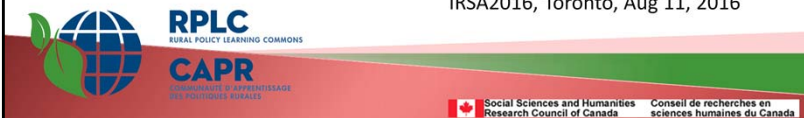


## The Rural-Urban Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities

- Joshua Barrett (Memorial U.) and Bill Reimer (Brandon and Concordia U.)
- Chris Southcott (Lakehead U)
- John Devlin (U. of Guelph)
- Lars Hallstrom (U. of Alberta – Augustana)

IRSA2016, Toronto, Aug 11, 2016



- Rural and urban places are highly interdependent – especially in a resource-dependent country like Canada. This is often overlooked as a result of distance, the complexity of our interdependence, settlement patterns, or competition for attention or resources. We overlook this interdependency at our peril, however, since doing so means working at cross-purposes and missing opportunities to the detriment of all.

- This panel will address two questions arising from rural-urban interdependence:*

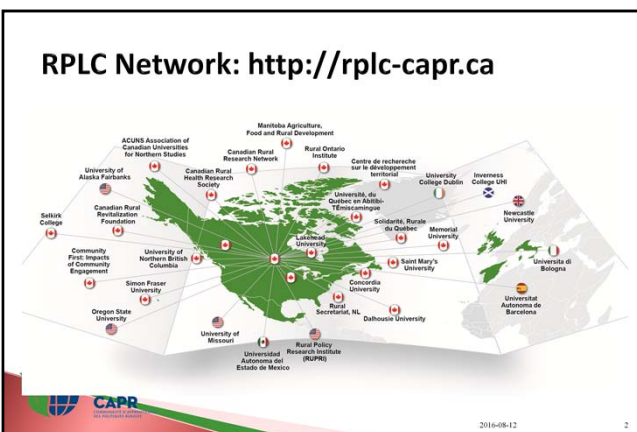
- In what ways are rural and urban places interdependent? and*

- How can we develop more beneficial rural-urban relationships?*

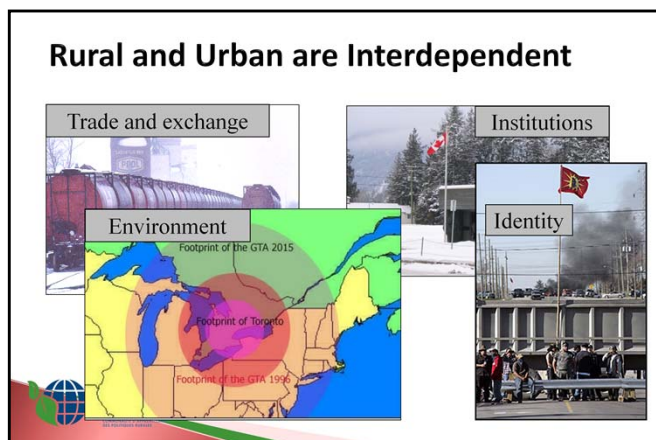
- This panel is supported by the Rural Policy Learning Commons: 7-year partnership project with over 90 participants (<http://rplc-capr.ca>). Inquiries, contributions, and new participants are welcome.

- Timing: 16:00-17:30, Aug 11, 2016

- Place: TRS 3176



- The Rural Policy Learning Commons
  - An international partnership of (at present) 90 partners and participants
  - Convinced that systematic investigation in a comparative and collaborative context is the best way to address the many complex and important issues we face in rural and northern places.
- Some examples of the agriculture-related activities of our partners.
  - Food waste-related issues: University of Bologna, Italy “Energy footprint of dairy farms in Missouri and Emilia-Romagna” ([matteo.vittuari@unibo.it](mailto:matteo.vittuari@unibo.it))
  - International labour mobility: University of Highlands and the Islands, Scotland ([Philomena.delima@inverness.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Philomena.delima@inverness.uhi.ac.uk))
  - Impact of alternative agricultural and environmental policies on Irish farmers: UCD, Ireland ([james.breen@ucd.ie](mailto:james.breen@ucd.ie))
  - Food-energy-water-climate nexus: OECD preconference, Memphis ([JohnsonTG@missouri.edu](mailto:JohnsonTG@missouri.edu))
  - Food and Beverage Processing Industry: RDI, Brandon, MB ([ashtonw@brandonu.ca](mailto:ashtonw@brandonu.ca))
- This is a partnership project – so our funding and support is for connecting people and groups with an interest in research with and about rural and northern places and people
- Built on a number of key principles
  - Find the people, groups, and centres who are working on rural and northern-related issues and support their activities rather than duplicate or divert them
  - Facilitate communication among researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens regarding insights and issues relating to rural and northern people and places
  - Build the capacity of the next generation of researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens
  - Provide easy and open access to all who share our objectives. Give a little, and get access to a lot.
- I invite you to explore our site, let us know if there is something of interest there, propose an initiative if you don't find it, or let us know how we might help you in your own deliberations.

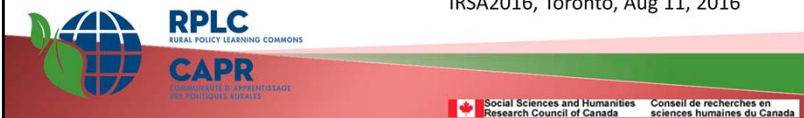


- By way of introduction to this panel I would like to outline the framework and assumptions I used when considering its development.
  - Urban places will increase in their dominance of Canadian society and politics.
  - Rural and urban places are interdependent – and will continue to be so in the future.
  - Rural prosperity depends on understanding that interdependence and positioning rural people and places strategically with respect to it.
- I have found it useful to think of this interdependence with respect to 4 broad features of social organization
- These are 4 ways in which changes in rural or urban settings will have impacts on each other (the meaning of interdependence)
- \* The first is via trade and exchange
  - Of goods, services, finances, and people
  - Sometimes it is direct as with farmers markets and commuting (labour markets) but often it is indirect via other nations or complex downstream transformations
  - This is to be expected in our commodity dependent economy where 83%+ of our positive balance of trade (goods and services) is due to the export of rural products (agriculture, forestry, energy). (CANSIM, 2006)
- \* The second broad way in which we are interdependent is through the institutions we share
  - This includes national, provincial, regional, and some municipal institutions (formal and informal) that organize activities for both urban and rural people
    - From Health, Education, and Welfare to Scouts, Religions, and Families – where policies developed in and for one context are applied to another context
- \* The third area is the environment
  - Over the past 50 years we have learned a great deal about the interdependence of all regions with respect to the environment – including the total earth.
  - It can also be seen dramatically on a regional scale
    - The environmental footprint for Toronto is 280 times its formal size (about 1/3 the size of Ontario)
    - The footprint is largely on rural areas (food, water, pollution processing, waste management)
- \* The final area is with respect to identity.
  - I am using identity to refer to the ways in which we see ourselves:
    - Who we think we are,
    - What our friends and families are like,
    - The places we grew up, work, visited, and wish to visit,
    - And the things we value about ourselves, our networks, neighbourhoods, cities, regions, and country.
- This panel will address two questions arising from rural-urban interdependence:
  - In what ways are rural and urban places interdependent? and
  - How can we develop more beneficial rural-urban relationships?

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- Joshua Barrett will examine the sensitivity of rural leaders in BC, ON, QC, and NL to the four components of rural-urban interdependence which I have outlined.
- Chris Southcott will summarize past and future trends in rural-urban relations in Canada's Territorial North. His analyses of Alaska and Greenland provide useful comparisons to highlight how those relations are linked to decolonization.
- John Devlin provides a challenge to those who would answer the second of the panel's two questions with reference to self-regulating markets. Inspired by the work of Polanyi he reflects on what types of policy regimes will be necessary to help rural places respond to the looming urban crises of water, energy, and food, and
- Lars Hallstrom will make use of provincial and national surveys to demonstrate the importance of rural-urban relations for the community capacity of mid-to-small-sized rural communities. He examines how insights from social capital, network, and innovation theory can improve our understanding of how rural and urban communities are inter-related.
- I have asked the panelists to keep their presentations short so that we will have plenty of time for discussion and development of the issues.
- I am particularly interested in exploring what these results imply for strategic action in the future – for the researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers among us.