era became a directed enterprise with senior government policy goals aimed at nation building and reconstruction. In Canada, resource endowments were imagined as a foundation for rural (and metropolitan) prosperity. Regional development strategies, such as the proliferation of growth pole strategies, became common programmatic responses to address regional disparities (Marchak, 2011; Savoie, 1992). As such, Canada's experience with substantial public investments during this period is commensurate with international trends, leading to the considerable expansion of rural regions and the establishment of foundations of service infrastructure and delivery aimed at standards parity (e.g., in health and education) across national space. These trends were followed in other OECD countries as well (Connelly and Nel, 2017b; Kotilainen *et al.*, 2017). Together, public policy and public/private sector investments led to economic growth in rural regions. From the 1950s to the 1970s, many such regions enjoyed development and prosperity. But the era also set the stage for increased dependence on natural resource sectors and increased vulnerability to change in the global economy (Freudenburg, 1992).

Era 2: neoliberalism

The global recession of the early 1980s marked a considerable shift in the investment orientation and ideology of senior governments in favour of neoliberalism, with vast implications for resource economies and rural regions. Harvey (2005, p. 2) describes neoliberalism as "a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade". The neoliberal response has expressed itself in a variety of economic and policy terms.

Economically, many rural regions within developed economies are high-cost commodity producers. They are high cost for many reasons: wages, taxation, regulation, services, etc., relative to some other regions of the globe. The process of globalization has rapidly opened up markets to the entry of resource commodities from low-cost producer regions (see Halseth and Ryser, 2018). The government response, faced with this international competition and enhanced industrial flexibility, has been to reduce the cost burden on resource industries in a variety of ways, via the liberalization of property rights, the liberalization of market regulations through the reduction of barriers for increased mobility of resource

companies, and the liberalization of spaces by increasing access to natural resources (Heisler and Markey, 2013; Hreinsson, 2007; Tonts and Haslam-McKenzie, 2005; Young and Matthews, 2007). The central goal of senior levels of government in these roll-back strategies was to promote a stable and incentivized jurisdictional environment for resource industries.

The investment orientation of senior governments during this period may be best characterized as state withdrawal. This social policy response is characteristic of a shift in government policy from an equity-based orientation to less defined attempts at enabling regional and community development (Polèse, 1999). This means that successive governments have been gradually withdrawing from a commitment to provide equitable access to standardized services across rural and urban space, while making modest (and incomplete) efforts to assume a secondary role of facilitating transition through various community and regional development programs (Markey *et al.*, 2007). This change in approach is partly driven by demands for greater bottom-up representation and control; however, many of the key fiscal and policy levers that communities and rural regions need to mobilize and realize those strategies are still held firmly by the state. Without the support of top-down public policy, local and regional initiatives struggle, leading to the down-sizing or closure of rural and small town services, and the gradual decay of infrastructure investments from the previous era (Sullivan *et al.*, 2014). While many of the service delivery models of the 1950s and 1960s are no longer practical in regions with dispersed sets of small communities, rather than seeking to deploy new models that make use of innovations in organization and technology, states too often simply close or regionalize services outright using the neoliberal-inspired metric that costs of delivery are too high when measured against urban examples.

A critical feature of neoliberal restructuring for rural and small town places is that the state has not yet been able to forge a coherent response to the post-1970s/1980s restructuring of the political economy of rural regions (Woods, 2007). Their policy mindset has changed and investments have been reduced, but their tools (the structure of fiscal and policy power and authority) for supporting rural and small town places have not changed. This has led to the current regime of incoherence as the pressure builds to replace or renew critical infrastructure and services. This lag in investment has supported the well-documented infrastructure 'deficits' that exist across the rural areas of many OECD states. The failure to adopt new, and better suited, service delivery models and to attend to critical infrastructure deficits impacts the capacity of rural and small town places to address both economic and social reproduction. It also limits their resilience and the support mechanisms required to mitigate the negative impacts associated with resource sector decline/closure and to engage with the opportunities simultaneously being created in the global economy.

Era 3: reactionary incoherence

There are a number of competing and divergent trends currently expressing themselves within rural resource regions. The actions and outcomes of various

actors are too chaotic and idiosyncratic to each circumstance or jurisdiction to defy the kind of logic or coherence implied by the terms 'model' or 'framework' that more neatly captures the depth and durability of staples theory and neoliberalism. Instead, we label this new policy era as 'reactionary incoherence'. This label incorporates a sense of the chaotic and disorganized elements that support a level of policy incoherence. It also suggests a mix of retrenchment and opportunistic initiatives/reactions undertaken specifically to maintain a past hegemonic structure and set of actors and relationships.

There are a variety of dynamic factors at work driving this era. First, there are the many inherent contradictions within neoliberalism itself (Halseth and Ryser, 2018; Harvey, 2005). This includes the rush right after the global economic collapse of 2008 by numerous state governments (regardless of political affiliation) to deploy massive state spending and other interventions in the economy to support employment, encourage production and consumption, and generally provide stimulus during times of economic collapse. While this approach has been effective at staving off several short-term impacts, particularly in rural regions (e.g., employment opportunities associated with long-awaited infrastructure investments), the investments, reactionary in nature, are hindered by a lack of regional knowledge and vision (i.e., reactionary investments based on 'shovel-ready' projects, rather than a coherent approach to establishing the appropriate infrastructure for supporting transformative rural change in the 21st century). Senior governments have reduced rural and regional offices, leaving centralized bureaucracies with a lack of 'eyes and ears on the ground'. This physical disengagement, decades of relative indifference to rural investments, and lack of a coherent new vision for rural development all mean that state response to dramatic rural needs too often has been to retreat to older economic models, losing opportunities associated with what could have been strategic investments for the future (Kim and Warner, 2018; Morris, 2015).

Second, the 'end of life cycle' status of much of the critical infrastructure in rural regions (built during the immediate post-WWII decades but run down by three decades of neoliberal policy) is gaining more attention (Argent, 2013; CCC, 2013; FCM, 2012). Degraded infrastructure impacts communities in numerous ways. There may be severe health implications associated with services like drinking water. From an economic standpoint, failing or inadequate infrastructure impedes new economic opportunities, makes existing activities more expensive (and therefore less competitive), and reduces the likelihood that communities will be able to attract and retain both people and capital. For our purpose, the removal or degradation of rural services decreases livability, hinders economic competitiveness, negatively impacts community development capacity, and diminishes the well-being of rural residents.

Senior governments have been offloading the responsibility for infrastructure to the local level, meaning municipalities and localities are now responsible for a greater share of infrastructure. In Canada, for example, it is local governments that now own more than 60% of all local infrastructure, yet those same local governments have the fewest fiscal tools and least fiscal capacity to address mounting costs when compared to other levels of government in the country

(The Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC), 2013; Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2012; Fletcher and McArthur, 2010). This presents a tremendous challenge to rural communities where low population levels, low densities, large distances, and more extreme weather conditions increase the per capita cost of critical infrastructure (CCME, 2006; CRRF, 2015; Rolfe and Kinnear, 2013). Overall, the recognized and well-researched need for infrastructure renewal is constrained both in governance and implementation efficacy, leading again to policy uncertainty.

Third, there is considerable nostalgia for the Keynesian investment era. This should not be conflated, however, with a desire to return to such a passive role for communities and regions regardless of the investment dollars. Stressed by decades of neglect and emboldened by the importance of community and regionalist approaches to development, rural communities are now active players in their own development (Makuwira, 2007; Manson *et al.*, 2016; Sørensen, 2017). Co-constructed development pathways (i.e., those that involve the top-down and bottom-up) have been proven to be very effective (Cheshire *et al.*, 2014; Shucksmith, 2010). The opportunity to leverage senior government fiscal capacity and regulatory control with highly contextualized knowledge leads to better development outcomes. However, communities and regions are limited by a lack of institutional capacity and the mechanisms to sort priorities and ongoing responsibilities remain weak. Senior governments also remain loath to transfer or relinquish regulatory or fiscal control. As Halseth states:

> While senior government has instructed communities to be more entrepreneurial in searching for economic opportunities and attracting new business ventures, it has at the same time removed many of the critical supports necessary to help communities secure those new economic activities or businesses.
>
> (2017, p. 5)

Finally, adding to the complexity is the uncertain role of industry in rural resource regions (Cheshire, 2010). During the period of neoliberalism, industries shifted dramatically away from their historic paternal relationship with resource-dependent communities forged during the staples era. Given the concomitant withdrawal of senior government roles in terms of representing and safeguarding the public interest relative to resource sectors, industry now finds itself having to rebuild community and regional relationships under the guise of corporate social responsibility, impact-benefit agreements, and other mechanisms. Resource companies now must contend with community and regional expectations, developed in response to decades of neglect, that corporate initiatives obtain a form of local 'social license' for new resource industry projects (Heisler and Markey, 2014). The challenge with these new mechanisms is that they are institutionally weak, are not regulated, and lack oversight and monitoring. All of which again leads to confusion and policy incoherence.

All of these factors serve as both outcomes and indicators of broader policy incoherence and drivers of ongoing uncertainty. Ultimately, they all contribute to

questions about the most appropriate ways and mechanisms for re-investing in rural places, and about the appropriate roles for senior and local governments in terms of directing development and representing the broader public interest relative to resource economies. There has been a growing and recognized need to re-invest in rural regions, the challenge being uncertainty about how, how much, where, and for what.

Book organization

This book is organized into five parts. Starting with our introduction, Greg Halseth, Laura Ryser, and Sean Markey briefly discuss the critical role of services and infrastructure in rural and small town places. The chapter highlights how older models of service delivery, and their supporting infrastructure, are increasingly not suited to a 21st-century context. As so often happened through the mid-20th century, individual services and the supporting infrastructure of buildings were created as single-purpose entities to deliver only that service in isolation from other services and community needs. Renewing and replacing outdated single-purpose infrastructure and services in small places is significantly challenged by the fiscal and policy realities of the 21st century. The book addresses this challenge with research from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the UK. The chapters focus on service and infrastructure models capable of strengthening rural and small town resiliency using three parts of discussion: government policies, new governance and funding arrangements to support new service models, and alternative infrastructure arrangements.

Beginning with the important theme of shaping new service arrangements through government policies, Chapters 2–4 explore local and senior government policy approaches that have supported new service and infrastructure models. In this part, Erin Sherry and Sally Shortall describe the rural proofing concept used in Northern Ireland to allow policy makers to assess the equitable treatment of rural communities based on their service needs and circumstances. Based on the Rural Needs Act (2016), government departments, local councils, and other public bodies are required to consider rural needs in all strategies, policies, and plans related to the delivery of services. Their research critically reviews the assumptions underpinning rural proofing and rural need, and questions whether the legislative approach as pioneered is more likely to help or hinder innovative service delivery.

In Chapter 3, Greg Blackburn describes recent efforts in Tasmania, Australia, to reform major public sector services through Service Tasmania, the first whole-of-government initiative. The project was designed to improve service delivery for those living in rural and remote areas that were previously constrained by fragmented and inefficient bureaucratic processes. By adopting a single integrated one-stop approach to providing seamless, cross-agency government service delivery, Service Tasmania offers almost 600 government services to the community through physical, online, and telephone channels. This chapter reflects on the lessons learned through Australia's first whole-of-government initiative. The chapter profiles the

benefits rural and urban communities obtained through this customer-orientated shift in government service delivery, the catalyst for change, and implementation challenges associated with the approach.

In the third chapter of Part II, Brian Dollery offers insights into shared service models used by local governments in Australia. Small regional, rural, and remote local authorities often face numerous constraints, including difficulties associated with attracting staff with specialist administrative and technical skills. Shared services represent a method for overcoming these difficulties, and web-based systems can facilitate the delivery of these services in an efficient fashion over long distances. In Australian local government, this mode of shared service provision has been pioneered by the Brighton Council in the form of a common service provision model. In contrast to most existing shared service platforms in Australian local government, the common service provision model is wholly owned by the Brighton Council, and it provides the same council functions and services to other local government entities on a commercial 'fee-for-service' basis. This chapter considers the national and state policy parameters within which local authorities must operate as they pursue these models, and offers a brief assessment of the policy implications to support these approaches in small communities.

Part III includes four chapters that highlight new funding and governance arrangements to enhance the resiliency of small town services, with a particular focus on health care services. In Chapter 5, Etienne Nel and Sean Connelly begin by presenting some of the rural service delivery challenges that have unfolded in New Zealand in an era of neoliberalism and new managerialism. The introduction of new managerialism practices has passed particular service delivery responsibilities directly on to rural communities, which are often under-resourced to take on these new responsibilities. These shifts have resulted in greater reliance on the social infrastructure (e.g., volunteers, networks, and community groups) in communities to adapt and respond to economic and social change. Drawing on evidence from the towns of Lawrence, Clyde, and Tapanui, located on the South Island, they explore how communities are responding, the opportunities and limitations of new models, and the implications for future service delivery in rural places. In more resilient communities, rural health trusts have been formed and the community has taken over the operations of health care facilities. However, this is not the case in communities where social capital and resourcing levels are weaker, leaving them at a structural disadvantage which reinforces polarizing spatial and social differences across the rural areas of the country.

In Chapter 6, Neil Hanlon, Martha MacLeod, Trish Reay, and David Snadden explore partnerships for health care sustainability in smaller urban centres in northern British Columbia, Canada. Health care systems that serve predominantly rural and remote populations face a number of challenges (e.g., health professional recruitment and retention difficulties, gaps in service, poor service integration, and continuity) that require a concerted set of policy responses. In Canada, several national and provincial health commissions have recommended a bundling of patient-focused health reforms, health human resource strategies, and

primary health care development as the means to resolve longstanding rural health care shortcomings. Yet such comprehensive policy efforts have remained elusive. Reforms promising primary health care development and upstream population health approaches have not advanced past the stage of small, limited-term pilot initiatives. A notable exception is a primary health care reform initiative currently underway in northern BC, Canada, where partnerships with community leaders have been developed to achieve support for wellness promotion campaigns and community-based primary health care reform.

Chapter 7 builds upon the book's examination of rural health care. Rachel Winterton, Kaye Knight, Catherine Morley, and Wendy Walters examine community and residential models of dementia care in rural and small town communities. Australian neoliberal policy discourses around health and aged care strongly advocate for locally sensitive responses to local health care needs, while simultaneously undertaking continued service rationalization and centralization. This places significant pressure on small, remote health care services to develop and implement diverse local models of care, in conjunction with other local partners and community members. Their case profiles the ABLE-D dementia model of care developed by one small rural health service in northwest Victoria, Australia. This program sought to tailor local community and residential dementia services to meet the needs of their communities, while taking into account the administrative, resource, and geographic constraints of the organization. In discussing factors associated with the model's sustainability after five years, the authors highlight some of the benefits, lessons, and challenges associated with implementing and sustaining this model.

In Chapter 8, Ryan Gibson and Joshua Barrett complete this section by exploring alternative funding options offered by philanthropic organizations to strengthen the sustainability of rural services and infrastructure. They profile two rural community foundations: Virden Area Foundation (Manitoba) and the Sussex Area Community Foundation (New Brunswick) in Canada. The transition to alternative funding services has been facilitated via the withdrawal of public investment, the retreat of service delivery, and the discontinuance of non-profit organizations. Although neither philanthropic organization intentionally sought to provide service delivery, they have recognized the critical importance of these services in building sustainable communities.

In a context of aging infrastructure, high operating costs, and budget constraints, the fourth part of the book consists of three chapters selected to portray the different ways in which rural stakeholders are pursuing new infrastructure arrangements. In Chapter 9, Sarah Minnes, Sarah-Patricia Breen, and Kelly Vodden examine some of the innovations for sustaining rural drinking water services in Canada. Since the 1980s, a prolonged period of economic, social, and political restructuring has resulted in the offloading of responsibilities from senior to local governments, and decreased levels of investment. This history, combined with recent economic, political, social, and environmental changes; changing regulatory environments; a growing infrastructure deficit; and increased expectations for service delivery, continues to impact rural communities and regions across the country. This research demonstrates innovative, place-based solutions in tackling the infrastructure

deficit and other challenges through training and asset management activities at community and regional-scale levels based on case studies in Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia.

In Chapter 10, Wayne Kelly and Michael Hynes examine proposals and strategies for the development of rural broadband in two countries – Canada and Ireland – providing an overview of pressures and barriers to the roll-out of telecommunications infrastructure to rural economies when market forces are reluctant or failing to do so. Policies for rural development have traditionally centred on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as agriculture and forestry, but more contemporary approaches aim to contribute to recognizing and making use of strengths and opportunities that are linked to locally produced economic development strategies. This has led to debates on the role the telecommunications sector should play as a key contributor to (re)developing rural societies and economies. The chapter highlights how many developed countries struggle with the challenge of extending their broadband infrastructure to rural and remote areas.

Policies that are driving new expectations for integrated or shared service arrangements are challenging the transformative capacity of rural organizations. At the same time, small communities are confronted with the challenges of aging and inadequate infrastructure established in the post-WWII era. In Chapter 11, Laura Ryser, Greg Halseth, and Sean Markey investigate this theme through an examination of 16 case studies associated with co-location infrastructure arrangements in British Columbia, Canada. A key issue identified in the chapter is that there is no central hub for rural stakeholders to learn about different models and processes that have been used to develop and operate these assets. There is also a limited understanding of ownership and user agreements, design features that can improve the functionality of multi-purpose spaces, issues of risk and liability, and protocols to guide the development, operations, and maintenance of these facilities. Given the limited tax base of many small communities, the chapter highlights how greater flexibility is needed to support financing arrangements and planning for these complex rural infrastructure initiatives.

In the final part of the volume, we revisit the strategic policies, planning, and investments needed to support alternative service and infrastructure models, while also highlighting some ongoing challenges that shape resiliency across different rural settings. The capacity of stakeholders to work with local and non-local partners to strategically develop appropriate new models is contingent on acknowledging the significance of these communities in our broader regional and global economies. In this final chapter, we revisit key emerging issues in both policies and community assets that shape the resilience and renewal of rural and small town places through more integrated service and infrastructure arrangements. The chapter also details a research agenda to advance rural community development research. We conclude with reflections on broader policy, practice, and theoretical implications for more integrated service and infrastructure models for 21st-century rural and small town sustainability.

It is our hope that this book will be of value to a wide variety of government, policy, research, private sector, and community audiences interested in rural and

small town communities and regions, and social and economic restructuring within those places, as well as those interested in the more general topics of community and regional development.

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