Authors meet the Critics
Parts VI, VII, VIII

Shucksmith and Brown (2016)
Routledge International
Handbook of Rural Studies

rplc-capr.ca
crrf.ca
billreimer.ca
Bill.Reimer@concordia.ca
2016/08/13

RPLC
RURAL POLICY LEARNING COMMONS
CAPR

FCRR
CRRF

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada   Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

- 19 Chapters – 20 minutes
- Challenges
  - Many insights
  - Many different types of audiences
  - Not enough time
- All chapters are rich introductions to their topics
  - Key frameworks, critiques, and literature
  - I particularly appreciate how most authors have placed the issues in their historical contexts.
  - Given the time constraints I decided to focus on what I found interesting or exciting about each chapter along with some reflections they stimulated – including questions and suggestions for the authors
- Two questions for each chapter
  - What did I learn (again)?
  - What comments or questions do I have?
- I hope they will provide you with the inspiration to check them out for yourself
  - Think of my comments as trailers for researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners

Part VI: Social and Economic Equality

> Look at the sites of resistance
>   ◦ Class
>   ◦ Scale (level of governance)
>   ◦ Ethnicity and culture
>   ◦ Housing
> Consider institutional legacies
> Consider migration
> Analysis of space = multi-disciplinary

• Part VI: Social and Economic Equality

• Learned:

   • (*) In the introductory chapter to this section, Bock emphasizes the importance of sensitivity to sites of resistance when looking at equality issues

   • The next 4 chapters (Shucksmith, Hooks, Loboa, Tickamyer, McAreavey, Gkartzios, & Ziebarth) illustrate this point by highlighting important contested policies, programs, and trends in equality issues such as class, scale or level of governance, space, ethnicity, culture, and housing.

   • (*) Milbourne appears to take a countervailing position by emphasizing the importance of institutional legacies in the study of equality.

   • (*) McAreavey reminds us to consider the increasing migration of people and asks: "What does a multicultural rural society look like?" – then answers it with the comment "Increasingly diverse"

      • (*) This means our analysis must also become increasingly multi-disciplinary and open to a variety of frameworks – an implication that Hooks, Lobao, and Tickamyer make explicit by drawing our attention to the essential multi-disciplinary nature of a focus on space - a theme which you will find repeated throughout this volume

• Comments

   • Initially, I felt that the suggestion to look at sites of resistance while considering institutional legacies was somewhat contradictory.

      • After all, institutions are typically identified as locations where inequality is structured and non-contested.

   • However, I recalled the case study research of my colleague John Jackson in which he follows the processes by which language conflicts in a small community become resolved by institutionalizing them in separate school boards. [Jackson, John D. (1998) Community and Conflict, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press]

   • This suggests a line of inquiry that integrates several themes of this equality section: What are the processes relating sites of resistance, institutions, and migration?

   • Two of my favourite anecdotes illustrate the potential.

      • In 1915, the Cercles des Fermières du Québec was created by the Minister of Agriculture and Catholic Church to improve the capacity of farm women and their family farms. Soon, there were Cercles in each of the many parishes throughout Québec – where women were exchanging information and insights from recipes and child care tips to farm accounting practices. At the same time, the network became very proficient at organizing meetings, learning from Cercles in other regions, and organizing for collective action. Much of the progressive family law currently on the books in Québec can be traced to the capacity and action of the Cercles.

         • However, as they became more skilled in collaboration and lobbying they began to compare notes about things such as birth control, women voting rights, and the household division of labour – topics that the Church fathers hadn't anticipated when they encouraged the establishment of the Cercles in the beginning.

         • Once this became apparent, the Church dissociated itself from the Cercles and established another women's group (l'AFEAS - Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale).

         • *[Femmes de parole: L'histoire des cercles de fermières du Québec, 1915-1990. [Montréal]: Le Jour, 1990.]*

         • Example: where institutionalization may create capacity for resistance

Part VI: Social and Economic Equality

‣ Look at the sites of resistance
- Class
- Scale (level of governance)
- Ethnicity and culture
- Housing

‣ Consider institutional legacies
‣ Consider migration
‣ Analysis of space = multi-disciplinary

RPLC
CAPR
2016-08-09   3

•A similar story can be told regarding the significant improvements in the capacity and power of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

•*In 1876 the relatively new Canadian government established the Indian Act to "civilize" the many Indigenous bands, tribes, and nations that existed throughout the territory. In spite of the more than 60 languages and hundreds of separate groups of Indigenous peoples, the government insisted on treating most of them in the same way. This began many decades of attempts to eradicate longstanding traditions and languages.*

•*The atrocities are just now being addressed, but only after many years of hardship and struggle by our Indigenous Peoples.*

•*One of the most significant features of those struggles is the way in which previously disperate and diverse Indigenous groups have worked together – facilitated by the government's insistence that they all be treated the same.*

•*This insistence and the associated institutionalization of these disperate groups created conditions where the Indigenous People were able to discover common concerns, organize across the country, and build the capacity to challenge the government on its own terms – especially as they learned how to use the legal and political processes of their oppressors.*

•*This is another example of the way in which institutional legacies can play important roles in creating sites of resistance.*

•The second example is one where institutionalization can be used to undermine potential collective action.

•This one concerns the organization of labour in rural southern Manitoba

•In order to solve a labour shortage in this region, the local Mennonite population turned to their religious brethren in Mexico and South America. They had all fled from Southern Russia at the turn of the last century – driven out by pograms and policies that violated their pacifist beliefs.

•By inviting those with similar cultural backgrounds to resettle in the region, they created conditions where immigration levels rivaled those in downtown Toronto – one of the highest levels in a high-immigration country.

•When a large meat-packing company was setting up its labour recruitment policy, they built upon this legacy of migration, but insisted that new recruits come from a wide variety of ethnic and national groups.

•They recognized the ways in which diverse language and cultural backgrounds and networks reduce the likelihood of labour organization and action.

•In this case, by establishing and institutionalizing such a policy, they reduce the opportunity for resistance.

•These themes get picked up in the next part of the volume: Social Dynamics and Institutional Capacity.

•Part VII: Social Dynamics and Institutional Capacity

•Learned:

  •Schafft puts us on the track to analyzing social dynamics and institutions with respect to the connectivity and relations they reflect among people and groups. This is especially important under conditions where mobility is increasing and technology means our relationships become less geographically constrained.

  •Gorlach and Starosta pick up this theme and take it in slightly new directions by looking at how those relationships might vary by geography, how they connect different levels of scale, and how globalization has moved communities and families into "limited liability" forms with much narrower ranges of services and capacities.

  •"How can we analyze this myriad range of services and capacities under conditions of climate change?" is the type of question raised by Campbell, Singh, and Sharp.

    •They suggest that the community capitals approach provides a promising direction, especially for dealing with adaptive capacity to climate change within communities, while linking it with global forces, and measurement challenges (social, political, human, cultural, physical, financial, and natural capital).

  •At first, Corbett and Boeck's focus on educational subjectivities and worker identities in Canada and Norway seems to take us away from the relational focus of this section, but they soon make it clear how identity management is closely tied to the reorganization of global relations and the impacts on workers' relations within their community – neatly linking multiple scales of analysis.

  •The following chapter by Faircloth and Hynds is an appropriate extension of the identity theme as they make their point that local control of Indigenous education is essential for decolonization.

  •Donehower and Green extend this point by arguing that literacy needs a community in place – thereby placing social capital as a key asset for literacy competency.

    •They add that the treatment of social capital must be more dynamic than is usually found in the literature – especially under conditions of increased mobility.

  •Allison and Jessica Hayes-Conroy remind us that many of the general processes we analyze are experienced most directly in and through our bodies.

    •They focus on bodily well-being as an interpretive device which includes considerations well beyond the physical condition of the actor – such as the social and cultural context of the individual along with their shared experiences with others.

    •By use of comparative case studies in the USA, Canada, Japan, and Colombia they illustrate how this approach is particularly promising with respect to risk management.

    •Their work is remeniscent of the anthropology of Mary Douglas and the issue of purity, pollution, and danger. She connects bodily well-being to sacred events and places, rituals, and lifestyle. To Douglas, the critical issue is one of boundary maintenance: personal and social. It's clearly linked to social inequality and marginalization and not a big leap to consider the relationship to geography.

Part VII: Social Dynamics and Institutional Capacity
- Focus on connectivity and relationships
- Networks vary by geography and scale
- Community capitals is useful approach for adaptive capacity analysis
- Worker identities tied to globalization and local relations
- Local control of Indigenous education essential for decolonization
- Literacy needs a community in place
- Bodily well-being includes social and cultural conditions

- Comments:
  - This section has particular interest to me for its focus on social relations in general and social capital in particular.
  - It is no surprise that I appreciated Schafft's focus on connectivity and relationships, but I found it was somewhat restricted by its limitation to exchanges as the basis for such connectivity.
    - Our research on rural-urban interdependency starts from the understanding that interdependency between people or groups means that a change in one is related to a change in the other.
    - Exchanges or transfers are one way in which this might be effected, but we have identified three other ways that are equally important.
      - The first is our mutual involvement or connection via institutions: amply illustrated by authors in part VI of the book who show how institutional policies in one region can significantly affect those in other regions *(Milbourne: institutional legacies; Hooks, Lobao, Tickamyer: institutional legacies; Gkartzios & Ziebarth: housing policy).*
      - The second is our shared environment – where we find that changes in farming practices, resource extraction, or transportation affect all of us.
      - The third is with respect to identity. This type of interdependence is well illustrated by Corbett and Boeck, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, and by the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
    - This more extensive interpretation of relationships and connectivity will not only broaden the range ot relevant topics, but it implies a variety of social dynamics relating to connectivity.
  - I would also like to include a gentle nudge to those using the social capital framework to consider more than the structural or accumulation aspects of the concept – a point reinforced by Donehower and Green when they call for a more dynamic approach to social capital. Most of the authors in this section have focused on the stock of various capitals – with a consideration of the normative aspects remaining underdeveloped.
    - In our research, we found that considering the norms by which social capital is used – along with individuals' or groups' capacities to operate within various normative frameworks - reveals some useful insights regarding the circumstances under which it is used, resisted, managed, or unrecognized. [Reimer, Bill, Lyons, Tara, Ferguson, Nelson, and Polanco, Geraldina, (2008) "Social capital as social relations: the contribution of normative structures" *Sociological Review*, 56:2, pp 256-274. - http://billreimer.net/workshop/files/BillPapers/ReimerEtalSocialCapitalAsSocialRelationsPublicV01.pdf].
    - This framework led me to wonder:
      - What types of networks were being used by the farm families mentioned by Gorlach and Starosta – and whether there were conflicts among the norms required.
      - Whether market, bureaucratic, associative, or communal norms were most effective for building adaptive capacity in Campbell, Singh, and Sharps' analysis.
      - Whether Chandler, et al.'s analysis of essentialist or narrative understandings of personal identity reflect normative competencies found among workers and the changes in their relationships, or
      - Whether the rural literacy programs discussed by Donehower & Green might be more effective if they were developed around associative or communal-based norms rather than bureaucratic-based ones.

Reimer, Bill, Joshua Barrett, and Kelly Vodden (2015) "The Water-Food-Energy-Climate Nexus: An opportunity for rural-urban policy integration" Presentation to the Water-Food-Energy-Climate Nexus: An emerging challenge for rural policy, OECD/ICRPS/RPLC Preconference, Memphis, May 18. [http://billreimer.net/workshop/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ReimerEtAlOECDWater-Food-Energy-ClimateNexus20150518V04.pdf]

Chandler, Lalonde, Sokall, Halllet, (2003:43) Personal Persistence, Identity Development, and Suicide: A Study of Native and Non-Native North American Adolescents

VIII: Power and Governance

‣ Exercise of power **Within, Over, By, About** rural settings
‣ What we know about local government
‣ Operating outside partnerships can be important forms of resistance
‣ Local protests don't always reflect local peoples' interests
‣ Important distinction: resiliency and adaptive capacity
‣ Rural is not just about agriculture

RPLC
CAPR

2016-08-09   6

•Part VIII: Power and Governance
•Learned:
   •(*) In her introduction to the section, Cheshire provides a useful four-fold division when considering the exercise of power:
      •**Within** rural settings: Internal class and power structures
      •**Over** rural settings: Globalization and political economy
      •**By** rural settings: Typically a shift from government to governance
      •**About** rural settings: Reassertion of rural power
   •(*) Douglas boldly jumps into the complexity of those themes by considering 9 questions regarding research results about local government (community and regional) – then proceeds to answer them in the following way.
      •Have regional amalgamations improved rural efficiencies? (no)
      •Have the local costs cancelled out the benefits from economies of scale and scope? (yes)
      •Are local governments more democratic? (no)
      •Have services been enhanced? (unclear)
      •Greater political autonomy? (increment in relative power for metro)
      •Greater congruity between spatial configurations and functional domains? (yes)
      •Have governance processes evolved? (greater variety emerging)
      •What is the nature of local government engagement? (generally subservient to the centre's hegemony)
      •Have restructuring agendas been linked to broader development agendas? (rarely)

   •In the process he leaves us with the provocative question "Are restructuring initiatives antithetical to rural development?"

   •(*) Macken-Walsh considers the current interest with "partnerships" and reminds us that such arrangemments involve the formalization of power relationships - they organize the access to resources and the rules for such access.
      •She champions "pockets of resistance" and suggests that those who operate outside the dominant partnership model of rural governance can be an important form of resistance.
   •(*) Woods uses Polonyi's double movement perspective when looking at the relationship between global and local processes.
      •He cautions us that local protests don't always reflect local peoples' interests – and that this tension should also be considered part of the reconstruction of the countryside.
   •(*) Young introduces an important distinction between resiliency and adaptive capacity when looking at environmental changes.
      •The former is more useful as a metaphor, he suggests, whereas the latter focuses attention on learning capacity, community capitals, institutions, community characteristics and dynamics.
      •*[He then focuses on adaptive capacity and identifies 4 current conditions which are especially important to consider in its analysis:*
         •*Globalization – which provides tremendous power to global supply chains and networks*
         •*Rapidly evolving technologies – most recently related to the Interneet*
         •*Global environmental change*
         •*Shift in governance methods and strategies]*
      •He also suggests that resistance and acceptance of change can coexist within a community and the tension between them is dynamic and often creative (p 647).
   •(*) True to the promise of a "handbook" I found Ashwood and Bell's chapter on the Rural-Agricultural powerplay to be very helpful as I was preparing a presentation to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture last month. Agriculture in Canada is a relatively clear example of the way in which commodity agriculture has undermined community development in rural areas.
      •They point out that we should not be surprised that commodity agriculture (or other resource industries) means fewer people - that is its objective, although an indirect one.

VIII: Power and Governance

- Exercise of power **Within, Over, By, About** rural settings
- What we know about local government
- Operating outside partnerships can be important forms of resistance
- Local protests don't always reflect local peoples' interests
- Important distinction: resiliency and adaptive capacity
- Rural is not just about agriculture

- Comments
- I greatly appreciate the focus on power and governance of this final section – it provides a useful link to the problem-oriented approach championed by the Handbook's authors.
  - It raises for me questions of our own responses to these challenges – as researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners with interests in rural and remote places.
    - How do our skills, assets, objectives, and actions relate to the challenges faced by rural places and people?
    - How might we better position ourselves to exercise power WITH rural places (to add a fifth preposition to Cheshire's four)
- To address these questions we must consider not only our relationships with those places and people, but among ourselves and with our own work.
  - This includes debating a core methodological feature of our work: How do we know when we are wrong – no matter what position we take on the issues of knowledge, data, and analysis?
  - It includes considering the question posed by Shucksmith and Brown: "How should rural scholars proceed to engage…with policy and practice?"
  - And it includes questions of our self-organization.
- If, as Young (and our research) suggests,
  - Rural issues are of decreasing importance in the face of urbanization and globalization
  - Rapidly changing technologies are changing our most important relationships
  - Rural regions are particularly vulnerable to environmental changes, and
  - Our governance methods and strategies are dominated by neoliberal approaches – including our home institutions
  - How can we best position ourselves to ensure a vibrant and sustainable cohort of researchers and practitioners with a sensitivity to rural people, places, and issues?
- This Handbook will help
  - By providing researchers with a handy reference to the challenges, issues, and debates that surround rural people and places,
  - By serving as a useful resource for those of us who are engaging with the next generation of rural researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens, and
  - By providing an inspiration for us to move outside our disciplinary and institutional comfort zones to learn with others who have traditionally not been associated with the "rural" adjective.

- Ch 55: Rural Studies: The Challenges Ahead (Shucksmith & Brown)
  - Learned:
    - Challenges
      - Rural-urban dichotomy increasingly inappropriate
      - Rural places increasingly precarious
      - Nature and rural places inextricably intertwined
      - Migration and displacement increasing
    - They also advocate problem-oriented approaches that:
      - Include multiple actors: researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, citizens
      - Include coalitions with advocacy groups – with associated consideration of the methodological challenges
      - Support public intellectuals, and
      - Develop appropriate institutional structures for such approaches.
  - Comments
    - Suggest a reformulation of the first challenge: Rural and urban places continue to be interdependent, but the links are less visible.
      - Our positive balance of trade in Canada, for example, depends on the export of rural-based products (food, forest products, energy, water, minerals) but the links between rural fields of wheat and urban ipods, clothing, coffee, and housing is very indirect.
      - We are losing the generations of urban people with rural roots – as a result of aging, migration, and immigration
      - We have not taken advantage of the concerns which urban people do share with rural and use these as a basis for new collaborations, alliances, and knowledge mobilization.
        - For example, food, water, environmental stewardship, energy, and recreation are all rural-dependent issues. We don't need to convince urban people of their importance.
        - Japan has built this into its agricultural policy
        - NY City has recognized it in the development support they offer to communities in the Catskill mountains (from where it gets its water)
      - Sociological researchers can do it by seeking collaboration with biologists, geographers, historians, engineers, climate experts, medical and education researchers, liesure studies, management researchers, and artists who have never thought about their research in terms of its rural implications.
- One of our greatest challenges is our institutions – where such collaboration, problem-based research, and non-academic writing are devalued and the time they require can jeopardize the careers of our junior scholars.
  - In the NRE Project we were large enough to arrange for tradeoffs between senior and junior colleages so that careers were enhanced among our pre-tenure members.

Conclusions Chapter

‣ Challenges
  ◦ Rural–urban dichotomy increasingly inappropriate
  ◦ Rural places increasingly precarious
  ◦ Nature and rural places inextricably intertwined
  ◦ Migration and displacement increasing
‣ Problem–oriented approaches
  ◦ Multiple actors
  ◦ Methodological challenges
  ◦ Public intellectuals
  ◦ Institutional structures critical

RPLC RURAL POLICY LEARNING COMMONS
CAPR

http://rplc–capr.ca

2016-08-09   9

•Facilitating such collaboration is one of the key objectives of the RPLC

  •It is a partnership project in the broad sense: researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, citizens

  •Take our research on community development seriously - integrate all target audience right from the beginning

  •Objectives:

    •Connect

    •Communicate

    •Mobilize knowledge

    •Build capacity (including new generation of scholars and policy-makers)

    •Explore new ways of doing this

    •Invite exploration, engagement, and initiatives (have resources)

•We do it by building on what people are doing already – not asking them to divert their energy.

  •If an issue is identified as important – we ask

    •Who is working on it already?

    •How can we enhance their work?

    •How can we connect them with those who need to know about it?

•That is one reason why this Handbook is so important

  •It points to the research and researchers who are involved in key rural issues.

  •It identifies those issues that need most attention.

- Future of Rural Sociology
  - Rural: Rural-urban interdependence less visible – thus the distinction is less visible
    - As analytical categories
    - As publicly-relevant categories
  - Sociology: Place-based focus of rural studies is inherently multi-disciplinary
    - Sociology, Geography, Economics, Resource sectors, Sciences, Liesure Studies, the Arts, etc.
    - Any multi-disciplinary approach is institutionally vulnerable
      - Weakest legacy of collective and institutional action
      - First to go under austerity conditions
  - Implications
    - Rural-urban alliances will be critical
    - Urban connections with rural are weak
      - In Canada: the generation with rural roots is disappearing; migration is urban-urban; immigration is disconnected from Canadian rural
    - But – rural-related issues continue to be important to both rural and urban
      - Food, water, air, soil, forests, minerals, environment, recreation, etc.
  - Strategies
    - Rural Sociology must build alliances
      - Form symbiotic relations with other disciplines
      - Make the effort to bridge the differences (means learning the language and perspectives)
      - Participate in other disciplines' events, not expect them to attend ours
      - Invite strategic people and issues to our events
      - Act on our insights re. bridging and linking networks
        - CRRF/RPLC: add value to others' events and activities
    - Explore other options for capacity-building rural sociologists (bonding capital)
      - Add-on meetings
      - Invited sessions
      - Collaborative research initiatives and funding
      - Social media
  - Use/support existing structures – rather than adding to our workloads
    - RPLC/CRRF
    - International networks

- I rely on a number of sources for this presentation
  - (*)Most recently: RPLC: an international network/collaboration of people interested in rural and northern issues
  - (*)CRRF: 28 years of collaboration among researchers and practitioners
  - (*)NRE: 11-year research and education project working with 32 rural communities across Canada (2 in Japan)
- I encourage you to investigate and connect with people in all these groups.
  - Invite you particularly to participate in the conferences, workshops, webinars of CRRF and the RPLC
    - (*) For example, in October CRRF will be holding its annual conference in Guelph (Oct 12-15) – an excellent opportunity to connect with researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and community people with a common interest in rural and northern issues. [2017 in Nelson, BC]
  - I also encourage you to suggest initiatives that support your work to the RPLC – including research, exchanges, internships, training, and communication activities.
    - This partnership of over 90 organizations and participants is specifically designed to facilitate collaboration, knowledge mobilization, and capacity-building with individuals and organizations. We welcome your interest and participation.