

RETROSPECTIVE

Community resilience:
Critical reflections from the Canadian
rural development perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Resilience is a highly value-laden expression with all sorts of dimensions to it. It is an integral concept in the theoretical discourse relating to ecological systems (Folke 2006; Gunderson and Holling 2009). With climate change it has garnered widespread attention (Kais and Islam 2016). And it is now very much part of the vernacular in the development discourse (Gibson-Graham 2011; Turok 2011), and has found its way into rural development in Canada.

This chapter is designed to provide a critical reflection on this aspect of rural development. It is not based on a particular primary research project or practice episode. It draws upon the author's four decades and current activity in rural development, which encompass policy design, community-based practice, graduate and professional instruction, and extensive research, across many Canadian contexts and a number of international settings. The intent is to interrogate critically our implicit and explicit understandings of the concept or notion of community resilience, and to explore where this inquiry might take us in terms of policy, practice, and the research agenda.

The chapter opens with a brief discussion of the concept or notion of resilience itself. This concept is then placed within the reality of the development record in rural Canada. The efficacy of the concept as a development objective, and as the basis for prescription, is critically examined. From there resilience is unpacked in terms of the factors that the research has associated with rural community

development. Development interventions through policy and practice that are purported to contribute to varying degrees of rural community resilience are interrogated. Finally, the question of the political economy of rural development is broached, and the role of power, its incidence, manifestations, and reproduction are highlighted, critically posing the contested project of resilience in this milieu. The chapter closes with some challenges which this examination poses for research, policy, and practice.

RESILIENCE

The notion and eventually the concept of resilience has roots and associations that may encompass the admirable personal attributes of strength, fortitude, and self-reliance of an individual, and the natural, self-organizing, and equilibrium-seeking dynamics of an ecological system (e.g., a disturbed wetland or a post-fire forest). The media, popular usage, and other sources use the term with some license to describe entire national economies, sports teams, leaders, refugees and other victims, particular businesses or even economic sectors, individual communities (e.g., Lac-Mégantic, Québec, or Palestinian “refugee camps”), high-profile individuals (e.g., Terry Fox or Malala Yousafzai), children, and many other facets of our life and times.

In the main we admire resilience. We pose the resilient person, company, or community against the relentless Darwinian processes of the market, the at times unseemly plots of political machinations, the competitive privilege of “elites,” or the random hardships of just plain “bad luck.” And we praise what we see as rugged self-assertion, bootstrap persistence, courage, and plain “guts” against the odds. There is a certain Promethean awe inspired. And with this an expectation that the admirable energies and behaviours witnessed set something of a standard, a norm to which we aspire, and also expect of others. While making some allowance for those in the direst of conditions (e.g., war victims), we see it is clearly not for the faint of heart, the indolent, the wilfully dependent, or others to whom we ascribe certain deficiencies. We associate resilience with the brave, the industrious, the visionary, the innovators, and others who attain the heights of our normative summits. Perhaps central to our approbation here is what we see as the purposeful acquisition, or, even more praiseworthy, the re-appropriation, of agency.

As with any social norm, resilience is socially constructed and brings with it the values, worldviews, assumptions, experiential lessons, unquestioned traditions, received nostrums, and other baggage of the societal milieu within which it is conceived, reified, and communicated. The tacit understandings at work here relate to the desirability of the end state toward which the resilience is directed. These might include a larger community, an expanded business sector, economic competitiveness, a more “rural” community, a safer community, and so on. But these end states toward which the processes of resilience may be directed are not always uncontested. For example, the assumption that re-industrialization, or the re-capture of retail markets, or the resumption of residential growth, or other accepted manifestations of resilience, are intrinsically desirable, do not always go unquestioned. But they sometimes do. Many spokespersons for the “rust belt” look to a retrospective resilience. Many still look to a return to the “family farm” as an integral, iconic foundation of the Canadian rural economy, and society. The vibrant outport community in a reinvigorated “moral economy” is another manifestation of a desired resilience. A rural idyll, however internalized, is rarely far removed from many of these aspirations. At a more general level the return to “growth” is widely held to be either synonymous with “development,” and therefore is unquestionably desirable, or at least it is held to be a requisite precursor of this sought-after end state.

The social concept of resilience also includes received understandings of the causal relationships between the processes of resilience and the desired outcomes. Among these we might include the efficacy of increased financial incentives to stimulate new business investment, public investment in social housing to expedite a return to community well-being, the creation of agricultural reserves to ensure the viability of the farming sector, and so on. Some of these causal assumptions eventually manifest themselves in fairly rigid ideological positions as became evident in the resurgence of neo-conservatism and related positions on the appropriate roles of government and the market. Some prove robust with considerable staying power, such as the New Public Management (NPM), notwithstanding their questionable claims. Many become part of the formulaic rhetoric of local development (e.g., “the community is open for business”). Others are polemical, such as the “war on drugs,” or calls for being “more tough on

crime.” But others have a more concrete presence such as the almost universal building of industrial parks throughout Canada in the 1960s and 1970s based on the supply-side assumption that this competitive investment would attract all sorts of manufacturing industries. The putative relationship between a rural community’s cleaned-up and redesigned “Main Street” (e.g., gas lamps, signage enhancements) and economic revitalization remains strangely intact. There are many more examples of the assumed causal relationships between the necessary processes of resilience and the desired outcomes.

We should acknowledge that the concept of resilience is very selectively applied in practice. We rarely attribute this characteristic with any favour to disease, natural calamities (e.g., hurricanes), and other such resilient episodes in our lives. We constrain our use of this term when dealing with crime, economic inflation, labour unrest, and other developments that we see as negative. Here, “resurgence” replaces “resilience.”

RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA: THE RECORD AND RESILIENCE

The fate of rural communities across Canada’s regions has been extremely diverse, matching the historical migrations of the country’s Aboriginal peoples and the emergence of the country’s settlement systems with the newcomers and regional economies since the late 15th century. Across this enormous diversity, the one common denominator for the majority of rural communities since the middle of the 20th century has been the reality of population and economic decline, and extended periods of stagnation (Bollman 1992, 2014). Indeed, the 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the closure of several hundred nascent and many apparently well-established rural communities (Brown 2007; Hodge and Qadeer 1983). And the wholesale thinning out of extensive settlement systems in provinces such as Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador has been a fact of life (House 1989, 2003; Stabler and Olfert 1992; Stabler et al. 1992). And this spatially selective thinning-out continues apace (Patterson et al. 2017).

The last hundred years has seen an increasingly complex set of factors leading to the decline, stagnation, closure, occasional reinvigoration, and growth of rural communities. These have ranged from

the opening and closing of primary extraction industries (e.g., forestry, gold-mining); natural and human-induced calamities (e.g., the Dust Bowl, the North Atlantic Cod); the opening and closing of primary manufacturing industries (e.g., pulp and paper); the structural transformation of agriculture and a massive substitution of capital for labour; the spatially concentrated expansion of the branch plant industry in selected parts of the country (e.g., Southern Ontario); the de-industrialization attendant with globalization, technological change, and the so-called New Economy; and continuous urban expansion onto rural lands, extending metropolitan commutersheds, local government restructuring, and the associated amalgamation, annexation, and absorption of communities; and the emergence of cottage tourism, second homes, and retirement communities. These and several other factors have brought about distinctive rural population and community growth patterns across Canada, with the growing “metro adjacent” zones and a small number of other regions (e.g., retirement) contrasting markedly with the more rural and remote zones (Bollman 2014). Stagnation and decline have been widespread, while growth has been selectively and spatially concentrated in a minority of rural communities. The reality is that resilience is the exception.

All of this has engendered a sense and indeed a culture of some marginalization, frustration, and concern with what are seen as preferential public policies and allocations for urban society, neglect by much of the market economy, and derision by some sectors of the media and society (Lind 1995; Sim 1988). Much of rural Canada sees itself functioning as a resources hinterland and a ready source of labour force and markets for the hegemonic interests of urban Canada, and other external interests. “Rural” has too often become problematic, associated with endemic grievances, systemically dysfunctional, plagued by assorted crises such as low farm output prices, forest fires, the deplorable conditions of too many First Nations communities, vulnerable boom-bust economies, inadequate physical infrastructure, the unavailability of basic public services, being peripheral and economically uncompetitive, and a general sense of being left behind. The central defining characteristics of being “rural,” such as density, distance, and the concomitant issues of scale, while providing a host of social, cultural, identity, and other benefits, have militated against the welfare and sustainability of large segments of rural society in Canada

(Douglas 2010a; Markey et al. 2015; Reimer and Bollman 2010).

This highly generalized record is of course marked by multiple exceptions (OECD, 1994), but also by a parallel record of dogged resistance, at times admirable innovation and creativity, inspiring episodes of social mobilization and action, charismatic leadership, well-known “bootstrap” initiatives in endogenous development, and many other cases of economic, social, and occasionally political development. We have a wealth of case studies or compilations such as those in Markey (Markey et al. 2005, 2012), Clarke (1981), the Canada/Newfoundland Agreement’s survey of regional economic development best practices (1999), the former Regional Economic Development Boards’ listing of development initiatives, the former Economic Council of Canada’s valuable series on local economic development, the *First Nations Forestry Program: Success Stories* from Natural Resources Canada in Partnership with First Nations (2009), the celebrated stories through *Projet Dignité* in Québec, the still vibrant initiatives of New Dawn in Nova Scotia, the former Great Northern Peninsula Development Corporation, the Chemainus community murals experience, the Evangeline co-operatives in Prince Edward Island, the more recent pine beetle community coalitions in Northern BC, and literally several hundred others.

Notwithstanding this inspiring record of development initiatives, it has not proved a system-wide source of resilience for most rural communities across Canada. The patterns and trends of overall decline, stagnation, and sometimes demise persist. And the inevitable “framing” of the rural condition (Schön 1983) as systemically problematic must now give us pause to seriously consider the relevance, and indeed the acceptability, of our rhetoric and well-meaning expectations around this value, this concept, we call “resilience.” From this, the onus is on us as researchers, teachers, policy advisers, and practitioners to reflect critically on our prescriptions for agency-driven strategies that are purported to re-engage thriving rural communities through purposeful rural development investments and other commitments. Is the exhortation to move from “case making to place making” (Douglas 2013) empirically grounded in the reality of the record? If not, it might be censured as fatuous, and perhaps not worth much more than the rhetoric.

RURAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
AND THE RESEARCH RECORD

It could be argued that these reservations should be tempered by the analytical record relating to the functioning of rural community and regional economies. We have amassed an extensive and impressive body of knowledge, analysis, and theory on the economic fortunes and dynamics of urban centres and regions (Anderson 2012; Beshiri et al. 1999; Bourdeau 2003; Florida 2005; Porter 2003; Savoie 1986; Storper and Scott 2009). This has allowed us to gain some understanding of the factors that have led to, and perhaps still may lead to, changes in the economic fortunes of various places. This dominantly economic analysis has belatedly been enriched and somewhat rounded out by other perspectives such as regime theory and others addressing social, institutional, and other factors at play in the fortunes of different cities and regions. However, the attention at the lower levels of the settlement hierarchy, addressing individual or groups of smaller rural communities, has been dominantly agency- and agent-focused, and highly idiosyncratic, producing a plethora of “war stories” replete with lessons and putative “best practice,” with little added in incisive and explanatory value. The promise of earlier geographical analysis addressing settlement systems, such as Central Place Theory, has not been extended allowing for more incisive understanding of the development factors at work in rural communities with particular conditions in common, such as economy, location, development record, or assets. For these the myriad of case studies has proffered a set of putative and perhaps candidate explanatory factors (e.g., heritage resources, leadership, labour force skills) that have served to supplement the more systemic factors emanating from urban and regional theorizing (e.g., comparative advantage, threshold requirements, transfer inputs). But being unable to “join up the dots” and construct a robust theory for rural community growth, yet alone development, we have moved to the normative or prescriptive and crafted a set of development principles that are claimed to have some universality “explaining” success and related achievements in resilience. Thus, the teleological has replaced any pretensions for a positivistic construct (Douglas 2010b).

We might condition this critique in noting the research from

Reimer and colleagues, the research previously sponsored through Statistics Canada, and others' identification of the factors that could lead to differential growth in smaller communities (Reimer and Bollman 2010). Drawing on the Canada-wide New Rural Economy project, such factors as levels of self-employment; access to micro-finance; proximity to a high school, college, and university; the availability of public services; access to transportation; level of commercial shopping; the level of local water and sewage services; and several other factors have been investigated as they relate to the economic development capacities of smaller rural communities (Connell 2004). This research has further explored the earlier generalizations regarding the presence and importance of social capital (Wall et al. 1998). Reimer has deconstructed the contributory facets of the social capital factor further (Reimer 2002). He and colleagues have investigated the complex interrelationships between rural community capacity processes, four types of social capital, four types of community outcomes we associate with rural community development (e.g., household incomes), and four different contexts (e.g., metro adjacency).

Factors associated with economic growth, such as the regional location of rural communities (e.g., rural remote versus metro adjacent) and initial conditions of relatively low incomes in the 1980s, were identified by Bollman and colleagues in the extensive research conducted through Statistics Canada (Bollman 1999). Work conducted through Memorial University's Harris Centre has identified a number of general factors associated with differential spatial patterns of economic growth, such as proximity to major urban centres, labour force participation, and competent professional personnel engaged in economic development (Freshwater et al. 2014). Drawing on the work of Gardiner and others (Gardiner et al. 2004), potential regional competitiveness factors were identified and a matrix of hypothetical regionally differentiated "policy suites" devised. These are at a highly aggregated level (e.g., broadband, cluster promotion). Beyond a focus on productivity and the importance of spatially selective public policy interventions, they do not identify a conclusive shortlist of specific determining variables that might not only have explanatory value, but prescriptive application.

These research initiatives and others have added some connectivity to the plethora of case study and similar idiosyncratic reportings.

More recent research in the Manitoba context has revealed a host of factors, such as the presence or absence of the so-called creative occupations, per capita debt, poverty indicators, population change, and others that might be associated with the need for “localized intervention for economic development” (Patterson et al. 2017). Now place-based development perspectives are proffering an additional array of factors that might contribute to the resilience and viability of rural communities (Barca 2009; Daniels et al. 2015; Markey 2010). These include vigorous local leadership, the environmental qualities of the community’s place (e.g., clean water, unspoiled spaces), community solidarity and self-esteem, heritage resources, artisanal and other unique skills, and other place-particular assets that might cumulatively provide competitive advantage (Reimer and Markey 2008).

Does the sum of this research now provide us with a rational theoretical underpinning to explain the variegated record of rural community decline, stagnation, and occasional growth, and thus provide the conceptual wherewithal to credibly construct prescriptions for resilience? As noted previously by this author, the answer is not as yet a confident “yes.” And others would concur (Freshwater 2004). This must serve to temper not only our expectations and exhortations for rural community resilience, but also our comfort in providing professional advice and prescriptions for the processes of community-based resilience.

RURAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

One finds in the voluminous and heterogenous community development canon an extensive roster of development norms and principles, and associated prescriptions for action (e.g., leadership development, organizing, surveys, animation). These have been gleaned from a rich and disparate empirical base of practice, experience, applied research, and observation (Douglas 1993; Gittell and Vidal 1998; Phillips and Pittman 2015; Roberts 1979). In local and community economic development these have often emerged as how-to manuals, occasionally supplemented with high-profile case studies of success (Centre for Community Enterprise 1996). The same has been the case for more broad-based community development (Frank and Smith 1999). Scores

of these have been produced since the 1950s. Regular newsletters with reports on community-based initiatives were published (e.g., *Making Waves*). Even a comprehensive and fully integrated community-based training course was put in place and widely disseminated (Douglas et al. 1992). This had assorted manuals and stepwise guidelines on appropriate process in public participation, economic base analysis, strategic planning and management, and other topics to be facilitated through group learning. Again, this and similar initiatives were usually based on an explicit set of normative principles relating appropriate process to desired outcomes. These principles addressed such matters as the required breadth of the economic analysis (e.g., the whole economy), the specifications for participatory process (e.g., social inclusivity), the imperatives of a strategic approach, and other matters. These cause-effect principles and associated policy and practice guidelines were further articulated through a distinction between local economic development (LED) and the posited more desirable community (-based) economic development (CED) process (Douglas 1994). A community-based viability protocol and assessment process was articulated (Stolte 2010). Other research has added a Regional Economic Capacity Index (RECI), to be accessed through the Harris Centre's website¹ (Freshwater et al. 2011). One of the more recent products in this stream of activities is yet another guide for those rural communities that are subject to the well-known boom-bust conditions (Van Assche et al. 2016). And the ongoing process of sharing experiences, case studies, lessons, and the received principles of practice continues through, amongst others, the Canadian Community Economic Development network (CCEDnet)² and the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF).³

The endemic challenge for community development policy and practice has been, and continues to be, to assert its relevance to the place particularities and contextual idiosyncrasies of individual communities—urban as well as rural. This is especially the case today in the context of place-based development with its emphasis on distinctive local assets, the competitive advantages of differentiated community resources, the intrinsic uniqueness of place itself, and harnessing endogenous social practices, culture, and process (Markey 2010). How might the researcher and the rural community practitioner balance and blend the application of generic concepts, received cause-effect

algorithms, and the value-infused principles of practice to the unique and the place-particular? Is this a dialectical process that is intractable, or is it soluble? In the context of rural community resilience this is especially challenging.

Part of the response to this challenge, or dilemma, might be found in two relatively recent areas of emphasis in rural development. The first relates to innovation (Vodden et al. 2013). Various modes and degrees of innovation are to be found in rural development across Canada, as documented in the recent major research project, *Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials* (2011-15). We might look to local innovation in development practice in such areas as participatory process, in creative governance, and in many other areas. Yet much of the commentary on neo-Schumpeterian or other perspectives on innovation in the post-Fordist economy, especially in the so-called knowledge (or learning) economy, would present this as a very formidable and even questionably feasible expectation for most rural regions (Sweeney 2001). So, while we see a considerable array of innovations in process and structures in the development agenda, we still need a base of transferable, robust, and applicable analytical concepts and a tested set of reliable principles of practice. While promising, any innovation will be a complementary augmentation of this platform, not a substitute for it.

The second emergent area of emphasis might be described as the conceptualization of a set of higher-level variables that have promise of significant transferability and robust application. These include the potent concepts of capacity, governance, and social capital. We have already referred to some of these (Lyons and Reimer 2009). Away from the particularities of physical infrastructure, natural resource endowments, labour force skills, electricity rates, municipal taxes, sewage treatment capacity, and other variables that have been integral to conventional locational analysis and so much of the rural economic development practice, these composite factors shift the focus to more structural and systemic considerations. And they are considerations which move the development agenda more toward social, cultural, political, and institutional factors in the community's make-up. They are also factors that lend themselves to purposeful intervention, design, and investment by the community itself (e.g., leadership, organization, training), thus bringing the development process back to the

endogenous imperative. They also serve to situate the economic development agenda and process squarely within the overall community development agenda, and associated issues of welfare, security, social justice, democracy, and quality of life. For these and other reasons they are readily transferable as pillars of the development process. Capacity and the associated questions of competence have to be addressed in most rural communities. Governance, especially in its initial formulation (Stoker 1998), is readily proffered as an overarching factor that must be attended to in the development agenda. Likewise, the imperatives of the community's social capital(s) are easily argued as vital considerations for all rural communities as they relate to trust, supportive networks, processes of reciprocity, and the very cohesion of the community itself, and, therefore, its agency (Beckley et al. 2008; Gittel and Vidal 1998).

These and some other newer areas of research and practice foci offer some hope in addressing the limitations of our more traditional practice in rural community development. They, therefore, might make for a more robust, portable, and credible development process addressing the challenging issues surrounding community resilience.

RESILIENCE AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Rural community resilience is quintessentially about power, and issues of choice and control. As with rural development in the round it involves the mobilizing of attention to specific issues (e.g., homelessness, out-migration, competitiveness), the exclusion of others, the setting of priorities and securing their claims on scarce resources, and the organizational and institutional investments to legitimize and enable this agenda. The theoretical discourse has for some time articulated the universality of these structural dimensions of the development process (Benveniste 1989; Bryson and Crosby 1996; Forester 1989).

With some exceptions, we tend to skirt around or give little attention to the fundamentally political dimensions in rural development. While recognizing the complexity of rural community resilience it is usually couched in technical, analytical, and managerial terms, with some attention to social and local cultural conditions. Perhaps we believe that the political is already well-attended-to in the over-

arching rural/urban dynamics that are usually in play in rural development, the company/community dialectic in the ever-present resource town issues of boom and bust economies, and the statutory and other dimensions of local government involvement with all its policy-dense and regulatory trappings. But beyond some limited incursions into the political economy discourse, at times analogous to the rural restructuring debate in parts of Europe (Clove et al. 2006; McDonagh 2001), we have done little in terms of a critical analysis. And when it comes to Harvey's "processes of valuation" (Harvey 1996), in the context of rural community development, there is a void.

The role and direct impact of public policy on the fate of rural communities has been effectively demonstrated in some of the research (Markey et al. 2012). The hegemony of agri-business in many regions has been acknowledged, as has the local and regional power and leverage of mining, forestry, fishing, and other transnational conglomerates. Likewise, the overarching priorities of major urban centres in Canada's metropolitan regions for more land, infrastructure, and other requirements have been acknowledged. There is a lengthy record addressing the manifestations of public policy such as major infrastructure decisions (e.g., airports, floodways), the Ontario Greenbelt, British Columbia's Agricultural Land Reserve, local government restructuring, or health services provision. Perhaps we have felt that our attention to the historical geopolitics of the staples economy, and especially its manifestation in resource-based communities and their hazardous boom-bust economies (Markey et al. 2012), has adequately addressed the political economic explanations of the shaping of rural Canada. The connections between local economic development and local government have occasionally been explored (Kitchen 1985). However, the interrelationships between local government development and rural development itself remain a relatively neglected field (Douglas 2005, 2016).

In most of this there is very little critical interrogation of power itself, the distribution of different types of power, and notably the processes of power reproduction. What Harvey and others have addressed in the field of urban development (Harvey 1973, 1996) is virtually absent in the Canadian rural development discourse.

Therefore, this remains a major deficiency in our understanding of rural Canada, and the fundamental formative and dominating

factors behind the shaping of resilience capacities of rural communities. We cannot disentangle rural community resilience capacities from the larger question and contexts of rural development, which itself cannot be divorced from the prevailing forces of the political economy of the country.

The rural restructuring questions remain in play for the issues and challenges of rural community resilience. Whose agenda is at stake here? What has been the communicative process to establish, broadcast, and legitimize this agenda? Who represents the “problem” or “opportunity” in framing it, and validating its urgency? How has the “community” and its values and interests been constructed in all of this? How is this “community” being represented? What is the posited distribution of costs and benefits? Who has constructed this depiction of possible or predicted outcomes? And so on.

SUMMARY

There is perhaps something of a cruel irony in the fact that what we typically expect of rural communities we do not expect of most other social organizations. Businesses, arts groups, political alliances, NGOs, and most other entities can come and go. Indeed, organization development and management theory and practice has led us to see the organization as a pragmatic functional entity, a contraption of sorts that once it has served its core purpose is available for merger, wholesale acquisition, internal re-organization, or other transmogrifications, including closure. Organizations, even those with considerable longevity and sometimes a spatial presence, are by definition ephemeral. Their *raison d’être* is entirely dependent upon some metric which confirms them “fit for purpose,” or otherwise. If the latter, they are dispensable.

We ask a lot of rural communities when we use the term “resilience,” with all its trappings of self-reliance, self-assertion, and bootstrap fortitude. It has a Darwinian flavour, tinged with not a little Promethean spice, served at more than a tepid temperature for the able, confident, and self-asserting. The resilience project has gained international status and is promoted in many different rural contexts (e.g., Dehne, this volume; O’Keeffe, this volume). It is present, implicitly and explicitly, in most of our scanning of the rural condition in Canada and its potentials and challenges (Blake and Nurse 2003;

Douglas 1990, 1997; Markey et al. 2015). This chapter has attempted to unpack selected dimensions of this ambition, and concept. It has questioned the revealed record of rural community resilience in Canada, and based on this very mixed record our idealization of it as a development goal, and its feasibility as something to be exhorted and promoted. The substance of our analytical base to recommend, yet alone prescribe, for resilience has also been explored and questioned critically. Tempering this, it is inferred that our wherewithal to prescribe for policy and practice is now advancing through research on interrelated high-level composite variables such as governance, social capitals, and capacities. Finally, the chapter asserts that the central issue of power, types of power, their sources, networks, and the contested processes of reproduction through the dynamics of community resilience have been largely neglected.

Recognizing that the process of resilience is complex and the processes of adaptive change are bound up with non-linear dynamics in the socio-ecological system (Folke 2006), any efficacious process will pivot on the community's competencies as a learning community. But it will also depend on the relevance and "fit" of supportive public policies and professional practice. As previously noted, Freshwater and colleagues address some of this in terms of identifying functional economic regions (FERs) and their differential policy requirements, on the one hand, and the differentiated capacities available in various regions, on the other (Freshwater et al. 2011, 2014). We need to get the mix right. There is, in effect, a need for what Eliasson has called "competence blocs" on the part of all participants—community members, community organizations, local government, the private sector, the Province or Territory, the Federal government, and, not the least, the community of researchers and development practitioners who intervene in and seek to inform the resilience project (Eliasson 2001).

This chapter suggests (a) that we revisit the values and other underpinnings which have idealized the resilience project; (b) that we revisit the record and assess the probabilities of durable success in resilience initiatives in our mixed-market political economy; (c) that this should then serve to interrogate the feasibility of resilience as an unquestioned universal project in rural development, and one toward which scarce community resources (including social capitals) be assigned; (d) that we critically revisit the analytical support from the

research that might inform our exhortations for resilience, and our prescriptions for policy and practice; and (e) that the question of power in rural community resilience, in all its manifestations, and especially the processes of reproduction, be explicitly and critically addressed.

NOTES

- 1 <http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/RECI>
- 2 <https://ccednet-rcdec.ca>
- 3 <http://www.crrf.ca>