

An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide consists of several overlapping chevron shapes in red, black, yellow, and blue. These shapes are arranged in a way that they appear to be building up or pointing towards the right, creating a sense of movement and growth.

RURAL 2.0?

investigating
place-based rural innovation systems
& their implications
for public policy
& community development practice

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Innovation is a Canadian value.

**It's in our nature, and now more than ever, it will create jobs,
drive growth and improve the lives of all Canadians.**

**It's how we make our living, compete and provide solutions to the world.
We have the talent, the drive, the dedication and the opportunity to succeed.**

So, what's next?



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Government of Canada - Innovation Agenda Consultations



BUT... **WHAT ABOUT RURAL CANADA?**

- All Canadian Innovation Agenda consultations happened in urban centres - rural Canadians were left out from the beginning
- In related strategies & reports, like "Unleashing Productivity Through Infrastructure" - the Government of Canada's Advisory Council on Growth only mentions 'rural' twice - once in a throwaway/catchall line & secondly as a foil to rapidly urbanizing population
- Emphasis on agri-food innovation in Barton report, but little attention to the rural communities that feed & fuel our economies - conflation of rural & agriculture that renders broader rural communities invisible
- CRRF 2015 State of Rural Canada Report: we have forgotten how to meaningfully invest in the future of rural communities



BEYOND CANADA...

- Preoccupation with innovation across international jurisdictions
- While some research on innovation in rural regions exists, it often encounters difficulties in applying generally accepted, urban-centered notions of innovation systems
- Rural communities differ not only from urban communities, but from each other
- Rural policy is often conflated with agricultural or extractive-industry/sectoral policy, which fails to account for diverse notions of rurality and obscures or ignores broader issues in modern rural community development
- Place matters: the lower the population density, the more likely it becomes that key determinants of innovation and community development are specific to the people who live and work in a given region

RESEARCH GOAL:

- **Investigate whether innovation systems can be modeled at the rural community level and determine the role of place in these systems through international comparative case studies.**

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION:

- How do place-based innovation systems operate in rural communities?

SUB-QUESTIONS TO BE INVESTIGATED:

- (i) the influence of spatial, relational, and structural dimensions in the development of place-based rural innovation systems;
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- (ii) the influence of infrastructure investments (particularly the social and economic impact of broadband infrastructure); and
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- (iii) the influence of provincial/state and national policy frameworks on rural community capacity to develop place-based innovation systems.

PLANNED RESEARCH APPROACH

- **Rural community innovation framed as place-based systems**, bridging systems theory from Meadows (2008) and Holling (2001)
- Applying **place-based innovation systems theory** to local/rural level (scaled and specific application RIS theory)
- Draw from exemplar cases from Scotland, Finland, and New Zealand, with range of economic legacies & trajectories (agricultural, manufacturing, remote/periphery). (**Cases still TBD**)
- **Additional threads of interest:** What are the roles of key stakeholders/influencers/decision-makers? What do they think creates a rural innovation ecosystem? How do broader networks influence investments?
- **Knowledge mobilization goals:** How can/do decision-makers mobilize innovation insights into evidence-based policy & practice?

INFRASTRUCTURE

physical & soft infrastructure
broadband as enabling tech
civic institutions & structures

REGIONAL
CONNECTIONS

CAPITAL
INVESTMENT

**RURAL
INNOVATION
ECOSYSTEM**

CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

PLACE

influence & role
of spatial, structural
& relational
dimensions
of community



POLICY

influence
& role of
national & provincial
policy frameworks
& funding priorities

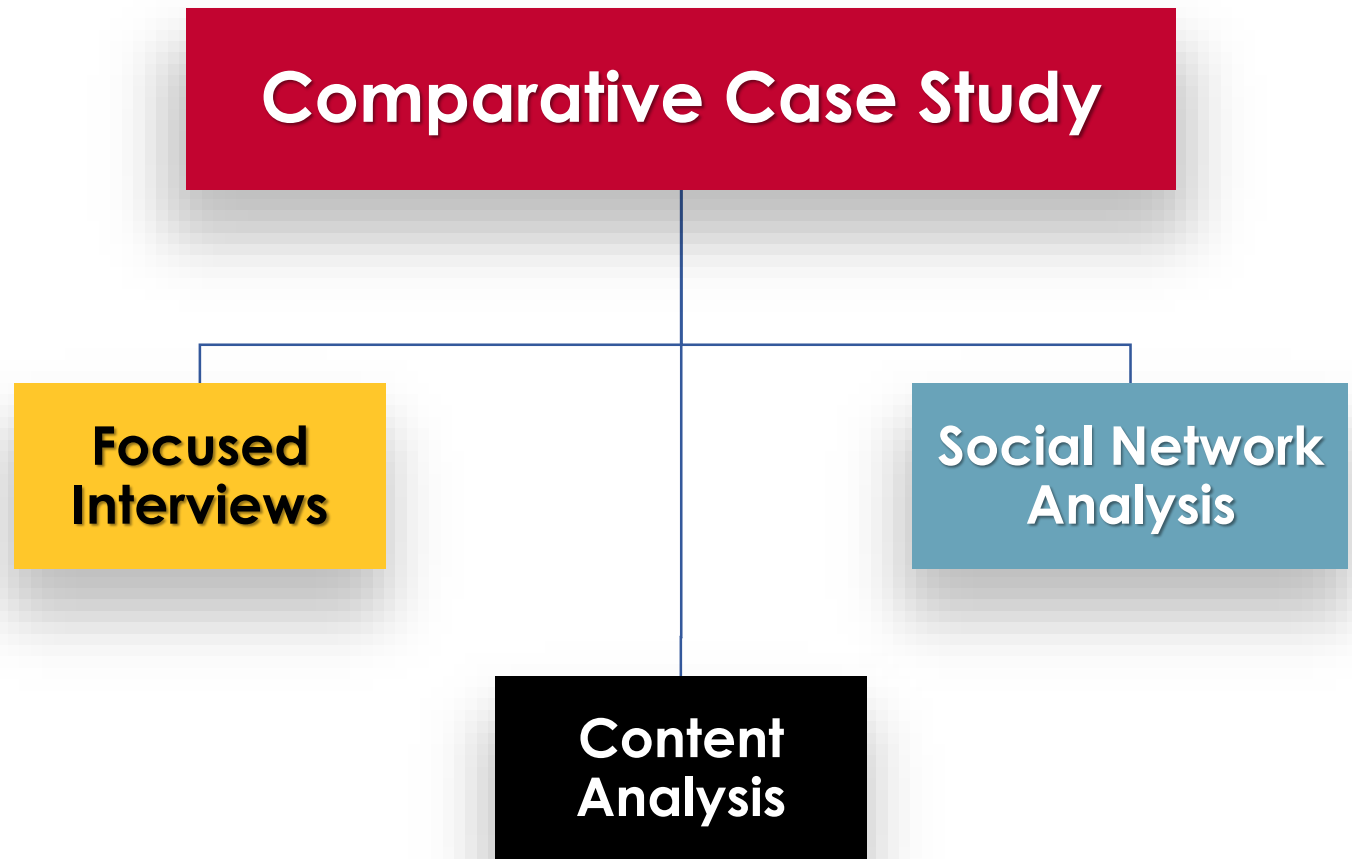


WHY DOES THIS RESEARCH MATTER?

Rural communities feed our bodies and fuel our economies. However, many national or regional innovation agendas fail to empower and enable rural communities, businesses, and people to seize their futures in a rapidly changing world. This research will provide grounded, illustrative narratives that will help address gaps in current place-based development and innovation systems-based scholarship, providing a timely contribution to socio-technical systems studies while addressing current policy concerns about the changing nature of rural landscapes and innovation.



METHODOLOGY



TIMELINE

YEAR 1

Conceptual framework, background & methodology.

**COURSE-
WORK &
THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK** **20
18**

**20
19** **CASE
SELECTION &
FIELD WORK**

YEAR 2

Exemplar cases from Scotland, Finland and New Zealand
*(*cases still TBD*)*

YEAR 3

Primary & secondary data collection & analysis.

**FIELD
WORK &
ANALYSIS** **20
20**

**20
21** **DEFENSE &
KNOWLEDGE
TRANSFER**

YEAR 4

Synthesize findings, develop core conceptual models & recommendations



QUESTIONS?

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