Cows in the City and Other Rural Development Strategies

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Cows in the City?
Rural Protest in Canada

- Agricultural Protest in Ontario
- “Farmers Feed Cities”
- “Financial Crisis”
- “National Issue”
Rural Protest in France...
Global Rural Protest...

- India
- 40,000 Rural Protesters in London
- Wales
- Loggers in Melbourne
- “A Rural Way of Life”
Rural Under Pressure

- Globalization
- Logging: For and Against
- Sprawl
- Parks
- Genetically Modified Crops
- Land Title
- Farming
- ...
Outline

- Profile of Rural, Northern BC
- Broader Context for Development
- Menu of Rural Development Strategies
- Welcome to the Dark Side: The Connected North
- Conclusion
Purpose

1. Provide a deeper perspective on rural development issues...create more lasting change;

2. Argue that control, through collaborative action, is the cornerstone for future development in the North.
Profile
Urban Perspectives on Rural

- Rugged
- Hick
- Attached to the land
- Slower pace
- Backwards
- Out of touch
- ...

...
What the Reports Say: Assets

- **Attraction of People**
  - Affordability
  - Quality of life: amenities

- **Resource Rich**
  - Extraction
  - Tourism

- **Strong Social Characteristics**
  - Commitment to place
  - Higher volunteerism; more sharing
What the Reports Say: Challenges

- Overall Competitiveness:
  - Employment in primary industries is declining
  - Population base is declining
  - Access to investment capital limited
  - Education levels are lower
  - Lower levels of income
  - Severity increases in Aboriginal communities
Rural – Urban Tension

- **Urban Supports Rural**
  - Cities are the engines of economic growth...subsidies to rural
  - *vs.*

- **Rural Supports Urban**
  - Export wealth; food production
  - Those trees you’re milling didn’t come from Stanley Park...
Broader Context
Cycles of Boom and Bust

- Seven year cycles for the forest industry
- 1980s restructuring
- Staples development:
  - Fur
  - Agriculture
  - Lumber
  - Hydro
  - Oil and Gas
BC in the 1950s

- Resource royalties subject to wide fluctuations
- Inefficient resource industries
- Community & industrial infrastructure of central/northern BC poorly developed
- Few secondary/support industries
- BC as a ‘have not’ province
1950s Solutions

- Wood waste to support interior pulp and paper plants
- Electrical power to drive industry
- Oil/gas for revenue and power
- Full highway network
- Integrated railway network and airports
- Creation of new towns (‘Instant Towns’ act) in ‘remote’ BC
- Community infrastructure (schools and services) to attract and retain a workforce
The Long Boom...

British Columbia pop. change 1971-1981

- **Gain**
- **No Change** (+/- 0.4 %)
- **Loss**
And Then...?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skeena-Queen Charlotte</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Rupert</td>
<td>-12.4</td>
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<td>Masset</td>
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<td>Kitimat-Stikine</td>
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<td>Kitimat</td>
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<td>Terrace</td>
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<td>Bulkley-Nechako</td>
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<td>Houston</td>
<td>-9.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smithers</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Decisiveness vs. Complexity...

- Clear Recognition
- Definitive Plan...Implemented!!!
- But:
  - Environment
  - Value Added
  - Market Laziness
  - First Nations Exclusion
  - Complexity...
Strategies for Rural Development
What the “Experts” Have to Say

- Restore land base certainty
- Additional community-based forest tenures
- Private development of electricity
- Tourism development and linkages
- Marketing for northern products
- Invest in human capital
And the Northern Response...

“WE HAVE BEEN STUDIED TO DEATH”
Policy Report Legacies

- The “Heartlands”
- Ministry of Community Development Cooperatives and Volunteers
- The “New Economy”
- REDOs
- The Jobs and Timber Accord
- ...
The Connected North

Welcome to the Dark Side
Voices from the North

- It will be important that we think about small economic activities as well as large industries and must support infrastructure which serves a wide range of interests.

- We need to protect and develop the four corners of economic development: 1) education; 2) transportation; 3) communications; and 4) health.
Voices from the North

- A northern vision must include attention to the human and community sides of development in concert with economic development activities.
- A northern vision and strategy must be built from the bottom up by northerners.
- We need control; we must determine our own destiny which will involve taking power from other places.
So What’s the Problem???
A Model for Action

Low Coherence

High Coherence

High Agreement

Low Agreement

Simple

Complicated

Complex

(Tamarack Institute)
What Does the Dark Side Look Like?

- New forms of collaboration
- Place-based not sector-based
- Bottom-up not top-down
- Telling not asking
- New approaches to planning
- Community – regional integration
- New organizations: institutions
The Region:

New Forms and Scales of Organization
The Regional Imperative

- Our competitors have scaled up
  - especially the European Union

- Need to coordinate to create synergies
  - other jurisdictions shifting from sectoral to ‘place-based’ policies

- Need to invest limited funds wisely in infrastructure and services

- Scaling up to bring a regional voice to public policy and the marketplace
What Connects the North?

- Political relationships: e.g. North Central Municipal Association
- Infrastructure that connects a diverse region
- Services (increasingly consolidated)
- Culture, lifestyle
- Economic flows
How to Move Forward?

1. Comprehensive from outset
2. Focus areas/niche
3. Strategic drivers (entry points into other issues)
4. Opportunity driven
5. Combination
What are the Opportunities?

- Seniors
- Pre / Post Retirement services
- Tourism
- Education based activities
- New Information technology
- Quality of Life
- Hydrogen economy
- Minerals
- Innovative wood products
- Aquaculture
- Agriculture
Re-bundle ‘traditional assets’

- **Energy**
  - wind / coal bed methane / IPPs
  - links to hydrogen economy

- **Forests**
  - community forests / ‘Waste’ wood / Value Added
  - opening up access to timber supply and processing to encourage innovation
  - birch syrup / non-timber resources

- **Agricultural Lands**
  - alternative uses for grains/ waste heat uses
  - farm tourism
  - niche crops / geographic isolation

- **Education**
  - science, technology, technical, and trades programs
  - network of Colleges and UNBC
  - Norway and Newfoundland got ahead of game in training people
  - community groups and voluntarily organizations
  - industry and labour have skill / training expertise
Conclusion
A New Northern Brand

- Hard working
  - Connected to the land
- Outdoors / wilderness
  - tourism / resources
- Safe community
  - retirement / young families
- Pace of life
  - outdoors lifestyle / recreation / seasons
- Independence
  - doing more with less
- Affordability
  - housing / office space
- Youth in an aging world
Then Again…
Thank You.