Boom & Bust

Local strategy for big events

a community survival guide to turbulent times

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A guide for citizens, community leaders,
politicians, administrators, academics,
and other activists for managing ups and
downs in communities

Ideas for and from the Canadian West

Boom and Bust: A Guide is the result of a collective effort at the
University of Alberta to better understand the dramatic ups and downs
which too often characterize western Canadian communities. It offers
community leaders, politicians, administrators, academics, students,
and all active citizens helpful techniques to analyze the current state
of their own community, understand how it got where it is today, and
ultimately, identify possible ways forward. We encourage analysis of
historical paths and policy contexts to better understand what strategies
might work (or not) in a community.

The authors encourage readers to learn from local histories, a broad range
of tested theories, and the experiences of other communities to develop
a context-sensitive strategy of asset building, while at the same time
taking on an informed understanding of what assets and resources
could support long-term development planning for their communities.
They demonstrate that assets become such within a context and within
a narrative, forming a story about the past, present, and future of the
community. By showing the importance of reinvention and the dangers
of rigid identity, the authors call on communities to re-evaluate their
assets and their dependencies, and ultimately to reintroduce long-term
perspectives within governance.

By acknowledging the difficulty of local control over local development in
a global economy, the guide offers strategies to broaden perspectives and
inspire local action, as well as to harness the power of informal relations,
latent stories, silent assets, and diverse local identities to cultivate more
varied and prosperous futures.

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A readers' guide to the citizens' guide

This guide is the result of a team effort at the University of Alberta, and is based on new and existing original research by the authors and others. We offer readers a new perspective on the effects of extreme ups and downs in resource markets, population, and investment, and on the strategies communities have found, as well as their missed opportunities, to manage the resulting erratic development paths. We do not pretend to give a universal strategy for managing long-term community planning and governance, and warn against those who offer simple solutions.

What we do present is *a roadmap for self-analysis and strategy-building*. We share learnings from our own investigations across Western Canada, as well as from a broad range of tested theories and past research, to empower each unique community to find its own answers to the destabilizing dynamics of boom and bust.

This guide is intended for a few different groups, with varying levels of interest and investment in immediate or local action. Our intended audience includes local community groups, community leaders, administrators, politicians, non-governmental organizations, students, and generally interested citizens. Canadian and foreign academics alike might benefit from the research presented in this book. From a narrative perspective, the rich and varied Western Canadian history of boom and bust, featuring a wide variety of responses to wild swings in community prosperity, can inspire community groups and citizens on a global scale. Depending on your own background and interest, several paths through this book are possible.

Readers with very little time and a strong focus on local organizing can read Part VII, in which we summarize key insights and highlight the most important points in bold. Also helpful for that reader are the diagrams and figures.

For leisurely skimming, or a relaxed introduction to the concepts presented in our work, readers can take a look at the photos with captions, and at the wealth of examples and short case studies. These extracts illustrate points made in the main text, often depicting a mechanism at work in boom and bust communities, an effect of boom or bust, or an individual community's response to such ups and downs.

For all readers, we point out that the main components of our guide are the following:

• An introduction and a gradually unfolding overview of boom and bust in general and in the context of Western Canada (Part II and later)

- A guide for self-analysis by communities (Part III)
- A guide for strategy-building based on self-analysis (Parts IV, V and VI)
- A concise summary with key insights for analysis and strategy (Part VII)
- A final reflection on the potential and limitations of locacl control of autonomy (Postscript)

Readers interested in a history of the region and more general overview of community planning might focus their reading on the earlier chapters, jumping forward in the narrative as needed. Similarly, individuals seeking in-depth strategy advice can jump to later sections, and when necessary flip back for further background information.

We have provided a substantive glossary, which can be referenced during or after reading. The glossary also serves as a stand-alone quick-reference resource for individuals with a specific area of interest and deeper background knowledge.

For those readers who want to engage more deeply with the theories and practices that we present, we invite you to explore our recommendations for further reading in the community resources and literature lists, provided for each section.

Regardless of your background or your reason for picking up this guide, we believe that it has something to offer to many individuals and communities, in Canada and abroad. As all communities affected by boom and bust know, it is easy to forget the effects of a previous bust, and it's hard to maintain a long-term perspective on community development. We hope the theories and strategies outlined in this work will help you shift your perspective, and think of your position and your potential in a new light.

Boom and bust: An introduction

This book is about ups and downs in communities, about ways to manage them, to mitigate them, and first of all to survive them. We speak, with the economists, of boom and bust. It is about cycles of growth and shrink, and how to navigate them. We don't assume as authors that local communities have complete control over their destiny, that they can completely steer or ignore the cycles, but we do think there are more options than just assuming cycles are part of nature.

People can do something: local governments, their administrations, business organizations, citizen activists, advisors, academics. Long term perspectives are utterly useful as a frame of reference to understand and respond to up and down but they have to come out of the community itself.

Canada is the country studied in this book, and Canadians were intended as the first audience. Based on field work, theory and comparison, the book deals with the radical swings that affect Western Canadian communities. Western Canada is a place par excellence to study boom

Map of Western Canada and locations of case studies used within this guide.

and bust, their effects and attempts to deal with them. The reasons, also discussed below, are manifold: a short history of intensive resource exploitation, a diversity of resources and community forms, an influx of people and capital in the region, magnifying the swings, a large number of short lived towns, a strong tradition of localism.

Or, in other words, much happened, strong and dramatic stories of development and decline, and they can be studied and reconstructed with relative ease. What happened in Canada does not stay in Canada however, and much of what is so clearly visible here, happens elsewhere too, in places where there is less experience with the radical potential of upward and downward swings and shocks. Perhaps in other places change is less dramatic, buffered for example by a welfare state like in many European countries, however change does not have to be dramatic to have a lasting impact on communities. We talk about how to deal with dramatic ups and downs but many of the lessons learned apply also to less dramatic circumstances. It makes it useful then for other places to take a look at what happened in Canada and at our proposed community strategies. Europeans might be more buffered from the vagaries of resource cycles by welfare states and diversified economies but as we know nothing lasts forever, and building European resilience might require an investigation of places more exposed to the brute forces of globalization and technological innovation. In a world tending to an increase in interconnectedness ripple effects of dramatic change can be felt around the world.

In Western Canada we find many examples of "industry towns" or "railway towns" some went to become ghost towns some still survive. These were places established in the late 1800's and early 1900's sometimes designed in great detail, by mining, timber or railroad companies and where left to their own fait. Later we find a tendency to establish work camps, rather than towns. Because camps are easier to build and break up, and people don't vote there, higher levels of government sometimes quietly push for the establishment of camps, rather than towns. One can speak of a latent policy of camps.

We are not categorically opposed to this model, but believe there are a myriad of local community strategies that can mitigate boom and bust, many of them unknown and unexplored within Canada itself, and certainly outside its boundaries.

We can learn from the effects of more forceful economic cycles, and we can learn from the answers people come up with in a country that is federal, as many European countries. Canadian Provinces and the Federal Government severely restrict what local governments can do.

If the reader has very little time, not enough to look at the Reader's Guide, right after this introduction, then we'd like to share as a main message that weathering the storms of boom and bust requires two things: a self-analysis and a strategy. The community analysis cannot be imported or copied from elsewhere, and the same applies to the strategy. Inspiration and advisors can abound, but there needs to be a grounding in the community itself, the way it understands itself, its past, present and future.

The book does not belong to one discipline. It borrows freely from economics, planning, sociology, anthropology, geography, political sciences, history, public administration and philosophy. This is important because it means we do not locate the knowledge for community analysis, nor for strategy, in one discipline. Which in turn is linked to our view that the answer to local development issues cannot be found in the prescription of one tool, one form of institution or coordination. The product of a self-analysis, the form of a community strategy, does not have to be a plan, a design, a law, a policy, a napkin with scribbles. It does not have to be the proliferation of one form of expertise, or the rising prominence of one expert group in local governance - the engineer, the environmental scientist, the landscape architect.

We do not pretend to have found one common substance to all solutions or strategies; what needs to be done depends on the community, on the findings of its self-analysis. The authors here do not subscribe to any ideology, any overarching normative story about the good community and good governance. We do assume some form of democracy to be good, and some form of redistribution of benefits of resource exploitation.

What represents the unity in the diversity of our perspective is the idea of governance, the taking of collectively binding decisions in a community, including governmental and many other actors, some more visible than others. This guidebook offers communities a structured way to analyze their own governance evolution, showing in a new light the effects of boom and bust, and how they dealt with them. We use a modified version of the conceptual frame developed in evolutionary governance theory (EGT), where actors and institutions, power and knowledge, formal and informal institutions are seen to co-evolve, shaping each other in the course of a structured history of decision-making, called a governance path. EGT itself borrowed from institutional economics, social systems theory and several versions of post- structuralism, but it's ok if readers forget those terms right now.

We offer an accessible and altogether new architecture of concepts, to understand co-evolutions in a community, and the genesis and effects of policies, plans and laws. There is a clear affinity with the planning tradition in the broad sense, planning as a field of coordination of decision-making. Just as caution is warranted with narrow definitions of good governance, we believe it is not fruitful to embrace recipes for correct participation in planning and strategizing. We are thus in the terrain of planning as community building, planning as necessarily participatory in some form, and planning as more than spatial.

Self- analysis has to be a community endeavor, and is not a matter of tea and cookies. Analysis can be painful, even traumatic. Planning if often therapy, and the self-analysis which makes planning so much more fruitful, can be therapeutic indeed. Which means potentially painful, as it can bring up hidden histories, conflicts, exclusions and other dormant truths. Self-analysis and strategy- making might take the center stage in local politics, in community discussions. It might not be relegated to a small expert domain. Boom and bust communities tend to have traumatic histories, and strategizing is likely to entail a form of reinvention, thus the daily activity of governance might be transformed for a while.

The unit we are addressing, the local community, is the product of co- evolution of different levels of governance, and this co- evolution shapes it abilities to reflect and look forward, to understand and to coordinate action. What happens in a municipality is influenced by the county, province, country. The same is true for what can happen, the ability to shape events. With the passing of time, also the understanding of situations and problems is colored by these other levels of government. Stories about what one is as community are always tied to stories about the identity of others, and "the others" for local governments are not only neighbors but mostly the parents or superiors in the state organization. Our proposed method makes it possible for a community to see more clearly the limits of local autonomy, and to find ways to envision expansion of that autonomy, formally or informally.

Later in the book we present recurring types of community strategy. None of them is presented as superior to others, all are seen as potentially useful for communities to selectively borrow from. Strategizing is learning for us. One can learn from one's past, from other places, from theory. Learning is not first of all a matter of copying nuggets of expertknowledge, but discerning where one feels trapped and limited in a path of boom and bust, and that is in many ways a matter of analyzing confining stories, and rewriting them. Knowing is telling stories, and organizing is made possible by the same stories.

Globalization, its flows of resources, people and knowledge makes specialization seem logical for communities, an optimization in one particular direction, which makes them at the same time more vulnerable, less adaptive. In Europe, shared histories of social- democracy in the 20th century, big government, economic diversification, redistribution mechanisms, better supported municipalities, acceptance of higher level government planning when it does go wrong (as in suffering coal and steel regions) create a strong and stable bedrock, helping communities to withstand the cycles of boom and bust. Yet the stories of success have their own limitations, can make Europeans blind for new challenges. European welfare states have been 'downloading' responsibilities for years now, from central to local governments and to individual citizens - usually without extra resources. Talk about citizen participation and strong societies is often a thinly veiled exhortation for citizens to stop whining, start organizing themselves, expect less. Responsibilities are localized, and instability and inequality are looming.

The reasons why local communities become more vulnerable for ups and downs in the economy are similar across the world, as are the effects. Sometimes, the effects are magnified or tempered because of particular configurations of governance, while the institutional tools available differ according to the same diversity in governance systems.

The basic method proposed in this book can work in every part of the world, as long as there is a place and a group of people living there, considering it their place, having some influence on decision-making. The modes of learning, and the pallet of substantive approaches presented here, is not tied to the context of one nation state, or to the western world. They represent ideas and experiences from across the globe.

There are limits of applicability: if there is no rule of law at all, then the proposed mode of strategizing, aiming at different levels of governance and different time horizons, is unlikely to work. Law stabilizes expectations and roles and that makes calculation and strategy possible. Another limitation: if no local self-government is deemed acceptable, if local communities are supposed to stay under the radar for any meaningful decision- making, then what we propose is dangerous and nearly impossible.

In boom and bust communities in Canada, and in more and more over-burdened and vulnerable local governments in Europe, the importance of leadership is becoming clear. One cannot rely on procedures alone, on policies and plans coming from above. If bureaucratic legacies prevent us from thinking and seeing what's going on around us, we need to rethink ourselves together with our relations to those legacies and to

higher levels of government. The Western Canadian experience illustrates that such repositioning and reinventing of the local community can take many shapes and paths, but that local leadership is of the essence. Leadership can come from individuals and groups, it can be cultivated, it can encourage reflexivity in local governance, it can pull together resources and connections, it can assess transformation options. All of those are necessary to write a new community story, adapted to a new world, and to develop organizational capacity, to push forward.

We have had the opportunity to present and discuss the book with some of the communities we worked with and it was generally appreciated, not for its easy solutions or grand promises, but because it made citizens and leaders rethink the path taken, the strategy taken or not taken. In several places, people became more aware that what looked natural or self- evident was the result of a strategy now forgotten, and this forgetting made the strategy and its positive results more vulnerable. In European cases, it is likely that more experts had been involved and more layers of institutionalized strategy and planning, but that does not mean the forgetting can be just as bad, affecting the resilience of the community. In European communities, people tend to be farther away from the community strategy itself, it tends to be more latent, and the argument for more participation should be stronger. On the other hand, the Canadian cases show how informal strategies are vulnerable because of that reason.

The book does not prescribe what should be formal and informal, what should be participatory and where to rely on representation, and as we mentioned, it does not presume that planners are the key people and plans the key tools in community revitalization. The openness in prescriptions, the belief that strategy has to emerge out of self- analysis, the diversity in possible pathways of development, and the variation in forms of expertise and coordination tools which might be helpful are a set of distinct reasons why our perspective is useful in Europe and the rest of the world.

The Canadian experience of community drama through boom and bust, of crazy roller coaster rides with wild hopes and dashed dreams, and the rich landscape of divergent communities doing their best to survive and thrive, offer experiences of testing, torture and glory that show in a nutshell an array of scenario's for European places. Even where similar futures are unlikely, the chains of events, the feedback loops triggered by up and down, by dependence on a limited number of economic sectors, and the observation of attempts to deal with problems as marked by the same conditions that caused the problems, present us with real analogs to European potential evolutions.

There might be few ghost towns dotting the European countryside, but the Canadian ghost towns, even when plowed under, can teach Europeans many things. They speak to a spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship, of risks calculated and reckless, and they show the limitations of dependence on one industry, one company, one form of expertise, on complete bottom up or total top down planning, the problems of localism and of short term thinking, as well as the problems of over investment and irrational exuberance. If we reconstruct the history of the ghost town and its still existing cousins, more lessons are offered to the foreign observer. Adaptive capacity is indeed scarce when all is focused on one activity and the short term, and it is rare when the long term is decided upon without a diverse observation of ever changing internal and external landscapes.

For Europeans, the importance of self reflection and strategy is illustrated in a magnifying glass by the Canadian experiences, as well as the risks of concentration of expertise, power, tools of coordination in the hands of a few actors. Whether these actors are private or public, whether they are located at the most local or a higher scale, matters less. The main condition for adaptation and resilience seems diversity in actors, institutions, and most importantly perspectives and narratives. The pressure to simplify can come from many directions and can take the form of calls for efficiency or reality, but that pressure has to be resisted. What looks useful now can kill alternative understandings, coordination tools, and expertise later, alternatives which might be essential to survive later. As said, optimization for one activity, one future, one story looks optimal only in that story, and when that story fits the situation.

Ghost towns can teach us a lot, and so can the places that came out of the cycles in good shape and good spirits. It would be a pity to relegate the stories about the margins to the margins, and presume only a forestry or oil town in the bitter cold has to deal with an all powerful forestry or oil company and a dictatorial market. These simpler situations, and the community responses are laboratories for the rest of us, where people work harder, take more risk, have bigger dreams and higher hopes than most Europeans. Sometimes they are dashed, sometimes they come true, and both the stories of these communities and the tools they devised to organize and transform themselves represent hard won lessons for the rest of the world.

The authors
Edmonton, December 2016

Part I:

Basic notions for community analysis

1. Governance

What is governance?

We define governance as the making of collectively binding decisions in a community. Governance is broader than government: it includes both governmental and non-governmental actors. "Actors," or stakeholders, can include individuals, as well as both government-based and non-governmental organizations. The government itself will not necessarily be one distinct actor, but rather a collection of often competing actors operating very differently within a given community. Actors are not always easily recognized, and it takes time and effort, even within your own community, to discern who has influence over which decisions. In some northern communities, for instance, a mayor can have less real influence over community governance than a charismatic and deeply rooted snow plough driver.

In order to better understand and manage boom and bust, it is best to think beyond government-based governance; to consider a broader scope of actors with whom to engage.

Often, when people draw attention to governance they link it to a need for participatory decision-making. Direct presence of citizens, citizen groups, and other non-governmental actors in decision-making is often expected to improve the quality of governance. In this light, participation is presented as the essence of democracy, and representation the root of many problems. We would rather say that any democratic community operates through a different combination of participation and representation. In places where government is insensitive to local voices, where the balance between participation and representation has tilted very much to the latter, enhancing the involvement of citizens can indeed be a good and important thing. At the same time, it's useful to keep in mind that participation is always there in some form, just as governance is always there. Government cannot simply work by itself, just as laws do not implement themselves. They don't work if they are not resonant with the values and coordination tools in a community.

Governance is a theatre of actors, and those actors need a script. A good governance "script" has two closely intertwined elements: content and rules of coordination (i.e., how to deal with others). Governance content is the web of narratives and stories about the identity of a place and its actors which collectively define a community's vision of what constitutes good governance and a good community.

The rules of governance are defined through the institutions at work in a community. All communities operate on the basis of a combination of both formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions are designed to guide interaction — in modern western societies these include laws, policies, and plans. Informal institutions are those unwritten rules that work as alternative coordination mechanisms, rooted in local culture and history. Formal laws, policies, and plans emerge out of and can only work in the presence of informality: they always leave gaps, require support, have to be interpreted, modified, enforced. In some cases, informal institutions form rules parallel to those formed by formal institutions. For example, when the mafia creates its own parallel law. More relevant to the western Canadian context, and considerably less dangerous, are informal social networks and governance guidelines emanating from church organizations, Lions Clubs, chambers of commerce, Masonic Lodges, sports clubs, or even well respected landowners or families. In some cases, city council can wield less influence than these networks, or else the two parallel systems exist simultaneously, alternating in relevance and influence depending on circumstances and actors involved. In other cases, informal institutions are mostly visible as coordination mechanisms existing in clear conjunction with the formal ones, forming rules regarding how and when to interpret, select, or even break the formal rules.

Whether formal or informal, rules of governance are deeply interconnected with a community's narrative. Stories shape daily interactions and negotiations, which in turn form rules of interaction, or simple institutions which can become more complex and formal. At the same time, the resulting institutions and rules impact how citizens engage with one another. For example, we may sign a contract because we don't trust a potential buyer of our house because of his questionable family history. However, we also sign a contract because we believe that we both live in a community where the rule of law reigns, because we believe there is a shared future in this place and that the contract has meaning to our buyer and the institutions that enforce it. Over time, our trust in the contract and in shared community values form and empower the informal and formal institutions within our community.

The stories that are woven into institutions have a profound impact on how decisions are made and implemented in a community, making local governance rich and complicated. However, these stories, that is "governance content", are selective and often limited. In many cases, they can be old, or out of date. Even if a story is still pervasive and significant in the community, the actual rules of interaction derived from its narrative may no longer work very well. Perhaps practical conditions

have changed. For example, the courts or the police are no longer well funded, people have less time for volunteer firefighting, or a reprimand by a school teacher has less authority than in the past. The link between the stories, the rules, and the changing community is always tenuous and evolving. Other rules and stories will always pop up. New and old stories, old and new rules coexist. Making things more complex and interesting, one can often see surviving old stories, now codified in law and other formal institutions, as well as emerging new stories, not yet connected to rules and regulation. That creates tensions between stories and rules, and a gradual hollowing out of existing rules — which no longer hold persuasive power within the community.

As leaders and citizens interpret laws, policies, and plans through the lens of their community's evolving narrative, they bring formal institutions closer to practical realities. New stories in and about the community, as well as older, more sinister, parallel stories and their own more informal coordination mechanisms, open up opportunities to manipulate formality to meet specific agendas. For example, local elites usually know how to use the system of governance for their own benefit. They may deploy informal coordination to make sure a new mayor's politics are not too far removed from the perspectives and interests of the chamber of commerce. Indeed, negotiation of both formal and informal institutions is ongoing and ever present.

Governance happens when actors use formal and informal institutions to coordinate their actions and decisions. Talking about stories and rules enables communities to talk about and envision their future; therefore governance makes it possible to coordinate action around shared visions for the future of the community. "Coordination" is of course not a neutral activity: talking about a shared vision is always a matter of negotiating, and once the vision is there, in the form of laws, policies, plans, the process of implementing that vision will give rise to negotiations and tensions between different stories and perspectives.

It is worth reiterating that in rural Canada, as anywhere, governance extends beyond electoral politics. While municipal governments are important and vary in status, capacity, history, and authority depending on the province where they are located, rural governance includes a wide range of actors. In addition to the formal institutions that determine what local governments do (policies, plans, and laws from local, provincial, and federal levels), local governance is also shaped by both formal (elected) and informal (community-based) leadership and activism. Additional formal institutions can be created on the local level, while others, coming from above, can be interpreted. We will come back to the role of leadership in governance later in the guide.

Formal and informal leadership is complemented by a diverse collection of other groups, organizations, and individuals, ranging from professional and recreational groups (like chambers of commerce, 4-H, agricultural associations, and business collectives) and service providers (health, community and individual supports, social services, recreation, etc.) to sports teams, seniors groups, environmental organizations, and neighborhood or community groups. This diversity is both a blessing and a curse — engaged communities and services build community capacity in a variety of ways. At the same time, however, these groups may not only have competing agendas and interests, but may also be competing for resources such as members, money, space, land, and political support.

These are some of the key dynamics of local governance. The blessings and opportunities, as well as the specific challenges facing a community in the real game of local governance, is not always immediately evident, and will require some analysis. Who has a leadership role can be opaque too, and varies from place to place. For example, in one town, the chamber of commerce may be rather passive in local governance, only waking up when a few members ask explicitly to say something in council, while in another town, the chamber may have a strong vision for the community and is an active participant in governance. In a third place, the chamber may take an informal leadership role and vigorously push its vision for the town, finding allies, taking initiative, lobbying higher up, and designating mayors.

Leadership, formal and informal, carries an ambition, an urge to take initiative, to move a community in the direction of a cherished story. That drive can become reality only when there is a deep understanding of the local landscape of formal and informal institutions, of the stories and the coordination tools existing within the community. Of all local actors, leadership has to see most clearly how to use both formal and informal institutions, how to interpret, use, or ignore provincial policies to advance local visions. As we will explore in later chapters, this may even mean a complete redefinition of what a local community can do, transcending limits on local autonomy seemingly imposed by formal institutions.

2. Stories/ narratives

Why talk about stories? Are there not hard facts that can simply tell us how to move forward? Doesn't a bust tell us objectively that we need a new boom?

We would argue that facts become such through the stories we use to construct reality. This is true for the construction of good and bad communities, and good and bad things within a community. What counts as democracy or as good democracy, as a pleasant community, as efficient governance, as inclusive, fair, and just governance will differ over place and time. What is considered social justice in Québec might be seen as socialism in Alberta, or weak and inefficient governance in China. "Good" governance is indeed relative.

We make up our world through stories and ideologies: stories about "good" democracy and the "good" community, stories explaining what's happening to and within our community, stories on the "right" answers to events, the "right" type of knowledge to use in dealing with challenges, the
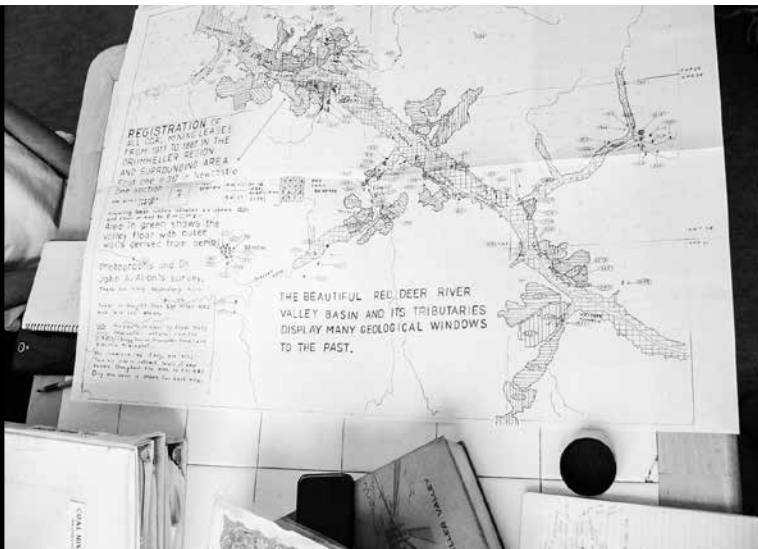
When talking and looking around in Western Canada, the story of the "good community" underlies many other stories on policy and development, existing in several versions that vary across local contexts. Is a good community mostly a growing one, with a growing population, growing average income, or growing number of businesses? Is a good community a place where people can keep their traditions? A place with a tight knit social fabric, or rather a place of personal reinvention and freedom? None of these basic stories is right or wrong, but it's good to know which one we're dealing with in our community, and if competing versions exist, to discuss which version we prefer, identify with, and want to coordinate our strategy around.

"right" procedures. This narrative character of reality and of governance in particular does not remove the need for and existence of regulation, nor does it mean that we can dismiss citizens' expectations. On the contrary, we cannot ignore what bubbles up within a community and just refer to a resident expert; that expert has no claim to correct governance, as there are plenty of other expert and local stories. In the end, it is the entire community's idea what is a good community that counts. If engineers claim that a road should look a certain way, there can be another, less vocal argument that there shouldn't be a road at all. If one faction in council presents a plan as undemocratic, it represents an occasion to consider which version, which story of democracy is embraced and has worked here. It cannot be the end of the argument.

Governance is always a tapestry of stories. The tapestry is never tightly woven or completely fixed, as competition between differing understandings of the world never stops. Stories are embedded within and overlap each other, as motives on a tapestry include smaller motives and give them meaning. One important category of stories are identity stories, those which describe a place's character or type. Some will say "We are a rural town, a city, an outdoor adventure place," while others will identify themselves as "a tourist town, a boomtown, a frontier community, a mining town". Many people we spoke to in our research of rural communities were self-assured in confirming or denying that they lived in a "boom and bust town". Using the words boom and bust placed their community in a particular story, shed a bleak light on their path; meanwhile, if people identified with more positive stories about their town, they didn't agree with the label of boom and bust.

How residents and stakeholders interpret the place they live has indeed shaped the way they have perceived the situations they described and the stories they told. The idea of "community" is already a foundational perception of a place, which in turn informs other stories. As we will see, not all places consider themselves a distinct community. Where there is no strong concept of community, fewer stories about this or that sort of community will develop and be compelling enough to local actors to play out in governance.

Stories give meaning and perspective to experiences, relationships, situations, properties, elements, and ideas, rendering aspects of reality into facts. A table, for example, is a piece of wood or metal with four other pieces to lift it off the ground. People seem gather around it, sitting on other combinations of wood and metal, including a flat slab to support their behind. This collection of physical properties and uses makes sense in a culture where people know tables and chairs and see their combination as a social space that can be used as a place for dining or sharing a comforting cup of coffee.

Stories or narratives do more than delineating and connecting elements. They create spatial, conceptual, and temporal order, and, importantly, moral and emotional order. Stories provide structure and create meaning by distinguishing episodes, climaxes, wanderings, conflicts and solutions, good and evil characters. Stories attribute value to things, people, places, and facts, and they attribute roles. Just as citizens and other actors create institutions and the stories that govern them through their interactions and negotiations, stories in turn imbue "actors" with roles, power, and meaning. Stories, therefore, create actors, as actors make up stories. Actors emerge from a history of practical organization in a community and a history of dominant and persuasive stories. If we see ourselves as a mining community, then it makes sense for the mine director to tell the mayor what to do. If we see ourselves as a religious place, then church organizations and Christian parties can play a role in governance, and a council dominated by those parties could push businesses gently to contribute to public projects imbued with Christian values.

If we see the past as glorious, better than the present, then the local museum will have representatives and advocates in city council. Rural stories create images and actors understood as typically rural, as associated with certain types of place, people, or histories. Urban stories can be understood along the same lines. Some stories are neither urban nor rural, and the same holds true for the development strategies they shape.

Understanding governance and possible ways forward therefore relies on understanding stories, as they have to be recognized, challenged, and addressed. Stories and the broader narratives they form are always worth a closer look, as they can shape a community's reality, turning events into dramatic crises, outsiders into crooks, and expertise into either sacred knowledge or worthless nonsense. Stories make communities turn very quickly to certain definitions of problems, certain understandings of causes, solutions, and useful tools. For example, a development plan informed by socialist ideology is unlikely to be perceived as useful in a town governed by beliefs and histories that are not socialist.

As shared narratives become enshrined in local institutions, some stories become more entrenched than others in governance. Each local, provincial, and federal democratic constitution already provides a framing story for local stories, while a history of local governance renders other foundational stories so normal, so seemingly self-evident, that they are no longer seen as stories, but rather as accepted fact. This makes them harder to change.

In an area of BC that sees itself as a forestry area, economic development is likely seen as more and better forestry. If regional government organizations hire experts to work on regional economic development, these experts will likely be forestry engineers, and general economic development studies and policies are likely to be framed in terms of forestry revitalization. Increased participation in governance will be translated as more participatory forestry.

3. Identity, ideology, metaphor

For people, identities are stories. There are always different stories in circulation about identity, about individuals and communities. Identities are value-laden stories of what one thinks one is. Wish and reality, fear and desire, are always mixed, and shared identity stories can bring perceptions of ourselves and our communities closer to reality.

Strongly rooted identity stories tend to steer governance in certain directions, making it difficult to redirect. Politics becomes identity politics and arguments are harder to make when the other actors identify with one narrowly defined version of their past, present, or future reality. If "we are a mining town" is the shared identity story, the future will look like that of a mining town, in which less mining is then a problem and more mining the solution. If there are several identities at stake, conflicts in governance tend to be more bitter, as issues are tied not so much to opinions or development paths which can be analyzed and possibly changed, but to ideas of who and what an actor "really" is. Arguments become conflicts, and rather than governance as learning, we get governance as conflict management and resolution.

Identity stories make governance more rigid, less adaptive. However, on the positive side, these stories can also be sources of resilience. They can help communities bounce back by reconnecting with a shared past. A story about the past can restore a social cohesion previously stronger and now under threat, thereby having the potential to revive a community in social

and economic terms. All hinges on context, as we shall see. Old social identities can be reinforced and this can generate the strength and creativity to respond to new challenges, and to engage with old yet productive stories on who we are and what we can do. Elsewhere, identity stories become productive in new situations by being reinvented. "We were always like this" can sometimes represent a real continuity between past and present, and sometimes it is a new story on old roots. For example, winemaking as an industry is relatively young in the Okanagan Valley, but residents can emphasize continuity by telling stories about the German monks growing a few grapes there in the 19th century, by highlighting the broader fruit-growing tradition of the region, or even by presenting the Okanagan landscape as fundamentally a large vineyard, always there, just waiting to be developed. Both actual and imagined continuity in identity stories can be productive and generate adaptive capacity.

Every place has a complex identity. "Identity" on its own is neither good nor bad, it is simply present. However, some stories of identity have more positive effects, some more negative. Positively, an identity can engender creativity, adaptation, social cohesion, and mutual support. Negatively, an identity can keep a place stagnant and stuck in the past, or aspiring for an impossible future. It can create rigidity, conflict, and unrealistic expectations. If we want to understand better what identities can do in the governance of boom and bust, how their impact depends on circumstances and actors involved, we need to make our own story a bit richer, we need to introduce a few more concepts.

■ *In southwestern Alberta, the small towns that make up the municipality of Crowsnest Pass were an important part of Canada's coal producing industry at the beginning of the 1900s. Since then, mining activities have come and gone in the region. The last mine closed its operations more than 30 years ago and communities have struggled with unemployment and the economic slowdown. Nonetheless, coal mining remains a deeply ingrained identity in the people. In the past, coal mining made these towns prosperous. Nowadays, some people work in mines in BC, while others live off their coal mining history and heritage through tourism activities, and many see future opportunities in the prospect of attracting mining companies from Australia. In the Crowsnest Pass, the past, present, and future is linked to coal mining. ●* ■

Identity stories are not the only narratives that influence governance. As we mentioned earlier, governance is often shaped by layered and competing stories. Two concepts can be useful to illustrate how multiple stories may interact in the realm of community governance: *ideology* and *metaphor*. Ideologies are among the broadest and most embedded narratives in

governance, and are often tied to conflict. Metaphors are important structuring elements of ideologies and of all other stories, forming links between layers of stories and between different perceptions of reality.

An ideology is a story that talks about the "good life", the "good community", and the "good way" to improve a community. Sometimes, ideologies can draw attention to issues on the local scale of community governance, but other ideologies are not interested in small scale changes, and have strong recommendations on how to reorder the world to achieve the good life — live in the woods with your family, or bring about international communism. Ideologies can incorporate ideas about the roles of government, individuals, experts, community organizations, and business in solving shared problems and achieving positive change. Some even have direct opinions on boom and bust cycles — communism, for example, sees capitalism as an escalating series of boom and bust leading to its ultimate implosion. Many ideologies do not directly address boom and bust dynamics, but nevertheless can provide a lens through which citizens can understand and solve challenges on the local level. Neo-liberalism, for example, only takes boom and bust seriously when it affects international markets, and even then tends to see a pattern of creative destruction, of old economies having to disappear before more efficient, rational, and innovative ones emerge from the ashes. At the local level, it can inspire a belief that entrepreneurship, more competition and efficiency in public and private organizations, and removal of local rules and restrictions is the way forward. Or else the belief that we better abandon ship and look for opportunities elsewhere. A religiously-tinted communitarianism can inspire community members to turn inwards when experiencing hard times, to help each other survive and endure suffering, perhaps even to develop strongly cohesive local strategies, while not necessarily looking beyond to deeper causes and larger scales. Often, one is not even aware that a certain ideology is dominant in local governance, or that a set of problems observed has everything to do with a waning ideology, a big story becoming less persuasive.

Many communities may find it convenient to blame a single dominant ideology for problems of boom and bust; the reality, however, is usually much more complex. Western Canada is a vast, diverse region, where communities vary considerably in size, age, economy, politics, culture, and ideology. In these diverse communities and their governance systems, globally present and widely familiar ideologies may have a local presence in one town, while in a neighbouring town, a locally grown ideology pervades community life. Ideologies can contribute to boom and bust, and they contribute to their solution. Our world is always ideological, whether we are aware of it or not. By granting individuals and communities a unique way of looking at the world, ideologies can create opportunities for

new forms of collective action to resolve a precarious boom/bust situation. On the other hand, they only offer a limited frame of reference for the world and the good community, potentially making us blind to other perspectives, which can lead to a boom or a bust, or a long history of them. For example, social democratic ideology in action can reduce poverty and create work, yet in its extreme form it can take away motivation to work and impede business creation. By recognizing ideology as a limited tool for looking at and communicating about our communities, it can be used to make positive changes. However, lack of reflection on ideology, and uncontrolled striving for purity in ideology can be more harmful than ideology itself.

Ideologies:
- *change,*
- *they spread,*
- *hybridize,*
- *produce offspring,*
- *compete in governance and in the community at large,*
- *they can erase older and alternative stories, and*
- *they can lose their persuasive character.*

British Columbia has historically tended to be more "left-leaning" than Alberta, which is arguably one of Canada's most conservative provinces. Yet, a great deal of local particularities and disparities exist within the provinces. An Albertan town, at a given point, may be more social democratic than a BC counterpart. A conservative party in name can be progressive in practice, and the same conservative party can in fact represent three different ideologies at the same time across different places and situations, and many more over time.

In the following chapters, we emphasize that each particular set of circumstances requires a tailored approach based on self-analysis — if possible, one free from ideological constraints. Ideology never goes away, but reflection on ideology can make us better understand its constraints and power in a given circumstance.

● The Social Credit Party, founded in Alberta at the start of the 20th century, rose to prominence as a solution to the social and financial troubles brought on by the widespread economic depression of the early 1930s. Social credit itself is a social democratic tool of government, a combination of subsidizing farmers and strong public reinvestment of private profits. However, the Alberta party under that name took a radically different course.

The party defined the role of government, businesses, and communities in the development and implementation of policies guided by its right wing, populist, conservative political ideals and Christian values. The party's name later changed to Progressive Conservative, reflecting its old social democratic roots, as well as its internal ideological diversity. ●

Metaphors are comparisons that don't use "as" or "like". For example: *A city is a ship. A crisis is a storm.* Metaphors can generate other metaphors: if a city is a ship, the mayor is the captain, the sailors have to follow orders, a storm is unexpected, a reactive attitude towards the vicissitudes of seafaring is rational. Strategizing within the context of this metaphor is predicting and avoiding disaster to guide the ship through a storm. Metaphors can allow us to see things in a new light, and build connections between different domains of reality. They can reinforce other metaphors, underpin and strengthen ideologies, and become deeply embedded in identity narratives. A shared metaphor can link multiple narratives, tightening a community's connection and commitment to an ideology embedded within the metaphor. If the government is a crook for a libertarian community, then this crook will probably show up in smaller community stories. If the government is a crook, then an individual opposing the government is a hero.

When stories spread, so too do the metaphors embedded within them, reviving old narratives or producing new narratives within new contexts. If a manager and metaphorical hero bravely opposed the government in his past to support local business owners, that "manager-hero" will be seen as a driver of success in a new community that shares a libertarian worldview. In some situations, a community "sports-hero", as a metaphorical figure, can gain local power because of an existing community adoration of heroic athletes, perhaps inspired by a pre-existing or previous similar figure in that community's past. Once accepted in the new place, the figure of the manager-hero or sports-hero can become the core of new stories, and could be the starting point for a local version of libertarianism or neo-liberalism, where she and her company or team play a key role in the story of local development. In another light, if a manager and metaphorical crook stole from poor workers for personal gain in one town, that "manager-crook" has the potential to be seen as a hero within a different ideological environment and set of local narratives.

Governing and managing boom and bust in your own community is easier when you have a clear understanding of how narratives, ideology, and metaphor function and interact. Metaphors can be particularly powerful tools for boom/bust communities that feel trapped, and are seeking new pathways forward. By critically examining powerful metaphors and creatively exploring possible new ones, they can open up new perspectives and new possibilities for the future.

4. Paths and dependencies

Each community is different, and one way to articulate that difference is through governance paths. A path is something dependent, subject to chance and varying circumstances and leading to certain places and not others. It is a route to future possibilities created through the past actions of governance stakeholders. Both the thing moving along the path, the local community, and the surrounding landscape determine what is possible. The concept of a governance path draws attention to the importance of history, context, and the rigidity of collective decision-making when planning a community's future. Governance paths more precisely defined are a series of governance configurations evolving over time. Each step in the evolution, each configuration of governance, reveals at least a slight difference in the actors engaged, in the forms of knowledge and narratives that inform it, and in the relationship between formal and informal institutions involved.

In order to understand the potential options available to a community for dealing with the effects of boom and bust cycles in a given time, it is useful to reconstruct the governance path, to consider past ups and downs, changing patterns of coordination, formal and informal institutions, and inclusion and exclusion of certain actors and forms of knowledge.

Understanding who was involved in which cycles, which tools were used and not used, which plans, policies, and laws worked and how; all of these mapping exercises can help identify what tools and strategies can work here and now. If laws were never obeyed in a community, then a new law will not fix the problem — unless other aspects of governance are changed, some form of the status quo "rule of law" is restored. If comprehensive planning has never been used, then solving a coordination problem by means of planning will be difficult. The influence of past governance paths can also apply to specific types of actors. For example, if landscape architecture is strongly associated with the gardeners of the hated old elite, or a community is suspicious of biologists because of past associations with higher levels of government, then there will likely be strong resistance to these groups taking a leadership role in a new governance strategy.

Looking at the rigidity in the governance path means examining existing relationships and dependencies. We distinguish three types of dependencies: path dependence, interdependence, and goal dependence.
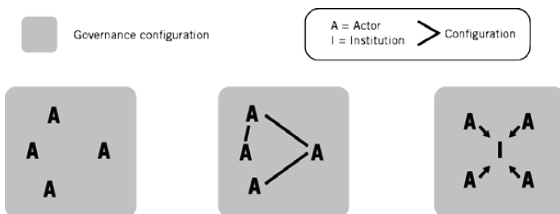
Figure 1. Governance configurations consist firstly of actors, which can be individuals, organizations or groups (A). Not all actors relate to each other and cooperate in the same manner. They coordinate decision-making by means of institutions (I), which can be policies, plans or laws.
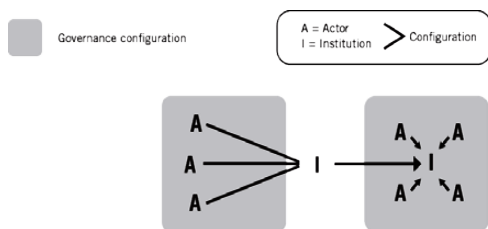
Figure 2. Actors in a governance configuration also produce institutions, which can then play a role in the coordination of decision-making later, in the next steps of governance evolution.
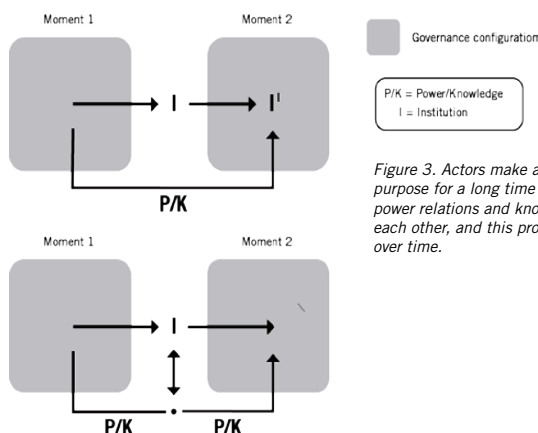
Figure 3. Actors make and use institutions, which can serve their purpose for a long time in governance evolution. Yet, meanwhile, power relations and knowledge selections in governance change each other, and this process alters the institution and its working over time.
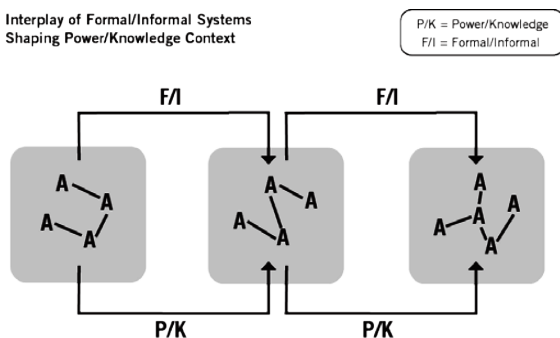
Figure 4. Besides power/knowledge, there is another twin concept influencing governance evolution: formal/ informal institutions. Informal and formal institutions always exist in parallel, and continuously shape each other. The interplay between formal and informal rules is a driver of governance evolution; what can really happen, which policies and plans can be made and implemented, hinges on that interplay.

In Prince George, BC, there is still a substantial timber industry. There are three operating lumber mills, three pulp mills, and a number of small pellet plants. Of course there have been ups and downs, most recently exacerbated by the mountain pine beetle. We were interested to learn in our interviews that the city had diversified its resource and service focus to include potential liquid natural gas mining work, but remained relatively unconcerned about the sustainability of these resource activities. The relationship between the resource firms and the community was changing too, to one that was less paternalistic and less committed, and which demanded municipal improvements, instead of offering contributions or building the community, as in the past. There was a strong perception of Prince George as an innovative, attractive, and competitive city, but it was less clear how place-based these discourses were: it was not clear whether these stories were dependent on the specific circumstances of Prince George, or rather the product of consultants borrowing from generic innovation stories floating around globally. It was hard to discern whether the innovation story had taken root, was locally adapted, and had the ability to coordinate real change. At the same time, the innovation story veiled the community's continued dependency on a resource economy which is not questioned, nor complemented with really different activities.

Path dependencies are not simple, and the past does not necessarily determine the future. Armed with a strong understanding of the past and how to work within existing dependencies, internal and external forces can redefine existing relationships and open up new possibilities for the future.

• On Vancouver Island, Port Hardy, BC has a long history of lumber as an economic driver. While the importance of this industry, as measured by direct employment, is nowhere near its peak, lumber remains an important identity for the community. The development of fish farms is a more recent source of employment for many residents, yet community identity remains unchanged.

In Chemainus, another community on Vancouver Island, the history of logging remains an important part of the town, but not through local employment and taxation. With a focus on arts and theatre, local history is on vivid display through murals, public art installations, and museums. Chemainus is no longer economically dependent on forestry, but its current survival is firmly tied to the past through tourism, attracting urbanites based on its identity as a resource town and as a manageable access point to the island wilderness. ●━━━━━━━━━━

Path dependencies are legacies from the past which limit and enable decision-making now: certain actors, institutions, and stories which had an influence can still linger on, or they have left such bad memories that anything resembling them is now excluded.

Path dependencies, as these examples show, can have very different natures: one actor can stay in power forever, or else one set of actors, one ideology, one industry, or one place, say a big mill or a dam, can be strongly tied to a town's identity and fate. A negative path dependence can stem from an aversion to an old story, plan, or company. Striving to avoid or do the opposite of the past is still being bound by that past.

Path dependency
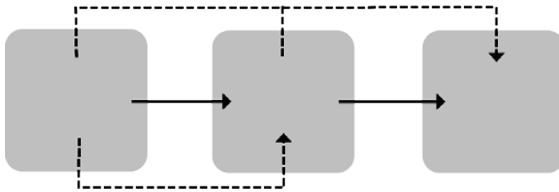
Figure 5. Path dependencies are legacies of the past affecting governance in the present. Looking forward, we can say that some things happening right now in governance engender short-term effects, while others will shape the path for a long term.

When analyzing boom/bust communities, *material path dependencies* deserve special attention. The material world, the physical landscape and the things in it, represents a strong constraint and motivation for governance to move in a certain direction. Material path dependencies can encompass big industrial objects or buildings, significant capital investments, or physically imposing structures looming large over a community despite being out of commission. Material path dependencies can also include infrastructure networks (e.g., roads and sewer systems) constructed in unbalanced patterns during periods of boom and bust, as well as pollution of the natural environment (i.e., from unrestrained mining and quick abandonment of extraction and processing sites). Materiality in a broader sense can include the climate, which in western Canada often means a very cold climate, as it is affected by patterns of land and resource extraction and processing and associated settlement and infrastructure development, leaving an area hard to redevelop and

transition to a different economic base after a bust. Finally, the physical nature of the resource itself leaves a material legacy through subtle influence over the development of other physical elements and structures of a community — the nature of the important resource in town pushes the physical and cultural development of the town in a certain direction.

Material dependencies can vary in influence and permanence. If a community is located on a major highway system linking key cities, this element of the built environment provides opportunities for the future that differ from remote communities, where infrastructure ends. Logging roads can be used for infrastructure later, yet water pollution from mining can remain in the ecosystem for decades and can preclude a number of development strategies. Amenities from a previous resource boom can be a drag on local finances, or an asset and a starting point for reinvention. For example, historical rail lines are hard to remove, but can give space to build bike trails. Dumps, sites with abandoned equipment and soil pollution will shape development negatively, by avoidance, and thus structure peri-urban usage. Material paths, as all path dependencies, thus never generate only one possible next step. However, they do restrict and shape what is likely to happen and impact which plans can likely work.
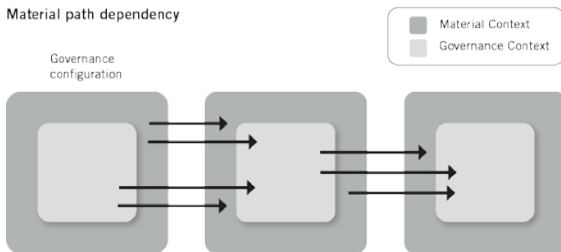
Figure 6. The material or physical context of a governance configuration (in the diagram the layer around it) is important anywhere, but especially in boom/bust communities. Material path dependencies stem from a complex interplay between material context and governance configuration. What happens in the physical environment can have effects on the governance configuration, and/or on the physical environment, and the other way around, what happens in governance does not stay in governance. Pollution eg can reduce governance options for a long time.

Interdependencies represent another potential source of rigidity in the governance path. What is possible in governance at one point in time hinges on the relationship(s) between the actors involved. Relationships with certain actors or groups of actors may be necessary to avoid obstruction, or they might facilitate access to resources, expertise, or labour. Similarly, actors and institutions can become interdependent when they develop and evolve alongside one another. Lawyers and laws, for example, are part of the same process of institutional innovation. Money and bankers co-evolve. Closer to our topic of discussion: without a planner, formal planning is harder; further, without a local history of planning with plans or a local coalition coalescing around it, it is also hard. When strategizing for community development, it is quite useful to understand such interdependence between actor and institution.

● Interdependencies are often reflected in the need for regional governance structures, a theme that is discussed in some detail later in this book. Awareness of interdependence between local communities can lead to cooperation, which then intensifies interdependence. This type of interdependence through regional cooperation is represented by the development of wind energy in southwestern Alberta. One of the first steps in this economic transition was a series of meeting of mayors within the southwest. These initial meetings precipitated a new level of collaboration called the Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance. This alliance between communities promoted tourism development and advocated with one voice to higher levels of government to establish a regional economic focus on wind energy development. In addition, ocal leaders took steps to initiate a more comprehensive community re-visioning plan. As a first step to developing the industry, local officials met with the provincial government to share their idea of a local wind power industry and to ask for support and guidance in initiating its development. Local leaders noted that the initial response was not positive from the provincial government regarding their plans but provincial support began to appear as the regional alliance continued their collective efforts in securing a new economic future for the region. ●

Image: Kristof Van Assche & Monica Gruezmacher.
Prince Rupert, BC

We find a unique example in Kitimat, BC, which was created and entirely planned as an industry town in the mid 1900s. Because its purpose was so tightly linked to the aluminum smelter, it is no surprise the council and local government members were all part of the industry, creating a strong interdependence between government and the aluminum industry in governance. Financing of cultural and recreational activities was almost exclusively dependent on the industry's support.

Goal dependencies are the effects of visions for the future in current governance. Plans, policies, and laws can represent a vision or a partial vision for the desirable future of the community. Plans rarely play out exactly as intended, but that does not mean there are no effects whatsoever. The effect of and reactions to planning and implementation are much more diverse than compliance or non-compliance. People can despise a plan and be inspired to act in direct opposition to the desired course of action — in fact, they can disagree so strongly that no similar plan will stand a chance in the future. On the other hand, a given policy can be eagerly desired and longed for, but people can interpret it completely differently from the original decision-makers' intent. Goal dependencies can change over time as well. Landscapers and developers can distort a design accepted by the community, but the people might love the result so much that it becomes recognized heritage very quickly.
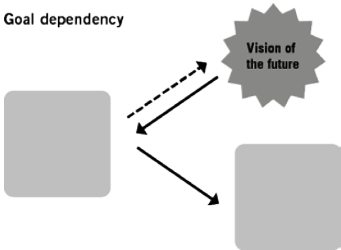
Goal dependency

Figure 7. Goal dependencies are visions for the future (the little cloud) affecting governance right now; actors come up with a future strategy, and this influences the coordination of decisions in the present, the next step in governance evolution.

Path creation through dependencies
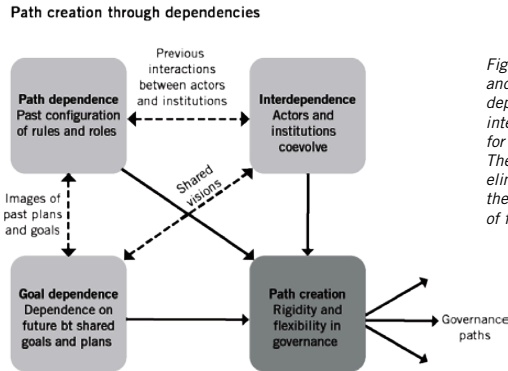
Figure 8. Path dependence, interdependence and goal dependence interact: how actors depend on each other results from past interactions, and it shapes the way visions for the future can be made and implemented. The three dependencies together do not eliminate space for change. Understanding the 3 dependencies can clarify the degrees of freedom in path creation.

In Prince Rupert, BC, we find key linkages and material interdependencies between the port, transportation infrastructure, and local industries. Logging took place inland where trees were located, while the pulp mill was in Prince Rupert because of proximity to the port. Wood chips were therefore shipped to the Rupert Pulp Plant from inland towns Terrace and Smithers via rail. As logging slowed and the pulp mill disappeared, local canneries closed and fishing all but disappeared save for tourism. However, a new container port and plans for new liquid natural gas (LNG) projects keep old networks alive. In a combination of path dependence and interdependence, key players working in one industry have a history of involvement in the others. Politicians became LNG lobbyists, mill workers moved to the container port, fishermen turned into longshoremen or into tourist guides. These transitions have been a matter of survival, but it is more than that: the residents are aware of existing interdependencies between groups, connected as they are by mutual dependence on the railway and ports, and are thereby more aware of potential options for personal and community adaptation as industries evolve and circumstances change.

Kitimat, BC serves here again as good example. As we mentioned, the town was one of a few industry towns entirely planned from its beginning, a relative rarity amongst boom and bust communities. Clarence Stein, renowned American planner, was its author. Neighbourhoods, parks, a town core with services and public spaces, roads, and other types of infrastructure all had a place in its master plan. The town, however, is not a direct likeness of its master plan. The main highway accessing the town was built in a different location, new neighborhoods are being built on lots twice the original planned size. Circumstances changed and planners and community leaders had a different idea of what they would like to have as a community. Goal dependencies were stronger in Kitimat than elsewhere, associated with a comprehensive town plan, but have not amounted to a full implementation.

CASE STORY: THE BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF COLLABORATIVE SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

Partnership-based and collaborative approaches, particularly for sustainable community development, are in many ways a common-sense solution to issues of limited capacity, information, and communication in small communities. With the recent introduction of initiatives such as integrated community sustainability planning and expansion of sustainable development from three to four, or even five, pillars (social, ecological, economic, cultural, and governmental/institutional), some problems with sustainability planning have become increasingly obvious. In numerous policy domains (such as public health, environmental policy, natural resource management, and even economics), it became quite clear that the bureaucratic impetus toward compartmentalization, specialization, and targeted policy instruments and interventions has several shortcomings. Goal dependencies of existing institutions are insufficient and partly contradictory: the different specialized actors compete, their perspectives are at odds, and their combined activities lead to policies with insufficient impact. In response to this newly identified need for sustainability planning, many actors in local governance and many voices in Canadian academia have argued that a new comprehensive tool would have to be developed. What would it have to be? It should be a sort of visioning tool at the level of the collaborating group, for which goal dependencies have to be maximized. At the same time, this tool has to be buffered from existing lower and higher level policies which could again undermine the sustainability effort. Many believed that some new form of community or governmental collaboration would generate the desired tool. Meanwhile, the complexities of collaboration itself are often not acknowledged.

Creating and utilizing collaborative methods such as partnerships, clusters, teams, and even crowd-sourcing have been put forward as ways of generating "value add" to the research, participatory action, planning, policy, and governance activities taking place in small, rural, and remote communities. Such collaborative initiatives within and across municipalities, and sometimes linking different levels and scales of governance, are commonly seen as a means of facilitating broader access to resources, as well as of creating efficiencies and avoiding redundancies, fostering or contributing to community-based autonomy and responsibility, and improving the problem-solving capacity of the partners or communities involved. In other words, the expectations for collaboration are high, and the methods at hand and their outputs are very diverse, sometimes leading to a new institution or a new plan for

sustainability, sometimes resulting in more modest levels of cooperation across stakeholder groups. While the concept of collaborative governance planning offers many opportunities for sustainable development and resource sharing, and there are multiple examples of highly successful collaborations, it is also important to situate these strategies within a more critical perspective.

The three C's (capacity building, collaboration, and competition) are increasingly the hallmarks of effective community development and sustainability planning in Western Canada, popping up in many initiatives, in discourse and in practice, and have proven to find the least resistance (compared to other methods) in an environment of many players dependent on provincial assistance or approval. From both a developmental and research standpoint, there is value to examining *how* exactly they affect rural governance. In many cases, the goals of experiments in collaborative development are often seen as extremely desirable, but actual results are not always well investigated. The dream is too quickly taken for reality.

The combination of capacity building, collaboration, and competition is often taken as implicitly positive and efficient. Although not without many positive elements, the dynamics of the three C's, and in particular the inclusion of collaboration, should also be understood as consistent with the imperatives of the neo-liberal state, which dictate that competition drives innovation and growth, and capacity building and collaboration can better prepare people and places for competition. There is a real possibility that collaborative strategies can foster economic growth and prosperity, while mitigating issues of unequal or unfair distribution of goods, services, or prosperity that are often used as a critique of neo-liberalism. As such, proponents of the ideology of neo-liberalism, strong in Western Canada and especially in Alberta, have embraced the concept of collaborative local strategy, making it look effortlessly compatible with capacity building and competition as principles for sustainable community development. However, as with any ideology, it renders us blind to other key aspects of the issues: it isn't clear exactly how collaboration and competition go together and interact, whether they create a sustainable path, and whether there is some form of social justice involved (distribution issue). Further, does a collaborative approach mean the province is endowing local governments with more capacity and power to implement regional governance and address sustainability issues? Or is the province simply endowing more responsibility? All these issues remain invisible within this neo-liberal perspective of collaboration.

Based on these unanswered questions, we can argue that the three C's represent a devolutionary or de-centralizing method and model of governance that can be highly ideological and elusive, and which, rather than addressing the core rural governance issues, focuses upon mitigating symptoms. In doing so, collaborative strategies are often implicitly part of a larger practice of neo-liberal governmentality where the state — provincial and federal governments — operates and governs at a distance, not pursuing many public goods, not delivering many services, and not doing much in terms of comprehensive development strategies, leaving a lot of space for private enterprise and individual responsibility. Yet at the same time, the state strictly holds the reins, keeping local communities governable and in line with a central ideology; keeping them small, rather powerless, divided, and unable to truly collaborate and reinvent rural governance towards sustainability. In the majority of cases, in which collaboration is a tool for neo-liberal prominence, goal dependencies of collaborative institutions are bound to remain weak, and truly regional governance is unlikely to emerge, unlikely to develop more powerful institutions towards sustainability. Collaboration can be harnessed and used thoughtfully towards sustainability, if disconnected from ideologies which reduce it to their own ends. When free from ideological constraints and agendas, new forms of collaboration can emerge as real problem solving tools, and lead to the reinvention of communities in their own terms.

5. Power/ knowledge

Coming back to our tour of governance concepts, which will help us analyze and mitigate boom and bust in our own communities, we encounter the inevitable question of power. Governance is about collectively binding decisions, formal and informal, and always includes a variety of actors representing a variety of interests and perspectives. Getting anything done requires power, and governance decisions will always meet with resistance from some actors who think they didn't get their fair share. Successful governance is about balancing interests. The "binding" in collectively binding decision-making is not always appreciated, and before the institutions which come about in governance are implemented, their formation is also a game of collaborating and competing power. In our treatment of power, we choose not to present it in isolation, but to discuss it alongside knowledge, as one element with two components. Interests and perspectives cannot be separated, and power and knowledge shape one another.

This symbiotic relationship may sounds simple, but it isn't. Knowledge can improve an actor's ability to strategize and negotiate, but at a more fundamental level, knowing something in a certain way also makes you act in a certain way. Conversely, making people see in a certain way gives you the power to make them act the way you want. Virtually everything in the world is filtered through stories, ideologies, identity narratives, and metaphors before it is understood. This extends to our understanding of our community and even of ourselves. If we see our self first of all as a miner living in a mining village, we can use that story to write our own identity, but we can also say that this story holds power over us because it influences our understanding of our identity and our past, and impacts how we will make decisions about our future. A local politician can tap into and sell the collective identity of a mining village to further her own political interests, positioning herself in local governance as a strong proponent of the mining interest with personal ties to the industry, maximizing her influence over that image and story.

In the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, we talked to people, to politicians,wearing caps from mines long since closed. The image of a mining town, supported by a mining past locally and a mining present farther west, limits the municipality's ability to envision alternative futures. Meanwhile, potential assets are preserved by the efforts of a very small group of heritage enthusiasts, but neither the enthusiasts nor the rest is much engaged in an objective evaluation of the possibilities to build on these assets, connect them, and create a new environment attractive for both tourists and residents. Daily concerns are too pressing and interfere with longer-term strategic development planning.

Power is not necessarily a negative attribute: it is always there and is necessary to keep communities functioning. It is the fuel of collective life, and it can be used and abused. Pretending it is something negative does not help to improve actual power relations, and pretending not to see it is to ignore is a powerful determinant of sustainable planning and governance. Power and knowledge are always entangled and it is therefore worthwhile to reflect on the specific entwining of power and knowledge in the governance path of your own community. This will not necessarily be a search for hidden agendas and abusive or clientele-type relationships (networks of client/patron relations). Power does not always corrupt.

That said, power corruption does happen, and deserves investigation. However, it is just as important to think about the types of knowledge that are present in a governance system, and how they are shaping and being shaped by the positions and roles of actors. "Knowledge" has to be understood broadly here, including expert knowledge (planning,

engineering, policy development, etc.), as well as local knowledge on particular topics, and, crucially, the different types of narratives, identity stories, ideologies, and metaphors at work in a community. The stories in a broader sense inform and lay the foundations for more specialized forms of knowledge, and therefore have to be considered knowledge as well.

When a specific form of knowledge or expertise, say engineering, is entrenched in a community, it can frame the thinking and coordinate the actions of other players, and as such becomes hard to contest and replace. Even if other actors do not agree, they find it hard to contest the prominence of the engineering perspective, because it became codified in a set of informal institutions and processes which prioritize engineering expertise in various policy domains, and give engineers a better position in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

Once a certain narrative on good governance has taken root, that form of knowledge can guide the selection of other forms of knowledge, decide which experts are involved in future decisions, and dictate how they are expected to interact. If social justice is a key concept in the dominant narrative, then sociologists and lawyers might find themselves together in an uneasy relation of joint influence on public policy. If individual freedom is a more central concept in the prevailing story of the good community, a different type of lawyer, arguing against government and maximizing property rights, might gain influence, alongside technical experts brought on board mainly for targeted service delivery.

■● Edmonton, Alberta is not a single resource-based town, but rather a big city highly influenced by boom and bust cycles. In Edmonton, engineering perspectives became dominant early on, as early governance actors interpreted development as infrastructure development and planning as allowing private developers to add new pieces to the urban fabric. Through cycles of boom and bust, planners have come and gone, but the engineers stayed and reinforced their position within the governance structure, and after a while, came to know the planning system better than anyone, becoming the administrative core around which other aspects of planning and development are coordinated. Planners could develop and propose a plan, but it would have little chance of implementation without the approval of road or other engineers. Working within this system, planners have had to find niches and extended them by means of informal coordination, touching base with other departments early on in a project to gain support, to delineate the space to maneuver within the existing system. ●■

Understanding *evolving* power/knowledge relations helps us understand how current governance works, why certain forms of knowledge, narratives, and ideologies are included; it also helps to see how things can be changed. For example, if it becomes clear that a certain expertise could be helpful for the community, but the experts and expertise currently in power have been overwhelmingly dominant for a long time, then it might be better to avoid a full confrontation. A better approach might entail trying to expand the thinking of the experts currently around the table — say engineers, lawyers, and economists — and to strategize with other actors on how to manage the experts. If it turns out that a useful form of expertise has recently been minimized — say ecology, hydrology, social work, or environmental engineering — for example, an expert has been fired or a policy including that expertise has been shelved, and the reasons for this marginalization of expertise are no longer present, then the picture is different, and one could start considering options to reintroduce that sort of knowledge.

Changing things by means of new knowledge is never simply explaining, lecturing, or communicating and disseminating. Inserting new knowledge of any sort into a governance system, in any community, will affect power relations and will provoke resistance. Approaches to community development and governance which focus on better communicating what the citizens, the industry, or the government wants, miss the point. Indeed, more transparent and abundant communication might be desirable, but can only lead to fair outcomes if communication becomes open discussion, if power/knowledge is made visible in the discussion, if the governance system allows this new discussion to affect decisions, and if the conflicts generated by the open discussion are allowed to play out.

In the oil-driven community of Fort McMurray, Alberta, it takes a lot to change local attitudes. One new councillor noted that perhaps the community should change its slogan to "Fort McMurray: All Grown Up," to alter the perception amongst older long-term residents, not to mention those external to the community, that the city is an industrial camp town, without real urban amenities and community life. Bringing in landscape designers to develop new, family-friendly neighbourhoods wasn't easy, as the expertise needed was not seen as locally available or relevant, and the type of neighbourhood being proposed was not immediately recognized as possible, or even desireable, within the community.

As in many communities of Western Canada, the railroad was a vital part of the development of Prince George, BC. The Railway Museum was first developed as a collection of all objects rail-related, under the leadership of ex-rail workers. After much persuasion, a new museum staff

gave a facelift to the museum, revitalizing its role in the community by moving away from the warehouse model, a storage of old things, to that of a social and cultural history museum, where the story of the railroad is treated as a special entrance to the larger community history. New curating techniques and new expertise brought a new life to the museum and the railroad history of Prince George. Meanwhile, a new container port in the city gave a new importance to the railroad within the present-day economy. In local governance, both this event, and the reconnecting of museum and community turned the museum into an actor in a real sense. The museum became a more powerful actor within local governance, shaping how citizens and leaders think about and plan for the future.

Meanwhile, Smithers, BC, was entirely created by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Co. (GTP). GTP built its divisional headquarters halfway between Prince George and Prince Rupert, drawing up the Smithers town plan to house its workers. Historically, town plans were commonly drawn up by railway companies. The plan featured a special wide street designed for what was meant to become "the core" of the community. The street, Main Street, was intended to host the town's business community and would feature large parks on either end, Alfred Park and City Hall Park (Central Park). Most notably, GTP ensured that its railway station would be highly visible from Main Street. Despite this strong initial involvement, residents of Smithers are more likely to see the railroad as an outside force acting on their town, than do the residents of Prince George. Their community did not choose to memorialize this aspect of its past, instead gravitating towards the Swiss historical narrative identity of the town's early settlers. Despite sharing a historical connection to GTP like Prince George, a railway museum therefore did not become an important part of the community's identity and social fabric. ●

Image: Adam Roy. Grounds of the Royal Tyrell Museum. Drumheller, AB

In Drumheller, Alberta, the presence of dinosaur bones, and a federal initiative implemented in cooperation with the province, led to the establishment of the Royal Tyrrell Museum. Local knowledge was not involved. Local or traditional knowledge cannot account for the museum, and the intended use of the museum as a driver of development and ultimately, community identity. The museum was and is a success but opportunities to use it to support sustainable development were missed. Higher level actors missed local knowledge, including knowledge of local history and governance, the groups, stories, fissures at work in Drumheller. City council and others in the community missed expert knowledge regarding the use of museums as a development driver, and regarding the powers of planning and design to create a more attractive community, for residents and tourists alike.

6. Knowledge and expertise

Our discussion of knowledge cannot rest here. Many strategies to deal with boom and bust rely on introducing new forms of knowledge in governance. We know that knowledge has a narrative nature, and that specialized, local forms of knowledge develop over time. This, however, cannot be the end of the story. We need to discuss in greater detail how new knowledge can be found, created, and be made useful in governance, and how to maximize its impact.

First, we can distinguish between local knowledge and expert knowledge. Experts can belong to an academic discipline or cover an interdisciplinary field, such as environmental studies, development studies, or policy studies. Governance in social-democratic countries like Canada features government actors that are advised by many collaborating and competing expert groups. Those in favour of a more participatory democracy argue that in many cases, local knowledge is ignored in favour of expert knowledge, and that this makes governance less democratic, less efficient, and less adaptive. While this is sometimes true, it depends on the governance path in question, on the balance between participation and representation in governance, on the particular role of expert groups in a given community, and on the nature of the dominant expertise. Further, some governance ideologies favour specialized expertise, tending to be more blind to local knowledge than others, as was the case, for example, in Soviet communism.

When local knowledge is indeed ignored, we must ask: What exactly is this local knowledge? and, What value will it add to governance decision-making? Some thinkers present local knowledge as an authentic knowledge, coming from a close relationship with the land,

the community, and the local cultural identity. Local knowledge is often seen as traditional knowledge and as necessarily good, more useful and inherently morally superior to external expertise. We counter that local knowledge is not always traditional knowledge, and that local and traditional knowledge both have their strengths and their limitations. In practice, local knowledge is usually a mix of current and old expert knowledge, traditional knowledge, and ideas coming from recent adaptation to local situations, including recent trends and conflicts in governance.

• Situated in the prairie region of Saskatchewan, the small town of Craik offers a very interesting example of local knowledge and expertise being used in the service of a new vision for this town. Once well on the way to becoming a prairie ghost town, Craik is now recognized world-wide as a thriving eco-village. This transition began with a strong push from outsider knowledge and expertise. In 2001, the town council was looking for people who could provide ideas to stimulate economic growth. They brought in a retired professor from the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Lynn Oliphant, who presented the idea of an eco-village. Since that first meeting, the idea took off, with internal and external actors pitching many news ideas and developments along the way, including the Craik Sustainable Living Project. One high-profile development included the possibility of buying a plot of land from the town for $1. The catch was that property owners would be required to build a home that was entirely off-the-grid — completely self-sustaining. Through many successes and failures, the people who took on this challenge relied not only on the knowledge of outside experts, but also took on the responsibility of developing their own knowledge, skills, and abilities to achieve this new vision for the town. The Town of Craik now offers a unique example of the knowledge and expertise that needed to be discovered and developed in service of a new vision for the town. •

A special challenge when using new knowledge in governance strategies is that — surprise — *the future is unknown*. We can know past and present, and extrapolate certain trends, but there is no guarantee that these trends will continue.

Assuming that we can predict and create the future fails to take into account many factors. Most importantly, it ignores:

• the nature of governance as unpredictable but marked by dependencies,
• the unpredictable nature of social reality, and
• the narrative nature of all knowledge.

In Western Canada, stories about the future tend to be either too optimistic or too pessimistic, depending on the underlying ideologies. Optimism and pessimism are the result of certain forms of knowledge becoming built into local narratives, and they can impact the future role of knowledge in governance. If a mining boom makes a town forget the previous busts, that selective forgetting, that loss of knowledge, has effects on the forms of knowledge included and excluded in governance: mining consultants and economic development specialists are brought in and have a strong influence, there is more pressure placed on environmentalists to shut-up or write positive reports, and residents and leaders will ignore planners and experts recommending tourism-related development to diversify the economy.

Predicting the future is impossible, and many things happen which nobody can foresee. Social reality changes and evolves because people start to believe in different things, identify differently, become bored, or get upset, changing the stories and expectations that form their perceptions of reality. Governance, with its continuous confrontation and transformation of actors and stories, adds to this unpredictability. Understanding path dependencies in governance makes things a bit more predictable, and goal dependencies can help shape a desirable future. However, these tools for predicting outcomes do not add up to the ability to engineer the future. Further, there is more work involved than simply

seeing a trend and extrapolating to reach a desired state: successfully influencing the future requires ongoing reflection on dependencies in active governance and decision-making. Leadership, policies, and plans affect what is possible. However, goal dependencies are never strong or pure enough for full implementation of comprehensive visions; every step in the process of evolving governance presents a new set of possible futures, a new opportunity to understand the expertise and factors at work. One step in the implementation of a sustainability plan will affect reality, which in turn affects how the original plan will be interpreted by its participants, and the next step will be different from what was first envisioned. This is not a problem. What it means is that we cannot believe in fairy tales of entirely predictable and manageable futures. Changing leadership brings in new stories and governance strategies — on their own, such changes are unpredictable, but further unpredictable changes can come from unexpected corners. Individuals that at first look like marginal figures may slowly gather support for their stories, and these stories may, potentially through or with the support of other actors, move to the centre of local governance.

There is no specific knowledge or set derived method to predict the future of a community. Nor is there specific knowledge and set method to produce, with absolute certainty, a defined future. Further, the evolving nature of social reality and governance means that one cannot even know which sort of knowledge will be important in future governance. Once again, this is not a bad thing, but rather a reason to be cautious when making big promises, and a reason to reflect on a regular basis on what is possible.

When thinking about visions for the future, and which knowledge to consider when developing and implementing plans and policies, the power of stories is often forgotten. As we know, stories frame how individuals and communities understand themselves, their environment, and the issues they face. Existing stories create reality as we know it, but in governance, new stories can be created and codified into new institutions. If a plan or policy is more than an impassive set of rules and steps, but also part of a convincing story, it will have a stronger impact with more robust and targeted goal dependencies.

We call this *performativity*. New stories, embedded in new institutions, can become reality because people believe in them, or because everyone acts as if they were true. Such reality effects of policies and plans hinge on the quality of the story (how persuasive it is), the quality of the storyteller (leadership), and the quality of the new institution (coordinative capacity). A storied institution might gain truth and legitimacy over time, as the story becomes more persuasive and powerful and people start to

believe in the underlying stories, values, principles. It is also possible that as circumstances change, fear and desire may drive people in the direction of a certain story and its resulting institutions.

It's important to recognize that stories are always in flux, constantly being developed and changed as people tell them, live them, and create new stories. Every step in evolving governance changes the combinations of stories and institutions at play, changes the picture of the possible and desirable future, and transforms what is actually possible in terms of outcomes. This remains true independent of the sort of knowledge we deploy in governance, whether we use one or 1,000 experts, emphasize local knowledge or expert knowledge. For boom/bust communities, this delicate balance between power over the future and unpredictability is particularly hard to grasp, as residents and leaders often waver between overly optimistic and overly pessimistic outlooks, missing much of the potential available for sustainable governance.

● *Tumbler Ridge, BC is an "instant town" planned by government and industry, in this case comprising several mining companies. The town was developed through a process involving meticulous planning and design, incorporating rich amenities and a plan for rapid transformation into a self-governing community. Soon after completion, however, coal prices collapsed and it looked like Tumbler Ridge was doomed. Many were surprised to see the intensity of local mobilization, visioning, and articulation of transitional governance, as well as a new goal of diversification. Landscape features, recently discovered dinosaur bones, and good infrastructure became seen as assets for a more diverse and stable future. Residents lobbied provincial authorities, who agreed to invest more, reduce debt, and pressure, to some extent, mining companies. What did not look like a community at all first, and certainly not one with a broad vision of its future, responded to the shock of mine closure with unexpected optimism and exertion. One could say that the process of resisting the closures and overcoming diversity contributed to creating a strong and sustainable community.* ●

● *In Prince George, BC, local actors have been promoting a strategy of centrality as early as the 1960s, starting with the medical sector. Prince George was to become a regional hub for many things, and this would stabilize the city. Meanwhile, in some ways the city was already becoming a regional hub independent of a particular conscious strategy. When, in recent years, city council and others explicitly embraced a formal strategy of central service delivery and regional branding, the performativity of the goal was strong, because it aligned with the previous path, building on the mix of strategy and unplanned consolidation already in place and accepted by the people.*

Similarly, Terrace, BC, made a conscious shift to become a retail hub in their region, recognizing and capitalizing on its position at a crossing point of roads and railroads and its existing service links to growing First Nations communities. ● ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

7. Memory

Future and past are connected in myriad ways. We already dwelled on path dependencies, how legacies of the past influence current governance and ongoing production of futures. At the same time stories about the past, how we remember the past, are rewritten through present day actions. Memories play a particular role in governance and we will see that they require close attention when devising a viable community strategy.

Why is memory so important and special? Because stories of place, of self, and of group identity, or, in other words, identity narratives, are constructed out of stories of the past — individual memories and group histories. History is always the history of something, of a group or community or nation, which selects and interprets, connecting them to places and to a desirable image of self to construct a narrative. A prairie town might see itself as a Canadian, settled, agricultural community attached to the prairie landscape, omitting from the narrative the nomadic First Nations roaming the plains for centuries and ignoring the American semi-nomadic cattlemen crossing the border every year and controlling the area for half a century.

Remembering is therefore never an innocent or apolitical act; it is always tied to identity stories and identity politics. One cannot build an identity without creating a new version of history, and one cannot write a history without linking it to a new or existing identity. Identity provides perspective and structure to memory, and without structure there is no meaning. These principles apply both to the official, extensive, and cohesive histories communities share, as well as to more fragmentary and fleeting stories about the past, modest recollections in local governance and the community.

▬▬▬▬▬ ● *Memories and assets: Frank Slide, in the Crowsnest Pass, is half a mountain which slid down a century ago and destroyed the village of Frank, Alberta. Now, the site of the disaster is a tourist asset, and planning and design efforts seek to highlight the past catastrophe. Once there, visitors learn about the numerous other mining disasters in*

the area. In this case, the Frank Slide disaster serves as a metaphor for other disasters, becoming a site for tourists and residents to experience and imagine local history through a dramatic lens. Staging one disaster site has amplified the impact of smaller stories, reinforcing the regional image of a tough, rugged past. In this case, the intention does not seem to be not policy change to improve mining safety (which has already happened), but rather to attract tourists through spectacle. The dark side of history is a spectacle, drawing viewers like an action movie. However, one has to tread carefully when highlighting and staging disaster and grimness, as the aim is not to scare people away. ● ▬▬▬▬▬

There is something else to consider here: just as communities plan and envision futures in the present, remembering takes place in the present as well. It takes place within current governance institutions and structures of remembering, knowledge, storytelling, and action. All this affects what and how things are remembered. The fears, hopes, and desires that a community is experiencing right now will influence what is remembered and how plans are made. Governance configurations such as actors, institutions, power, and knowledge all shape what is remembered of the community history and how these old "facts" are linked to decisions about the future. For example, a history of Western Canada written by English-speaking Canadians from the prairies will be very different from a version written by French-speaking Canadians. Old French-speaking communities in the English perspective may be treated as anomalies, while in the French version they will be early settlers whose voices should be heard.

▬▬▬▬● *In Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta, two large cities strongly tied to resource booms and busts, the vision of the future and the past constructed in boom years is very different from memories made and plans devised during a bust. In the bust period, the boom tends to be glorified, and the reasons for the bust forgotten. In the boom period, the previous bust tends to be forgotten, and the future looks like a long boom period. The urban landscape mostly reflects the past of the booms, and the busts are harder to remember because they are absences, gaps in development.* ● ▬▬▬▬▬

Drumheller, Alberta is a world-class tourist destination, said to be the third largest in the province, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Yet, much of the tourist activity seems to bypass the core of the town. Conflicts regarding the future of the downtown have persisted for over fifteen years, both within formal and informal spheres. Schisms between different grassroots efforts, such as business coalitions and citizen groups, as well as in the city council and the Chamber of Commerce, have elucidated important points of contention — including over the importance of tourism, planning, and coordination between players, as well as the role of institutions such as the museum, the prison, the downtown, and the chamber. The situation is entirely transparent yet entirely unsatisfactory. Many caught in these disagreements express annoyance about the state of affairs, often stating that "nothing has gotten done for fifteen years".

8. Conflicts

Building futures in communities is more than telling stories about the future, agreeing on a common path forward in governance, and distilling this into a vision supported by institutions. It is not always easy to discern or enact a better future, and it is even more difficult to agree upon one. Conflicts are a guaranteed part of governance, and if governance is ambitious and takes place under challenging circumstances, conflicts are almost unavoidable. Why? Let us take a closer look.

A community is never without problems, without difference, without conflict. A story or community identity might be dominant in governance, but it is never the only one. A person never fits one identity story, and certainly not a community. In collective decision-making, actors and

identities compete, forms of expertise compete, and versions of the past, present, and future compete. The frictions that accompany this diversity are not a problem, but rather are integral to genuine governance and community. Apparent absence of frictions is likely absence of transparency, and without transparency, corruption and factionalism will abound.

Conflict might be difficult by itself, adding stress to the practice of governance, and it will likely be especially daunting for actors trying to take a new path as a community or come up with an entirely new vision for the future. Many authors will emphasize the need for unity and consensus under those circumstance. We agree that consensus is something for which to strive; however, imposing an early and likely artificial consensus to avoid conflict can be much more damaging in the long run than the conflict itself. Avoiding conflict means ignoring the diversity of views and interests in the community, and jumping too fast into apparent consensus can result in parts of the community not identifying with the plan or vision and hampering its implementation.

Conflict can be praised for more substantial reasons: it can be productive. By harnessing a diversity of opinions, conflict can help adapt a governance to better respond to changing circumstances. In a narrower sense, differences of opinion can produce new things, new ideas, identities, new communities. Conflict, tension, and disagreement often provoke more participation and engagement, lead to reflection on identity and belonging, and provoke communities to rewrite old stories to craft a new sense of identity. New opportunities and solutions can come up as arguments in conflict, as well as through the process of conflict resolution. Conflict can speed up decision-making and can enable visioning and strategizing that was previously deemed impossible: a hard won moment of cohesion after a long struggle, a flash of shared insight after forced collaboration, a sense of urgency generating a stronger than ever power of collaborative coordination. One can say, therefore, that conflict can hamper governance, can make it very hard to move forward, but allowing it to play out can also suddenly lead to new inventions and to speedy deliberation.

■■■■■■■■■■ • *In Fort McMurray, Alberta, the city tried to convince higher level governments to pay more attention to and invest more in stabilizing the community and rendering it a northern hub and a place to raise a family, a place which could develop long-term perspectives. The oil companies and provincial and federal governments lacked interest, instead subtly favouring a camp idea for Fort McMurray, building on the environment and structure of the oilfield work camps. Long-term environmental*

sustainability was often considered in local development, in the form of mitigation and restoration, while the social sustainability of the city was ignored. Yet, the conflict did produce partial solutions. Authorities accepted a proposal to expand city limits, and many of the resource companies began to move more of their administration and management to Fort McMurray to support downtown core development. ●━━━━━

━━━━● *In Camrose, Alberta, as in many other rural communities, homelessness has emerged as a very real issue. Homelessness often looks different in smaller communities than it does in cities. The fact that there may not be people sitting on the sidewalks, panhandling, or sleeping in alleys leads many to assume that homelessness is an "urban" issue. However, the reality is that rural communities are often stepping stones to urban homelessness — especially if there are no services available in the rural town, forcing those in need of supports to migrate to larger centres. The experience of many smaller towns points to the importance of incorporating social issues into planning (whether infrastructure, economic development, etc.). Not only can doing so help mitigate conflict down the line, it can also limit the often unforeseen effects of social, economic, and other inequities within the community. Ignoring the issue, avoiding local conflict, and avoiding a reflection on the changing rural identity by silently pushing the problems to cities and blaming them, stands in the way of finding more immediate and locally meaningful solutions.* ●━━━━━

Despite its many potential benefits, conflict is not always productive. It can also undermine a whole community. It can become counter-productive when it undermines institutions, erodes checks and balances, and especially when it subverts the very rules it seeks to change. If discrediting the current mayor, for example, is the only way to become the mayor, the rule of law is negatively affected, and any community strategy coming out of the new council will encounter problems of legitimacy. Conflict can also destroy trust between groups of actors. If trust has left the community and residents are unable to trust in the fairness, enforcement, and efficiency of institutions, then rules will lose their power. This is another example of performativity: if there is no belief that institutions can fix problems, if there is instead a belief that a problem was always there and will always be there, chances are that the problem is perpetuated and that the tools to deal with it remain weak. Restoring trust does not happen easily, and it does not happen by talking about trust; it must be developed by example, through consistent actions that create a new pattern of expectations and a renewed sense of legitimacy.

In late 19th century southern Alberta, ranchers and farmers competed for land. Ranchers were the entrenched interest and lobbied with politicians to keep farmers out. The farmers were often more recent immigrants, which gave the entire conflict a shade of identity politics. Lack of government action led to pockets of lawlessness, where institutions broke down, and development of any sort was hampered. Eventually, the federal government intervened and strongly favoured farming and development of towns to protect settlements from the United States and safeguard the financial investments of central Canadian banks and speculators.

Conflict, then, should not be avoided at all cost but has to be observed, reflected upon, and managed. It can be restricted to a designated arena, mollified in procedures, relegated to specific topics, translated into specialized roles. Ideally, communities can place boundaries on conflict, can maintain the idea that this is theatre and that all have a role to play in politics. When the actors know and recognize this, they can take a distance when necessary, separate personal ties and emotions from the conflict. After a rough council meeting, for example, one can continue the conversation over an amicable beer. The boundaries of the conflict can be either formal rules, or informal guidelines, such as traditional customs and codes of honour for conflict resolution. When managing conflict, it can be helpful to recognize and consider overlapping identities to establish common ground. For example, an opponent in city council or the chamber of commerce may also be the local baker, a neighbour, a fellow in your church choir, or your wife's uncle. A tradition of changing roles can also be helpful in managing conflict, potentially imbuing all with the idea that we can play different roles in life and switch roles

Across Alberta, many communities are struggling to balance the complex relationship between town and county. In Grande Prairie, AB, there are ongoing disagreements between the "rural" (county) area which has access to much of the linear and industrial tax base (including pipelines and plants), and the city, which is dependent on residential taxes to finance municipal services and infrastructure. These problems have been exacerbated by the county's aims to create their own suburban and retail areas, as well as the city's inability to control highway corridor development. The city is thus not only left with large service costs as a regional hub, but is being choked by surrounding development and has to compete for tax dollars and development with a rural jurisdiction, which is by nature cheaper to run and can easily offer lower taxes. The city was granted approval for a significant annexation of the surrounding area, which resolved some of the issues, but there are certain groups that would like to take things further. Although there are long periods of time in local history where there has been no strong distinction between rural and urban identities, particularly as the county boosts suburban development, the new tension between municipalities can suddenly awaken and exacerbate older conflicts between these groups, where one again identifies as "rural" or "urban" and revisits old fights.

(and alliances) over time. Learning to participate in governance that way makes a community more adaptable. Overlapping identities and movement between roles can foster empathy and the flexibility to shift perspectives, without which governance can fall into identity politics, which tend to freeze and harden conflicts.

Conflicts have the unfortunate habit of coming back. This is relevant for understanding the dynamics of communities trying to get themselves out of a slump. The memory of old conflicts can revive old feelings of injustice, old factional lines. One can never predict which old conflict may be awakened in a new context; however, times of community reinvention

and ambitious visioning are bound to trigger sensitive topics, cast doubt on established narratives, and exacerbate differences in individual and community identities. When questions of a community's future are at stake, individuals can be provoked to conflict by a small remark, a minute change in policy or routine, or an alteration in the design of a building, a street, a park, or a parking space. Taking away a parking spot can turn a socialist into a libertarian, a reference to a rancher grandfather can suddenly transform a lawyer or engineer into a rancher.

Developing a new vision for the future can imply a rewriting of history, a critique of past and present. This can mean recasting old alliances and debates, reflecting on forgotten disagreements, and in other cases, introducing a new poignancy to previously accepted differences and supposedly resolved conflicts. New visions can introduce new community dynamics, as new patterns of opportunity and threat become visible and existing patterns of winners, losers, and alliances underpinning current governance become unhinged. Old disagreements can become ammunition then, or simply excuses, to navigate the new landscape of risk and opportunity.

Destabilizing conflict does not need to play out, and many communities are able to reinvent themselves and make themselves more immune to cycles of boom and bust. Understanding both the productive and undermining character of conflict in governance and community visioning is undoubtedly a precondition for success. Utopian ideas of an always cohesive and peaceful community, with easy consensus and strict avoidance of conflict, can only lead to disappointment later. To come closer to utopia, a cool assessment of the current situation is imperative.

Conflict assessment can be part of both self-analysis and strategy development, both of which are discussed later. Mapping out the history of factional lines, conflicting identities, tensions over resources, conflict management tools and successes, and conflicts associated with previous policies and plans can inform strategic planning and decision-making. New community strategies can then be better positioned to assess how to relate to old conflicts and how to provoke or avoid new ones. When knowingly facing old conflicts or triggering a new one to further a greater good, actors can be prepared to manage them by thinking through potential scenarios, accessing appropriate tools, and contingency planning. Crafting a community strategy requires strategy.

CASE STORY: FITFIR CONFLICT

The water licensing system in Alberta is based upon the First In Time, First in Right principle (FITFIR) — essentially "first come, first served". Under the FITFIR system, existing licenses are held by any number of entities, including individuals, municipalities, corporations, and irrigation districts, where water may then be distributed internally within the licensee (for example in the case of municipalities or agricultural irrigation districts). These existing rights are valid indefinitely, and while tradeable to a minimal degree, are largely static. In contrast to Eastern Canada, where the first claimant does not get the same privileges, the twin principles of first appropriation and apportionment emerged in the west to both guarantee agricultural access for irrigation (a necessary condition in the southern basin) and to provide a jurisdictional basis for that allocation. However, the priorities of access and consumption provided by the FITFIR system are, as might be expected, predicated on the myths of abundance and stability, and when either of those two mythologies are challenged, the FITFIR system can generate significant conflict.

The FITFIR principle was established to encourage rapid agricultural development and to ensure that agricultural land development was not superseded by later interests. In essence, it established a system with the goal of rewarding those engaged in early settlement and development of the province, and to ensure that water could be supplied to those who, in theory and based on the pattern of development, would most need it. The FITFIR system reinforces the hierarchy by permitting senior users to withdraw 100% of their allocation before junior licensees are given access. Thus, the FITFIR system gives not only priority access, but priority consumption with no incentive for rationing or conservation. In recent years, a number of Albertan municipalities with junior licenses have either been unable to access their allocated portion of water, or have had to rely upon recently allowed transfers to provide freshwater to their constituents.

FITFIR has therefore provided an institutional infrastructure for a long future of conflicts between individuals, municipalities, corporations, and other actors as, over time, agriculture becomes more intensive but economically less important, cities grow, new industries claim water, and environmental assets become more valued. Climate change will only exacerbate the existing tensions. These conflicts are not productive in any sense. They prevent more rational forms of regional decision-making on water, and can even impede broader forms of regional governance and collaboration, which can be highly useful in buffering boom and bust

cycles. Causing a conflict to modify FITFIR seems worthwhile, but would be a difficult, long haul. A combined lobby effort by municipalities, environmental groups, disadvantaged user groups, and concerned citizens might do the job, in combination with a lucid public discussion of the water conflicts that are sure to come.

9. Adaptation, resilience/ sustainability, and risk

What is the opposite of a boom/bust community? Where might a less tortuous paths lead? Apparently not utopia. Then, perhaps sustainability?

Ultimately, what we strive for are communities able to respond to change, to overcome disturbances and to adapt. If the community itself thinks it has a future — a future different from the current situation, one where the cycles of ups and downs have more manageable effects — then some idea of adaptability naturally becomes part of the equation. Working to increase a community's capacity for adaptive governance is not an easy task, as governance can only operate within a balance between flexibility and rigidity. If adaptive capacity were to give way to complete flexibility, a community would disintegrate into chaos. If it always bounces back to the same situation and roles, it is not truly adaptable. Adaptation can only work if there is some internal structure which remains in place, a familiarity between actors, with institutions which adjust to changing circumstances while maintaining some continuity with the past.

Adaptive capacity is often associated with resilience or the capacity to overcome, to survive a period of disruption or distress. Adaptive capacity is a term borrowed from ecological systems analysis, a mathematically inspired version of ecology looking at interactions and feedback loops within ecosystems. Its applicability to social systems and governance is often contested. However, we consider it useful for describing the way a community is able to overcome challenges by adopting a different development or governance path. Survival and adaptation might mean very different things, ranging from internal adaptation (new policies, changing actors, different expertise, new scales and domains of governance) or changing an external environment, to creating alliances with other communities, moving as a community to a new place, or possibly even disbanding a community to enable the survival of others or a larger whole.

• Sustainability and resilience always require consideration of several aspects and scales. In Alberta and BC, hundreds of current ghost towns were clearly not sustainable, nor resilient. One could look at them as failures. Indeed, the process came with much hardship and often a profound sense of loss, especially when the town existed for a longer time and people had established families and invested in homes, social networks, and public life. Most of the time, however, the residents finally moved on and tried something else. Along the way, they have contributed to the development of their province in other communities and through new paths. •

• Fort McMurray, Alberta is often pigeonholed as the epitome of unsustainable exploitation and community development. However, it can also be described as extremely resilient, guided by a narrative of opportunity dating back to the late 18th century, when explorers and civil servants predicted the future value of the oil sands. One can say that the story they told of a future boom was performative, contributing to the reality of returning booms, even to the resilience of the community itself, where hope was rarely lost, and where radical ups and downs were tempered by an ongoing belief in the viability of the place and the resource that sustained it. Optimism and resilience are also evident in the invention of new uses for available natural resources; for example, using bitumen for road construction and roofing, rather than waiting for better prices for more conventionally processed oil. The belief in value creates value, and the belief in community resilience fosters stronger communities. •

We still need to take a closer look at the nature and effects of boom and bust cycles in Western Canada, and previous attempts to manage or mitigate them. We have written this story using the concepts introduced in Part I, and challenge our readers to question: How can a better understanding of governance shed a new light on issues of boom and bust? and, In what ways can governance offer ways out of the damaging boom/bust cycles? In the following sections, the answer we find, in the broadest sense, is twofold: self-analysis and strategy-building.

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Part II:

**Boom/Bust:
A real introduction**

1. What is boom and bust?

What is a ghost town? A ghost town is a shadow of its former self, a place with too few people, too few services and too many memories, and no belief in a future. Places can be diminished but hopeful; when hope remains, we would not speak of a true ghost town. Planning and visioning trades in hope and depends on hope.

• Towns become ghost towns when markets disappear, resources dwindle, or infrastructures become obsolete. Weather can be a factor. In Alberta and BC, all shades and variations of ghost towns exist. When the land itself was valuable, they were razed. In other cases, they were left to decay. In Lille, in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, a mining community was quickly built in the early 20th century, only to go down ten years later, in the bust just before WWI. People moved out, the swanky hotel was dismantled and materials were reused. Its bar with Belgian wood carvings moved several times around the region, and the workers' homes were carried down the hill to several larger villages. Among those is Coleman, Alberta. For some, Coleman is considered a ghost town, with most of the downtown consisting of decaying heritage buildings, while for others, including many residents, that state of decay does not matter, and calling it a ghost town is a gross insult. •

Towns and cities know ups and downs, and while many can find the changes experienced by communities extreme, we are speaking of boom and bust communities. Even in such cases, not everyone will agree on a one-size-fits-all definition, and if so, some will not see a problem. Stories are the reason for this perhaps false sense of security: stories shape our understanding of what a good and a normal community in a good and normal society is, shape how we experience risk and responsibility. Ups and downs can be felt as normal, and the risks can be perceived as tough luck.

In many cases, especially in the Canadian West, a dependence on one natural resource and a history of very rapid development has made the ups and downs tougher. Longer histories can mean deeper roots, denser social networks, stronger identities, and a naturally more diverse economy. With dependence on one resource in a more globalized world market for commodities, and without the stabilizing intervention of provincial government, each community is left on its own, forced to compete with neighbours and the rest of the world.

How do we recognize boom/bust communities? What can we expect as negative effects of the boom/bust cycle?

Dependence on one resource makes places vulnerable to boom and bust. If prices go down, the place goes down. If several resources are extracted, the cycles can be more intricate, but there will likely be a boom/bust pattern. We argue that in resource towns, ups and downs in population and prosperity are to be seen as effects of resource dependence. Some of the effects become causes of other things themselves, intensifying the effects of boom and bust. Some effects reinforce each other, and aggravate the causes.

A feedback loop pattern common to many places starts with a population decline, which in turn diminishes the service base, which leads to a reduction in available services, which deteriorates the living and business environment, which undermines the schools and makes educated workers harder to find. All this renders diversification less likely. It is worth noting that in some histories, dependence on one resource was not the main cause of decline or extreme ups and downs; think natural disasters, think special circumstances in neighbouring countries, such as wars and depression. This has been the story for many communities in Western Canada. Vulnerability to boom and bust has several dimensions. Radical localism, either by choice or by abandonment, can be added to the list. We will discuss localism and local autonomy in detail later.

In Crowsnest Pass, Alberta and Revelstoke, BC, the infrastructure for large-scale development of the region, both private and public, became a buffer for the patterns of boom and bust. In Crowsnest Pass, much of the coal mined in the region was destined for the Canadian Pacific Railroad itself, for its steam trains. Meanwhile, in Revelstoke, the CPR had extensive maintenance operations for trains making the perilous crossing of the Rockies. Later, thousands of workers were active in damming and hydro projects. Infrastructure for development in larger areas can thus buffer the ups and downs of development in certain smaller places. Yet, the examples mentioned also indicate that this stabilizing force is never entirely stable: trains don't need coal anymore, nor do they require much fixing and checking when crossing a mountain pass. Dams don't need rebuilding too often. And in general, BC has lost its appetite for large-scale and long-term public investment.

2. The concentration problem

One feature of the pattern of feedback loops typical in many vulnerable communities is a concentration problem: concentration of capital, power, knowledge, or interests; too much capital in one industry, too much expertise, too much political power, too many voters agreeing on the importance of the industry, not enough alternative voices, activities, and/or expertise. This last mechanism is called *homophily*, the tendency of similar people to cluster together. In positive feedback fashion, homophily has significant implications for innovation, as it has the very real potential to limit new ideas, block connections to new partners or organizations, or to keep communities in a closed cycle of decision-making that worsens, rather than improves, the status of the community (a positive feedback loop).

Concentration problem
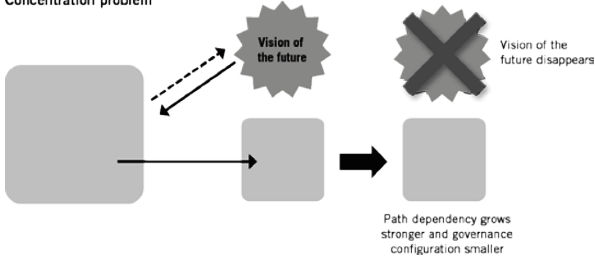
Figure 9. What we call the concentration problem, an issue typical for many boom/bust communities, is a simplification of local governance through the cycles, where fewer actors and institutions, less diverse knowledge, reduce the ability to look forward, to develop visions of alternative futures. Goal dependencies are weakened while path dependencies are reinforced, keeping the community on an ever narrower track, moving forward more blind-sided.

In governance, checks and balances are undermined this way. If the majority of people agree on a governance issue, a shift towards more participation won't solve anything. Agreement is exactly the problem. Tools to think of alternative futures, or of any future, are lost or never enacted, as good policy is seen as simply something that supports the entrenched industry which is understood as what is carrying the community. Alternative views are dismissed as irrelevant or harmful, and at the local government level, expertise allowing for the exploration of alternative futures is either forgotten, eroded, or actively rejected. Once all governance actors agree on a future of one industry, with all expertise and governance roles related to and dependent on that industry and with the government in a facilitating role, then the later inclusion of new voices becomes harder and harder.

The concentration problem in governance means that actors become similar, knowledge becomes simplified and narrower, institutions that push movement or growth in other directions are dismantled, and power positions are such that the transformation rules are petrified. In a way, residents within a boomtown self-select; boomtowns attract people

with similar interests who believe in the success story of the place, and who slowly become invested in and dependent on the reality of that success story.

When things work well, the best minds, hands, and the most capital are concentrated in that one industry. As time goes by, the social and cultural life of the town will be structured by the dominating industry: neighbourhoods form around different levels of workers in a factory hierarchy, a city council will comprise the two factions of managers and unionized workers. During booms, the most money and highest wages can be made in the boom industry, so doing anything else becomes irrational. Banks are reluctant to invest in anything else. Education becomes less relevant, undermining further the community's potential to diversify. Kids leave school early, leaving themselves limited career paths, and the level and variety of expertise in government and administration trends downwards.

Image: Adam Roy, Kitimat, BC

In Kitimat, BC, neighbourhoods and social life were for decades split along lines of roles at the Alcan aluminum smelter. When other industries moved in, the parallelism between factory and community was lost, lines became more blurred. Education in the aluminum heydays was valued mostly when it led to a well-paying job in the factory. Only later, when Alcan was shrinking and many of its tasks outsourced to less stable companies, did education and moving out of the town look more attractive to residents.

Similarly, in Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, mining was much more than a job for generations of miners — it was an identity, and it was assumed that sons would follow in the footsteps of their fathers. Even decades of continual slow closures did not radically undermine the appeal of the story of the perfect mining job. The story was so strong that other career options, and associated educations, did not come into the picture easily.

Short-term thinking tends to dominate when the concentration problem deepens, as decisions have to be made fast to jump on the bandwagon of rapid economic development, and people tend to jump on the same bandwagon if they perceive it as lucrative. Money is invested where money is being made. Quality control within the industry itself lags behind, but also in service delivery, in retail development, and in residential construction. Reputations and long-term relations matter less, and thinking about community futures, let alone ones that stray from the central industry, only happens in the hasty and rosy terms of more of the same.

● *During the oil boom of the early 2000s, housing units across Fort McMurray, Alberta were constructed at record speed. Less than 10 years later, several buildings sat vacant; occupants were forced to evacuate as it became apparent that the units were constructed very poorly and were not safe to inhabit.* ●

Thinking and working slower can mean losing money, and the impacts of this fast-fast attitude towards development are intensified in boomtowns by the idea that the most money is to be made in the main industry. People are so eager to move in and get started that, for the time being, they buy any house, accept any meal. Thus, there is a paradoxical effect that in many thriving boomtowns, people live in mediocre houses, eat poor meals, and have little time for a social or cultural life.

This kind of short-term thinking tends to be aggravated by an industry of speculation, making all players believe that there is indeed a boom or a coming boom, and that the boom period will never end. If all believe this is true, then one can accept many things for a while and invest time

Image: Adam Roy. Prince Rupert, BC

For a long time, the city of Prince Rupert, BC has been anticipating the arrival of the liquid nitrogen gas (LNG) industry for revitalizing their local economy. The port city is expected to be the exit point of oil and gas coming from Alberta and being exported to the big Asian markets. With the prospect of this large infrastructure project, several oil and gas companies have already invested large amounts of time and money in preparatory studies and ground evaluations, while real estate investors show interest, and different brands of consultants fly in and out to perform services ranging from geological and ecological assessments, to workforce and real estate mapping. In Prince Rupert, pre-construction work has reinforced the perception of unavoidability. Companies opened up shop in town to tout the benefits of future projects, to organize information sessions and visioning workshops. Many residents don't question the viability of the overall LNG project — they see the early activities and believe it's just a matter of time before the pipelines start arriving. Local preparations have therefore already begun, with individuals and other governance actors discussing where work camps should be placed, strategizing how health, recreation, and other types of infrastructure can be organized, and making personal decisions on living, working, studying, and investing.

Image: Adam Roy, Terrace, BC

Cost of living in Terrace BC, as in Prince Rupert, BC has increased dramatically in recent years due to speculation. The promised arrival of new industries, including an Alcan aluminum plant, hydro lines, and liquid natural gas (LNG) production, have caused a housing market boom, despite delivering no tangible results to date. Housing is in short supply, having been quickly scooped up following the news of potential development. As a consequence, there is also little rental space, and lease rates are inflated. Many tenants, primarily low-income segments of the population, have been pushed out. Other studies of Terrace point to the important economic link between the city's growth and its service industry, while the described speculation has sharpened the issue.

and resources in the boomtown. The industry of speculation can become an industry in its own right, especially when dealing with decisions over large investments which can drag out over years. Studies, more studies, pre-pre-approvals, consultancy firms, lobbyists, pilot projects, branding attempts, communication strategies, deal-sweetening projects, speculative pre-boom construction, real estate purchases — these are all part of the industry of speculation. The more people are involved in and believe in the industry, the longer a pre-boom can persist and the bigger the chance of an actual boom, of a performative story.

The unanticipated consequences of big investments or big policy decisions, potentially coupled with big investments, can be destabilizing, particularly in smaller communities, places with capacity constraints and with limited expertise in governance. For example, a new road can cause a shift in settlement pattern and in investment; a new dam can bring in so many workers that poorer locals are forced out of rental units; a tourism policy can turn homes into ski rentals or apres-ski bars, so locals cannot afford a home. If a boom is tied to one big investment in a small town, speculation is often the key unanticipated consequence. The political scientist Robert Merton coined the term *speculation* in the 1930s, and noted that with more ambitious and comprehensive policies, unanticipated consequences also increased. This offers a warning to consider when reviewing our later chapters, where we will discuss community strategies to mitigate or respond to boom and bust cycles. A policy expected to lead to a boom may trigger unforeseen events, and a policy designed to address the boom effects is likely to have its own unknown consequences.

Part and parcel to boomtown life is accepting that many people are not fully invested in the place. They often do not care so much about the impacts of speculation or other unforeseen results of boomtown development. There is little concern over the degradation of community assets and possible unraveling of community that can happen in a boom and in the face of a myriad of unanticipated consequences. Speculative investment in the place *can* be encouraged amongst boom participants when they believe there is an individual benefit in it for them. There can be a financial investment, a time investment, or a real estate investment that sends money and capital back into the community. In many cases, however, investment is minimal and their residence in the area is temporary. Perhaps there is another place they would prefer to move to on the horizon, maybe a warmer or community-oriented place, or a more pedestrian-friendly place, to which the money or other assets acquired in the boomtown can be carried. As in the old gold rushes, many want to make their fortune and head home — as in modern Russia, many want to take the oil money they earn and spend in Spain or on the Riviera.

● During interviews with long-term residents of Fort McMurray, Alberta, not one participant indicated they planned on retiring in the community. Every participant listed the BC coast, Newfoundland, southern Ontario, or the southern United States as expected retirement destinations. The reason: "there's nothing keeping me here."

In Edmonton, Alberta the guild of developers overseeing the booms of the 50s and 70s is now dispersed across the world: BC, New York, Scotland, the Caribbean, and other places. This does not mean they feel no ties or are not proud of their work. It does not mean they all had a hit-and-run strategy. It does, however, show that there's usually another place on the horizon for boomtown workers and developers, often seen as their reward.

Similarly, a small town located just to the north-east of Edmonton found that their community actually consisted of two populations. The first was a set of long-term, long-standing resident families, some of whom had been there for three or four generations. The second was a set of "newcomers," typically seeking both lower housing costs and proximity to transportation routes to the energy projects of northern Alberta. These families were commonly seen as "transient" as their presence in the community was often temporary (two to five years), and marginal, with limited engagement in community activities, development, or social capital. ●

If we are still talking about democratic societies (we believe we are), it is too easy to stigmatize "transient" or "limited investment" people and brand them as simply freeriders. All actors, regardless of their level of investment, are participating in a story they want to be true in the hope that all can reap the benefits. In practice, some will win, some will lose, and the dream of eternal boom makes it harder for all to assess the risk and know when to get in and to get out. On the other hand, it is also clear that the town itself can become easily trapped in a vicious circle, where transience becomes the only permanence. One of the feedback loops of a boomtown is that although many make money, few really invest in the place itself or seek to make it more diverse and vibrant, more stable. This triggers not the bust itself — which is usually dependent on commodity prices — but rather a *magnifying of its effects*. It can turn a bust into a Bust. If the boom years did not generate real investment in high quality infrastructure, education, housing, economic diversification (maybe starting from services useful for the industry, or for the new population), then few boom participants will have a reason to stay afterwards.

Similarly, if the memory of ups and downs makes the cycle of boom and bust seem normal for the long-term inhabitants, they will not see

or understand the possibility of managing them. Transients and long-term residents collaborate then in the amplification of the bust. Also, non-transient residents can highly value income, and if they measure their quality of life in income, not in their actual experience of life in the place, this makes reinvention harder, in another collaboration of earlier and later arrivals.

3. Detached identities

Aren't we missing something here? People cannot be forced to invest in a community, and in general, one cannot force people to identify with the place in which they work at some point during their lives. If they identify more with Newfoundland, where they grew up, and with Honolulu, where they want to retire, these two communities can be more relevant for them, for their choices and investments, than the Albertan town in which they currently live. One can take a moralizing point of view here, talking about the rights and duties of the citizen in the local community. However, those duties can only be enforced up to a point, and there are many different interpretations of community and democracy, many different types of community identity. The supposed indifference of the transients also deserves qualification: not belonging to a church group or participating in city council, and dreaming of a future in Honolulu, doesn't necessarily mean one doesn't care about one's community. Church and council can be closed circles, the newcomers might be interested in other things which are not valued or organized locally, and this can contribute to their dreaming of a future in other places.

If we talk about "the community" dealing with boom and bust, it is therefore important not to equate the concept of community with a physical town, or with the administrative unit represented by a city council, but rather understand it as people who live together and aspire to certain things. The *community* can be defined here as the idealized or perceived community from the point of view of those within the group, and is not to be confused with the conventional interpretation of community, often framed from an outside perspective. One cannot assume that all citizens want to exert their citizenship *here* and engage *here*, or, directly linked to this, that every place has to be saved at all cost. Indeed, if the whole town's existence is a history of short-term thinking, collective risk taking, speculation, and hit-and-run strategies, then the whole existence of the place is similar to the existence of a pinball machine, allowing people to take some risk and have some fun, and offering short-term rewards. If the machine disappears, so be it. It was only ever a vehicle for winning quarters.

On the other hand, if a town does see itself as a community, as a place to grow up and have kids, as a place with a long-term future, then the vicious circle of non-investment has to be reverted into a virtuous circle. The community can then become a town where more and more people identify with the place, look for other opportunities locally if demand for or availability of the main commodity goes down, improve their own living environment, pay attention to quality of life locally, and vote for others who invest and think in the long-term. We will come back to the topic of long-term thinking later in this guide, as this is a prickly but fundamental issue when looking for strategies to mitigate boom and bust. Investment, certainly, is not only locally directed, and negligence of small remote places by outside stakeholders and urban decision-centers plays a significant role in issues of short-term development; however, here we are analyzing mechanisms of influence and non-influence by locals. Even in absence of regional support, locals can do things. Conversely, even with regional investment, locals can fail to capitalize on available supports.

For now, we can say that boomtowns rest in a precarious balance between being a community and not being a community, between being simply a workplace, a camp, or industry town with forces pushing towards divestment and non-community and other forces pushing towards identification with place and community formation. The bigger the place, the more complex this field of forces will be. The younger the place, the stronger the tendency towards short-term strategies, the weaker the rooted counter forces of community. The outcome of this battle cannot be predicted easily, and should not be lightly moralized.

This is not a battle between good and evil. Short-term thinking and weak community ties, in combination with problems of concentration, do tend to obscure the potential negative effects of the boom activities on the people and the environment, undermining actors' observational capacity. One can also say that the dream of fast and easy money, of a continuing boom, has the tendency of suspending the critical judgment of many many players in a boomtown.

● *In Calgary, Alberta, boom times created million dollar condos for a class of managers and consultants who never fully settled in the city. A focus on building those expensive homes, and attracting the money of those restless movers and shakers, makes the development and redevelopment of the city centre more ambiguous. Even large-scale waterfront developments, a signal of a belief in a long-term community outlook, have not altered this perspective. The real decision-centers for the oil industry are not in Calgary or even in Canada anymore, and these well-off managers and consultants can move out quickly, back to*

those centers. The business community, an informal leadership circle in Calgary, is not fully a community, and does not, even informally, represent the needs, priorities, or long-term perspectives of the broader community. Planning for quality urban spaces for the long-term remains fragile when leaning on that fragmented group of high earners. ● ▬▬▬▬▬

These kinds of relationships between transient and community-oriented perspectives have very real implications for how communities respond to change. One can distinguish two kinds of social networks — bonding (the connections within a group) and bridging (the connections between groups). If there is not a good balance between both bonding and bridging connections, homophily (described in chapter 12) begins to limit the opportunities for new ideas, new connections, and new solutions to collective or public problems.

4. Bust aftermath

When things go badly, when the bust comes, there are a few typical responses. Often, all will forget about the previous cycles, and a realistic assessment of strengths and weaknesses is barely present. If there is little attachment to the place, people will move out fast.

As an Edmonton historian told us:

"I like it better here during the bust. Only people who want to be here, stay. And I tend to like those people better. They plant roots and create memories."

Those who could be most useful for a reinvention of the place can usually leave more easily: highly educated people, skilled people, rich people, people with connections. At the same time, some of the most damaging characters also tend to leave, those who had encouraged the dream of the eternal boom; some of whom had lost, others won, but none of whom have a real reason to stay.

A retired Edmonton developer shared:

"Yes, short-term perspectives, and wild west attitudes, those were and are still very common among developers. People suddenly called themselves developer, with little skill and money, and they wanted and needed to make a profit very fast. On the other hand, those attitudes can be productive as well, for a while. Most of those guys are not here anymore, however. They went bankrupt a few times, and moved to another place or another type of business."

When things go really bad, populations dwindle, supporting businesses vanish, construction comes to a halt, and previously hidden negative feedback loops suddenly become visible. Negative stories can become performative — more people believe in them, start to act according to them. And aspects of economic, cultural, social development that were supporting each other in a positive feedback loop are now causing the unraveling of the community fabric. Community groups, neighbours, churches, and social services supported by government, all those can weaken, can disappear, leaving gaps that make it harder to overcome a stroke of back luck. If the good times were not used to build capacity and community assets, then mutual support will not be there in bad times, and things will more easily deteriorate. One cannot reasonably refer to a mythical strong community in which residents support each other in good and bad times; that community has to be built and reinforced. People moving out do not use the same services anymore, and as a result service jobs are lost; private and public organizations cutting their budgets cannot perform tasks as well as previously, even if this task is keeping the community alive.

In bad times, the vulnerabilities previously hidden by, and possibly even the result of, the good times will come to the surface; the decisions which have to be made in order for the place to survive suddenly appear in a harsh light. The eternal boom stories quickly lose their luster and this waking up to reality can incite a flight, a simplified survival mode where everyone must look out for their own interests. In better cases, however, it can inspire a renewed reflection on what the community is and can be.

● *In Fort McMurray, Alberta, negative stories about the town, most notably published in the media, were brewing during the boom years. Some true, others not. Intellectuals from other Canadian provinces readily took them for true, even without ever seeing the place. When the economy recently slowed, both true and untrue negative stories had real effects on the community, magnifying the effects of the downturn. External perspectives became internalized quickly: maybe it's true what the others were saying about us. The existing negative images were now suddenly seen as the "real" truth, finally unveiled, so why would you still invest there at all? Why stay? Why maintain your property?* ●

The shock of a downturn can, in some cases, open up new avenues of thinking or acting, which can help overcome an issue typical for many boom places and times: a suspension of time. In boom times, the time horizons for many of the players are vague and opaque, to others as well as to themselves. Sometimes this strategy is meant to delude others, to pretend one has a long-term perspective and a love for the community.

In other cases, the delusion is self-delusion, and the imagined long-term does not really affect what one is doing right now, keeping things floating and transient. A serious bust can change things. A blast of reality means that time, and long-term thinking, once again counts, and competing fairy tales no longer render time horizons opaque. Delusion and self-delusion no longer work. Ultimately, this can be a good thing, and we would say that the most positive outcomes can be an increase in the reflexivity and observational capacity of community actors, and a rebuilding of conditions to allow long-term perspectives to again enter governance arenas. Entertaining, maintaining, building, and constantly revising long-term perspectives is probably the most important thing a community can do if it sees itself as a real community, one with a future. Everything covered in this paragraph deserves more space, and will get further treatment in the following chapters.

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(Part II and comprehensive)

(Note: the extensive list for this serves as a reference for the entire volume)

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Part III:

**Moving forward:
Path and context mapping**

How can someone guide a community they don't know?

Many would argue that guiding a community without being familiar with it would be like driving blindfolded. One can, however, advise communities on ways to analyze themselves and to find the necessary tools to develop and move forward. One could ask people to consider whether there is a community at all, or, whether it is emerging.

● *Between Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta exists a rivalry well-known in Western Canada. Each harbours outsider perspectives of the other city's identity. If Calgarians consider Edmontonians too close to government to be good entrepreneurs and efficient administrators, that doesn't mean Edmontonians have to adopt that image as their self-image. Conversely, if Edmontonians see Calgarians as "totally in the pocket" of the oil industry, that doesn't mean Calgarians should care or allow that image to shape their development planning.* ●

Outsiders, such as the authors of this guide, can help a community reflect on itself. We can call this a second order observation: outsiders show the community how to take a step back, to see how local actors have been thinking about the community in the past or to observe how observations have been made. This external perspective sheds new light on the present. Another way to frame the value of outside expertise is to call it cultivation of reflexivity: if people can find new ways to look at themselves, at their own way of acting and thinking, then a new understanding of their own evolution and assumptions can help them see which options for development are open. The concepts introduced earlier in this work can be useful in this self-analysis. Analyzing the community in new ways can open the doors for new understandings of its potential, as well as the limitations of visions for the future.

As primary components of the self-analysis, we distinguish between *path mapping* and *context mapping*, with path mapping being the process of reconstructing the governance evolution of the community and context mapping the selective sketching of contexts relevant for understanding that evolution. "Context" has no limit, and can mean anything, so selection of contexts will have to follow path mapping.

● *What happens in Lethbridge does not necessarily stay in Lethbridge. And what happens there is not the isolated result of previous local events alone. That said, events in Quebec are usually not relevant to the evolution of governance in Lethbridge, Alberta. Perhaps, if there*

were a federal law supporting agriculture, a Quebec initiative with impacts here, or Franco-Albertans with a special position locally because of Federal legislation, then those things could be part of the context mapping for Lethbridge.

Typically, however, the context of northern prairie agriculture, its infrastructures, its markets, is more immediately relevant in such a situation, warranting a scan of that agricultural history and organization as part of context mapping. ●━━━━━━━━━

In Part I we covered the basic concepts of community analysis- discussed needed to embark on our exploration of context. Other methods can fit under the umbrella of path and context mapping, and other concepts than the ones presented here can be of use. Different versions of self-analysis are possible and adequate, *as long as there is a process of community reflection.* Since the intention for the analysis will be to merge it into strategy later on, it is best to consider the process as a community reflection on governance that anticipates its effects on governance; therefore any analysis ought to take place *within governance.* The benefits for strategy development and implementation will diminish if the self-analysis is not truly internal and communal; external advisors can unearth unknown truths, but going through analysis as part of governance provides many more links for the continuation and ongoing transformation of governance.

The more a community is entrenched in conflict and in routine modes of thinking and acting, the more valuable it is to increase reflexivity in governance. We cannot assume that the exercise, which can be a long process, will always be harmonious and welcomed by the whole community. Factions might despise and dismiss the idea, or they might be pleasantly surprised by the outcome, annoyed by the substance of the analysis, or irritated by ensuing recommendations.

━━━━━━━━● *If a self-analysis in a northern logging community brings to light what everyone already knew — for example, that a family still living there sold the town mill to Americans, who then fired most of the workers — this can aggravate conflict. If that conflict makes the work of council and administration impossible, because of extreme polarization and distrust, then the process of self-reflection needs to be re-directed or even stopped. When the conflict can be readily predicted, the design of the self-analysis exercise has to be thought through more carefully, in order to minimize the impacts of the conflict. This is a matter of leadership, judgment, risk management, and in the end, hope.* ●━━━━━━━━━

The call for a rethinking of the community can come from many sides. It does not matter so much where it starts, as long as it happens and becomes connected to the formal and informal networks of decision-making. We will now revisit the concepts from Part I and discuss how they can be useful in self-analysis by boom/bust communities.

1. Starting point: Mapping

Path mapping begins with thinking about history, about actors, institutions, power, and knowledge. It will ideally entail a deeper reflection on the different dependencies marking the governance path, because understanding them will mean seeing which forms of steering might actually work.

Actors

Actors appear to be easy enough to recognize in the history of our own community. However, if we include higher levels of administration with local agency and informal links in unexpected places, the picture can become much more complex. For example, a city might have de facto abandoned planning because of an overambitious planner half a century ago, or after a neoliberal zealot passed through council later, or simply because the company who established the town had its own planners and architects, passing on a supposedly finished product to the first city council. A chamber of commerce might have been pulling strings a while ago, but not anymore. Or, one person in the chamber might prove to be the actor with the most pull during the decision-making process.

■● *Kitimat, BC was planned for an industrial-based economy capable of accommodating substantial growth. During the 1950s, acclaimed city planner Clarence Stein, who had designed new towns in the United States, was enlisted by aluminum production company Alcan to design a townscape that would provide a "modern community for its workers," so as to draw and retain a steady workforce. The layout incorporates elements of "Garden City planning": a green belt, super-blocks, looped streets, and neighbourhood units, systematically dividing the area into residential areas, a town centre, a service centre, and an industrial area, thereby also allowing for subsequent industrial expansion.*

To this day, the town planners have upheld Steins' concepts and the town retains many of the above described features. Kitimat has therefore not been planned to accommodate the single men who had built the town and stayed to work; they were not actors in city planning. Further, Kitimat was

anticipated to hold over 50,000 residents, and some planners initially predicted it would become the third largest city in BC. To its detriment, however, it never reached its optimal projected population, since modern metal production requires a fraction of the manpower and energy than it did in the past. The population trend since 1991 has been downward, with the most significant drop between 2001 and 2006. To an increasing extent, the Alcan (Rio Tinto) workers have become divided amongst Kitimat, Terrace, and the surrounding unorganized settlements. Many residents have moved on and stores such as the Hudson's Bay Company have had to close due to an inadequate consumer base. Perhaps the strongest consistency in population is the Portuguese community who emigrated from the Azores to work at Alcan and who have stayed as a close-knit cultural community in the town and region. ●━━━━━

Actors are not limited to individuals, and the big question in boom and bust towns is the degree to which local government can be an actor. The way local governments are defined, formally in the Canadian context by provincial law, and through histories of informal coordination and negotiation, is a major force shaping the matrix of potential strategies to deal with boom and bust. The formal definition of local government powers is too easily seen as defined limits, whereas in practice there is nearly always space for negotiation.

One can see immediately that thinking about actors past and present means also thinking about power relations and institutions. Even thinking about actors and their roles in community governance is in itself political, and will provoke discussion. However, if there is too much emphasis on avoiding conflict in the name of consensus, this essential discussion will not take place.

Considering multiple levels of governance and local autonomy

The relationship between higher levels of governance and government is a matter of both context and path mapping, since higher-level actors can play a local role as well. Re-analyzing that relationship can help communities identify which spaces are left for maneuvering locally, and which points of contention should be a priority for improving existing relationships with higher actors within a local strategy.

In Western Canada, formal and informal provincial rules regarding the redistribution of local revenue over a larger area, make a big difference in mitigating the effects of boom and bust locally. For example, if the revenues from a mine are shared more widely, then surrounding communities will suffer less from boom/bust phenomena. A larger

area will be able to develop long-term capacity and development strategies, thereby enabling it to deal with future cycles. Conversely, if provincial traditions make it hard for local governments to cooperate, and the province has previously played a "divide and rule" strategy among local governments, then this will reduce the options for local governments to pool resources and coordinate strategy.

● *In the mining communities of southeastern BC, mining activities were revived a few decades ago, when the Albertan economy cooled (in the Crowsnest Pass). One result of this targeted resurgence was high employment in BC, while on the Albertan side, towns were left struggling to make ends meet. The provincial government in BC then decided to allow regional redistribution of the benefits of mining. This proved to be a good survival strategy for the industry and the region. Benefits and costs are shared and this has allowed one of the communities to develop more of a tourism profile while a neighbouring community continues with mining, becoming a source of employment for residents of both towns and even for people across the border in Alberta.*

In Alberta, the government has employed amalgamation, and Crowsnest Pass emerged in the 1970s out of four smaller communities. However, all of them were poor former mining communities, so redistribution was not a powerful development tool, and regional redistribution was not possible according to provincial law. ●

Provincial governments have an important role in development and are able to impede local governance and agency. For example, if provincial deregulation strategies turned all utilities into private companies, then local governments will have little influence on them and will not be able to use utility management strategies to guide development and deal with weather cycles. Such higher level intervention not only weakens long-range planning options locally, it also adds a new set of actors to local governance: utility companies. As privately owned institutions, utility companies are less interested in public good, and can be bought, sold, and merged so the incentive to pay attention to local issues shrinks further.

If provinces have been traditionally suspicious of local powers and have made their revenues unpredictable and their revenue generation powers very limited, this will obviously restrict local strategies. If they have traditionally dismissed certain regions (i.e., fringe or extraction areas, or those considered unstable or irrelevant), or else places of a certain size (i.e., small) or a certain type (either rural or urban), this creates an uneven distribution of agency in local strategizing. The vulnerability of towns to boom and bust in Western Canada depends to a large extent on the degree to which local governments can be actors. This hinges first of all

on the provinces and their preferred forms of multi-level governance and formal and informal shaping of local autonomy. Yet not entirely. Private actors, albeit backed by the province, also play their role. For a while, especially in BC, company towns were entirely controlled and developed by companies, which did not favour local democracy or self-governance. Once a place is incorporated, one may call the local government an actor. However, we know that the true degree of autonomy in such places can be constrained, hence the limited capacity to navigate ups and downs.

• *The oil industry in the vicinity of Fort McMurray, Alberta has been a pillar of the Canadian economy for more than a decade. However, the development of this industry has all been on Crown land and direct revenues have escaped the city. For many years, both provincial and federal governments had aligned their interests with those of the industry, leaving the municipality to find its own strategy for financing long-term planning, without the land, tax base, and taxation powers to finance transportation, health, and recreation infrastructure.*

Only recently, when the municipality was able to incorporate Crown land into the rural area of the municipality, thereby increasing the rural tax base, has the town been able to receive direct revenue from the multi-billion dollar industry. The unfortunate trade-off of this strategy is that small farmers in this area now also have high tax. •

Image: Adam Roy. Terrace, BC

Alternatively, in northwestern BC, the Regional District of Kitimat Stikine, including Terrace, Kitimat, Stewart, New Hazelton, and Hazelton, as well as the regional Electoral Area Directors, recently formed a consortium called the Northwest British Columbia Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA). The Alliance is a revenue sharing agreement modeled after a similar regional agreement in

*the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, where Smithers, BC is located. At a
time of high resource development, comprising liquid natural gas (LNG) plants,
pipelines, refineries, port facilities, and other projects, the alliance represents an
"intra-governmental" entity through which localities can collectively negotiate
with the provincial government and major resource companies with respect to
resource development. Through these discussions, as proponents of the Alliance
note, higher level governments and private sector companies are more inclined to
obtain social license, address speculation, and share long-term revenue sources
in hopes of reducing economic volatility and unexpected consequences. Aside
from accommodating the expected growth, the goal for the region is also to
begin earning back funds to deal with local infrastructure deficits due to years of
economic downturn. The RBA can be thought as an intermediate body, designed
with the hope of mitigating the stark differences in costs and benefits between
corporations, provincial powers, and localities.*

World markets cannot be predicted, but the responses to market shocks
and their orientation are matters of governance and of the space and
resources given to local governance. Money and power are not the only
key attributes here — there is also scale, with small places simply being
more vulnerable. Strategies and institutions that allow for upscaling help
enormously, for the obvious reasons of potential diversification, capacity
building from a bigger and more diverse base, and pooling of resources.
Amalgamation, cooperation, and annexation are examples of such tools,
all to be used with caution. Access to these tools by local communities
is necessary for upscaling operations, even if all of them come with their
own risks.

Strategies such as amalgamation and the like are always contentious,
as they reshape power landscapes and redefine the actors in governance,
obliterating some while making others bigger. Sometimes strong social
identities are attached to administrative units; however, this is nowhere
near a universal truth. Small groups and privileged parties routinely
claim a very strong local identity to maintain their position of power.
Even in the presence of a strong local identity, however, one should not
be discouraged from talking about common goods and communities of
interest and local identity at other scales.

Often, the best general strategy to temper boom and bust cycles is not to
fight eternally with the next level of government, but to get bigger oneself
and perhaps abandon the idea of full autonomy of each and every village.
As mentioned previously, arguing for upscaling through amalgamation
or other means will likely cause conflict, which has to be managed, and
organizing upscaling in an entirely participatory manner will intensify the
conflict.

Alternatively, one could also opt to pursue localism, giving the smallest possible unit full self-governance. Then, we would argue, it is rational to devolve the risk of this decision and definition of actors to that most local level. One major risk with such an approach would be the very limited set of available responses and mitigating factors to boom and bust. Localism increases vulnerability. However, if a very small, very local group can accept the risk, there can be an argument for this approach.

• Over the course of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, several religious groups looking for isolation and local self-governance moved to the prairies of southern Alberta, including Hutterites, Mennonites, and others. They generally accepted the burden of localism with the benefits of autonomy. They rarely invoked higher governments to support them in tough times, like when crops failed, and they relied to a very limited extent on services and amenities provided by other levels of government. Many of those communities proved very resilient, sticking to traditions and social identity narratives. However, some disappeared and moved on, without casting blame. •

One of the most contentious issues faced by communities considering upscaling is the challenge of identity. Narratives of identity, however, can be reframed, and local leadership could present identity as layered. Local identities do not have to disappear when decoupled from local government. One can identify with a neighbourhood, a village, a municipality, a region, a country, an ethnicity, a religion, or with places and groups at different scales, without the need to choose one essential, "authentic" identity. One identity does not necessarily subsume the others. A community could cultivate differences between places and choose to believe their identity is entirely tied up with the smallest place and the smallest difference. But if that is the story of preference, then the risk of radical conflict, of not grasping the benefits of cooperation, of disappearing amidst the turmoil of boom and bust, is high indeed.

If localism is the way forward, for reasons of local preference or absence of other solutions, one has to think of strategies to increase local autonomy, to render the local community more fully an "actor" and multiply its powers of observation and response. Strengthening local autonomy, even under restrictive higher level institutions, can take several shapes. Improvements in infrastructure, for example, could open up more future options for the community. Increasing the tax base would have a similar effect. Stronger local autonomy could also stem from better local visioning processes, leading to a better understanding of limits and opportunities to stretch them.

Strengthening local autonomy could also entail the creation of a set of new actors, each contributing to further revenue generation and visioning. As in Revelstoke, BC, for example, this could include an economic development authority, a community controlled mill, a community forestry association, a tourism board, and an energy plant. In this case, local governance does become more complex. However, the collective potential increases dramatically and the leverage with provinces to redefine local powers increases.

Alas, decreasing local autonomy is just as real a possibility, although usually not one reached deliberately. It can emerge out of local action or inaction, often without intent, such as forgetting about planning instruments, or allowing expertise to disappear or go unnoticed. Communities may stop reflecting on assets and alternative futures, accept existing traditions and power relations, and get trapped in rigid identity narratives, all with the overall result of eroding adaptive capacity and autonomy. Such a decrease could be the result of a higher level strategy, or be an unanticipated effect of higher level decisions aimed at something else.

In many ways, this is a pattern that has been long-established in rural Canada. While Canadian local government is considered to have the least authority of comparable systems in the OECD, provincial governments have a long history of contributing to, if not directly causing, this weakness. In addition to provincial legislation that severely limits the capacity and authority of local governments, and informal traditions of divide and rule, a more recent pattern that has emerged since the 1980s is often called devolution — that is, the tendency of provincial governments to move away from the provision of public services. Instead, the province becomes a contractor of services, often providing funding, but little more. As a result, municipalities and privatized utilities become the de facto service provider. Municipalities acquire more responsibility but without an increase in real autonomy. They receive barely enough financial support from the province to fulfill the new tasks, and often operate without the legal authority and capacity to deliver and oversee services.

Theoretically, the overload on municipalities could be leveraged to increase local powers. In practice, however, it tends to reduce them, as local politics and administration are continuously overworked but lose oversight and the capacity to engage consciously in governance beyond government administration and the pressing concerns of the present day.

Mapping relationships with higher level actors has already proved to blur the lines between path and context mapping, and between mapping

and strategizing. Analyzing a community's governance path is already analyzing the intents and impacts of past strategy, and is a useful first step in devising your own strategy.

Actors and leadership

As mentioned, "actors" are not always easily recognized. Thinking about actors, visible and invisible, in the history of the community can be a careful and tiring tracing of lines of influence. Stories about governance are always changing, as any subsequent set of actors never remembers the previous ones, or does so only in images distorted by current considerations. Retracing history and uncovering the stories of half-forgotten or misrepresented actors can be imperative to understanding the actual evolution of governance, the actual influences on important decisions, the positives and negatives of old situations, and whether certain tools and strategies worked or not.

● The introduction of new actors can increase local autonomy and agency; however, each community must decide for itself whether new actors would be helpful within their unique context and goals. An economic development authority at the local level, operating at arm's length from local government, can be helpful in raising money for local initiatives, to operate faster and with more flexibility than government could to attract investors. It can afford to avoid taking sides in local politics. Such an authority can become an actor in its own right in community development, and can potentially follow the orders of politics more quickly and easily and annoy council less than traditional government administration. Whether or not this is a good thing is the question. Having sitting civil servants maintain responsibility over all governance tasks, including economic development, could be presented as the cheaper option, and perhaps more in line with public good. Yet, local politics are rarely stable for a long time, and economic development should not be tied to one party or clique. One can further argue that the presence of different perspectives and vigorous debate about them, as can be found in a healthy economic development authority, can improve the quality of self-analysis and visioning in a community. Revelstoke, BC worked hard to get its own autonomous economic development unit, while Terrace, BC, has only recently, in 2015, gotten rid of theirs. ●

A company town can present itself as utopia, with a benevolent management taking care of all the needs of the workers. Yet, workers don't necessarily always share this perspective. Years down the road, when reconstructing its governance path, a community cannot take

the founding company rhetoric at face value. Nordegg, Alberta, situated in the foothills of the Rockies, is a useful example. The town was built by cosmopolitan and enlightened entrepreneur Mr. Martin Nordegg and his company, Brazeau Collieries. Nordegg, a German immigrant, started developing coal seams in the area, with Canadian help, in 1907. For a later generation, living in a more autonomous but smaller community after the mining company has left, the memories of the company town can again become rosier, and the old rhetoric starts to ring true. Mr. Nordegg might be more popular now in Nordegg than he was a century ago. The influence of unions in improving working conditions is forgotten, the suffering in the mine has been erased from memory, and the connections between mining, railway, banking, steel, forestry companies, and government actors have changed and evolved.

*Image: Adam Roy. Museum of Northern British Columbia.
Prince Rupert, BC*

Prince Rupert, BC, has an indigenous city population of about 50 percent, but they do not often voice their interests collectively. The real actors are not always visible, and a combination of old merchant elite and unions remains influential, even if these merchants are not merchants anymore, and even when the mills and canneries, the places where unions thrived, are gone. A revitalized port, now for containers, and the promise of oil and gas development has shifted power relations, bringing new actors into local governance. It also propelled local politicians onto the international scene, since the container port existed in and thanks to international networks. Most goods go to Chicago, and people there had to be convinced and cultivated. Fishermen and their organizations, once prominent, have disappeared into the background of local governance, although a fishing union leader still sits on council, a remnant of past distinction.

A company might have been devoted to a version of caring capitalism and have worked on community building, might even have been tied to the local community by family links, by social and emotional connection. But the founding family can be long gone, a series of mergers and acquisitions can have carried off the company headquarters, affinities, and sensibilities far away, and the long-term perspective of the company might not be linked at all to a long-term perspective for the town where it all began. Those changes affect a community's relationships with the other actors, and the potential role of other actors in questioning and contributing to future strategies. Mapping actors is never isolated from tracing the changing identifications and roles over time, of the stories that diverse individuals and institutions tell about themselves, the community, and other actors. A company can be considered synonymous with the community for a while, then morph into a paternalistic figure, then a distant cousin, and finally become a dangerous parasite.

CASE STORY: DRUMHELLER AND THE LOBBYING DINOSAURS

For Drumheller, Alberta, its distinctive badlands landscape and identity as the so-called "Dinosaur Capital of the World", home to the world-class Royal Tyrrell Museum since 1985, has enabled the town to gain a high level of recognition. According to a municipal official, a former museum employee, this identity boosts local pride. Still, many are reluctant to embrace tourism, calling it a "phantom industry'" where people come, spend their time and money, but do not "exist or contribute" to the same life in town as residents. This belief persists despite the fact that roughly one in three residents are now directly or indirectly employed by the industry. It may be argued that leadership in Drumheller has not adequately communicated the value of tourism, nor translated its value into good planning and positive municipal governance.

Curiously, lobbying from town "boosters", including individuals that were very "pro-paleontology", started as early as the 1950s. In recent years, however, locals note the inconveniences of tourism. In particular, seasonal fluctuations in population and stress on infrastructure are common grievances. Many reject comparisons with Banff, Alberta or Whistler, BC, fearing the scale of the tourism industry in these places and citing the highly seasonal nature of local tourism and the size of Drumheller as reasons to push back. Yet, as the municipal official we interviewed explains, many fail to grasp the significance of the town's current context. Other paleontological "hotbeds" do not rival the touristic popularity of

Drumheller and the Royal Tyrrell Museum. A shift in leadership rhetoric and ideas, it may be argued, could serve to better connect and familiarize residents to the geographic and social reality of their area. The priorities and intentions of former actors, such as the 1950s dinosaur lobbyists and boosters, are no longer easily recognized by residents.

What feels like an external story now was thus partly invented and strongly embraced locally a long time ago. A reaffirmation amongst locals of the "dinosaur story" would allow them to connect the landscape amenities with the museum, and to see the downtown as a base for exploration, but also for the development of related activities and businesses designed to complement the museum by drawing on themes of prehistory, history, landscape, culture, and intellectual outdoor life. Connectivity is a keyword here. The forgetting of past actors and non-recognition of old local strategies contributes to the current population's half-hearted response to potential opportunities for growth, marked by barely connected and half-recognized assets.

Images: Adam Roy. Royal Tyrell Museum. Drumheller, AB

When discussing actors and influence, a discussion about *leadership* is necessarily in place.

Leaders make a difference. Leaders can be individuals, groups, or organizations; they can be loosely structured or tightly woven. One could speak of elites, in a good and a bad sense. Of movers and shakers, of community builders, of power brokers. People talk of protectors, guardians, icons, and heroes, of inspiring examples, communicators, and networkers. There can be powers behind power, hiding outside the spotlight. Leadership, in other words, has many forms and faces, some more appreciated than others, some present in formal politics, others not. Leadership can be self-serving, community-oriented, or both, and only some sorts of leadership will be recognized locally. Each time and place has its own form of leadership and its own aspirations for good leadership.

Path mapping as the mapping of actors, institutions, power, and knowledge over time requires mapping of leadership and reflection on leadership past and present. This aspect of mapping helps bridge analysis and strategizing, as leaders are the individuals who make things happen. Even well-crafted institutions do not perform by themselves, and their performance will derail without leadership. Adaptive capacity and resilience are a matter of institutional design, and of discerning leadership. Roles and rules, actors and institutions by themselves provide the frame for action, but not the impetus for desirable change. Radical participation has never worked, can never exist for long on its own, and does not provide an alternative for structured leadership. In a democratic combination of participation and representation, with institutional frameworks expected to guide the evolution of the community, leadership cannot be excluded.

Leadership can be both visionary and destructive, even at the same time. Just as with corporate management, it should not be fetishized nor glorified. Management can, in both public and private sectors, function as governance administration, and can indeed fulfill a leadership role. Leaders can wreak havoc in a community, and strong leadership can do more harm than weaker leaders. On the other hand, absent leadership introduces a different vulnerability, absence of direction and implementation. City councils are not necessarily the sole or most influential leaders; leadership can be found in other places or it can be largely absent, for instance, when influential factions exist but no one actor has a vision for or an influence on the whole community. One strong voice in council can bring leadership, whether it is found in a faction, or with an economic interest behind it. Discerning sources of leadership and direction is the domain of path mapping.

Good leadership, we believe, is capable of navigating the landscapes of risk, necessity, and opportunity that are visible within governance, to help the community reflect on, articulate, and implement visions. Undertaking any of those activities requires careful reading of circumstances and context, a combination and manipulation of formal and informal institutions. Leadership, then, goes beyond power, ideas, persuasion, and negotiation; rather, it is a craft of refined interpretation of external and internal conditions and a capacity to translate and match those conditions with existing institutions, with the potential to devise new ones. As we move forward, we will expand on this line of reasoning and understanding of leadership.

● *In Pincher Creek, Alberta, strong leadership was an important part of the story of transition from oil and gas dependency to the current focus on wind energy development and, to a lesser extent, tourism. Given the reliance on several industries that were in decline, local leaders started to look for alternative avenues in economic diversification. In this community, timely leadership came from the local economic development board, and then from several municipal government leaders, including the mayor. These local elected officials were instrumental in bringing forward a new vision for economic development that centered on wind energy and tourism development.* ●

2. Rules, roles, and formal/informal institutions for long-term perspectives

With roles come rules; with actors come institutions. We have distinguished between policies, plans, and laws as types of formal institutions. Each community uses all three, but in different combinations, and their use will shift over time and vary based on the issues at hand. Formal and informal institutions supplement each other in shaping long-term perspectives for the community. For a community to manage boom and bust, to survive and thrive, we need long-term perspectives, in governance itself and amongst participating actors.

Long-term perspectives are helpful because they serve as frames of reference, to give direction but also to assist in analyzing and reflecting. They help communities adapt to changing circumstances, as they can provide responses that are tied to core values and narratives extending into the future. Long-term perspectives are not only stories present in discussions; often, they are condensed futures embodied in all elements of governance, including actors, institutions, power, and knowledge.

They create dependencies. Actors imbued with long-term perspectives have stories about themselves and their community which may date far into the past and look far into the future, as well as knowledge and expertise that supports these visions, and ways of observing the environment that help to assess progress. By encoding and embedding long-term thinking into institutions, communities and actors can strengthen the impact of their visions as they are confronted with traces of old perspectives, old futures codified in institutions, and/or tools of governance they can't ignore. Institutions stabilize expectations and interactions in governance itself, and through governance, in the rest of the community. One cannot write all the laws, policies, or plans affecting the community locally, but in Canada, there is much space to act, to use institutions to devise and enact strategy.

Path mapping, understanding the presence, absence, confrontation, and transformation of long-term perspectives in the past can help actors analyze the present and move towards strategizing for the future. Once again, analysis of strategy inspires strategy.

Considering the qualities of laws, policies, and plans

If we want to discern the space for future local institutions, we need to understand what laws, policies, and plans currently exist, how they work, and how they interact with one another and with informal institutions, and we need to see how, in the local governance path, institutions have previously played out. We are still in the domain of path mapping.

Laws are the most rigid of institutions, and the ones over which local places have least influence. That is, local actors can work with bylaws and can, in some cases, create and manipulate local law. While there do exist other, sometimes more informal, forms of local law, for leadership there is much more space to be found in the managing of law through the selective interpretation and implementation of provincial or federal level laws, and negotiations with other actors on how to apply these rules.

Public policy is commonly considered to be the output of politics. However, we have increasingly come to realize that policies, that is, what governments and governance "do", are often shaping politics, rather than the other way around. Policies and plans are more flexible, in implementation and in adaptation, than legislation. Policies, however, only work within the frame of laws, and laws, for their part, can uphold and codify, but also delimit policies.

Plans can potentially be the most powerful tools for a community to move forward, as integral visions for an alternative future that incorporates

many actors, ideas, areas of expertise, and policies. That is why we like to emphasize the importance of planning, especially spatial planning, as a site of policy integration. Many things take place in space, and thinking about the organization of space allows us to give many activities a space so they do not contradict and harm each other, so valuable spaces can be saved, new qualities can be created, and several problems can be tackled at the same time. Plans can increase flexible adaptation but also make it harder — they can help a community to reflect, observe, and guide itself, but they can also, conversely, make this more difficult by usurping the place of ongoing reflection, pretending to represent the "correct" future.

● *Communities can forget that they are the planners and that plans mean nothing outside the evolving community. Kitimat, BC suffered from that syndrome, in part blinded by the fame and success of its original planner and city plan. The style and ideology of the original plan did not consider the value of organic placemaking; its modernism assumed that the scientific planner knew what residents and others objectively needed, and how that translated into an optimal and correct plan. Now, most planners would say that plans evolve as communities change and people want a say on their public and private spaces. More intricate combinations of land uses, not all planned, contribute to placemaking, creating a combination of well-designed spatial frameworks with openness for new assets and qualities to be discovered. That said, Kitimat's original plan can be considered an asset in its own right. Rather than outright rejection, we would argue for reflection, continuous assessment, modification, and expansion.* ●

Path mapping shows us which institutions made a difference, which ones were accepted and how they combined. Informal institutions require more tracing, digging, and detective work, and just as with actors, such investigation will trigger useful discussion if done properly — Is the revered plan from the 1950s as good and as influential as we think? Why has the subsequent plan, much praised in the 1970s, now fallen out of favour? Even in a one-industry town, there will be many actors and many institutions, a rich world of informality.

● *In Edmonton, Alberta, British-born planner Noel Dant saw planning as design, and understood the city as the main developer of new neighbourhoods. His plans, the Parkallen neighbourhood for example, include a denser centre, with a park, school, shops, services, and apartments for social housing. During the mid-1900s when Dant was active in Edmonton, the city had a housing shortage and a version of conservative ideology in city council that accepted a strong local government as responsible for taking care of residents' housing needs.*

Later, ideologies and interdependencies in Edmonton changed, with external developers taking a more leading role, and plans designed solely by government planners never again took centre stage. Dant's neighbourhood concept now looks revolutionary, and a similar proposal now would face stiff opposition. ●━━━━━━━━

We know that informal institutions can be parallel rules, and rules to manage formal rules. Informal institutions can help to stitch together formal institutions, fill in gaps in strategies for the long term, in formation and implementation. In path mapping, when searching for long-term perspectives, more insight might be found when considering the interplay of formal and informal institutions. Visions for the long term can be present without leaving concrete traces in formal long-term plans; adaptation mechanisms might have existed, hidden forms of diversification and resilience. They can be situated in combinations of visible and invisible actors, formal and informal institutions, a result of coincidence and planning, of small events interpreted afterwards as the seeds of strategy.

Learning from former strategizing gives insight into what will work now, or what may need to change to achieve a different result. If plans never worked in the past, and the reasons for that, formal and informal, are still in place, there is no reason to assume they will work now. If a local elite who always shaped local strategy is still in place, one can wish to replace that elite, or, likely more productively, one can try to make their thinking slightly more inclusive. If the community leaders' breakfast at the gas station is an important site for negotiating informal strategies, try to join it every now and then.

3. Mapping power/ knowledge

Mapping actors and institutions can be a self-examination by the community. Path mapping as a community activity can have many outcomes: it can have a therapeutic effect and be an engaging learning process, building capacity, and extending networks. It can be entertaining, and is always political. There is no neutral outsider position possible, no neutral procedure, no objective picture — building a picture of the past is always a local interpretation that can give meaning to the community, can provoke useful conflict, help in solving conflict, and, at its best, can play a role in moving that community forward.

Mapping continuity: Assumptions of the present, analyses of the past

New community stories emerge most successfully out of old ones. New identities do not come from nowhere. Mapping the changing patterns and impacts of stories, competing ideas of identity, of the good community and the good future, stories on the past, can prove useful in strategy building. Mapping power and knowledge means looking for these alternating, competing, amalgamating, invented, and forgotten stories, tracing how they link to actors and institutions. It is investigating the layering and embedding of stories which marks any community. Ideologies can compete and can be embedded in narratives about the place. Narratives in governance can include and exclude local and expert voices. The use of particular metaphors can inspire a certain delineation of problems, and solutions, and foster new understanding of the world.

The layers of stories in governance tend to keep its image of self and environment in place, so alternative understandings of the world seep in only with great difficulty. Alternative ways of organizing ourselves seem empty, appear to be based on nothing. As individuals and as communities, we tend to create storied worlds which hold their own test of truth, tricks to render oneself immune to external truth and value — no, evolution cannot be real, and fossils are obviously God testing our belief. The most cohesive, cozy communities can also be the ones that shatter when circumstances change. They cannot adapt. On the other hand, social cohesion, social capital, and strong identity can also have the opposite effects, enabling strong strategy building and adaptation if the concepts of diversity, learning, and adaptation are gradually built into the self-image, and if conflict and difference are given a structural place in self-governance.

● *Smithers, BC is aware of its Swiss heritage. It chose Swiss themes for its downtown revitalization, drawing on its local roots without imposing a unitary style. Historically, Swiss guides explored the mountains and made trails for mining exploration, for leisure, and to reconnect with their own European mountain roots. A Swiss hiking club was entrusted with monitoring early ascents and caring for the landscape. Members kept a record of all trail-making and climbing in specialized books, and shared their knowledge within their community. Social learning was enabled through this Swiss, and later semi-Swiss, network, and both community knowledge and asset building were encouraged through it. Smithers was able to brand its Swiss connection, because it there was a reality to it, and because that reality was easy to turn into an attractive story, and easy to link to the physical townscape and landscape.*

The story of Smithers could be expanded without straying too far from these beginnings. Outdoors activities, images of strong organization and care for the environment could be developed into other activities. Other local histories, less interesting for economic reinvention, are not interfering too much with the rebranding, as they did not leave too many traces. Mining didn't destroy the landscape assets, and a historical asset was added (as well as a recreational one — the ski hill is a gem). One could argue that the local networks are so strong that it didn't even need the Swiss branding - they would have been able to see another path. ● ▬▬▬

▬▬▬▬▬▬ *● Similar to Smithers, BC, the community of Camrose in east-central Alberta has a long history of connections with Scandinavia, and with Norway in particular. Founded by Norwegian settlers, it is still home to a settler museum, a Norwegian bakery, a University of Alberta campus (originally founded by Norwegians for English language instruction in the early 20th century), an extensive network of cross-country ski trails, and a ski jump! All of these assets are reflections of the heritage of the community, yet these connections are also slowly disappearing. An increasingly mobile population means that more and more people work and seek recreation elsewhere, in Edmonton for example, while real estate pressures mean iconic spaces such as the ski jump, which hasn't been used safely in decades, are at-risk, as planners seek to meet demand for new housing developments. ●* ▬▬▬

Lack of diversity in perspectives is a typical problem in boom/bust communities, one aspect of the concentration problem — the bigger issue of there being fewer actors, fewer institutions, absent long-term perspectives, and less knowledge or forgotten knowledge of alternatives. A narrowing of perspectives is common for a place with tightly woven local knowledge. Deeply embedded knowledge tends to become highly self-referential. If mining, forestry, or fishing knowledge is prevalent in local governance, underpinned by stories about identity and validated by a small set of actors in charge, critical capacity and other perspectives tend to leave. New ideas are rarely accepted. We encountered this dilemma earlier, in Part II of this guide: if we believe in very local democracy, communities are free to remain in a state of cozy yet false certainty, a vulnerable state. Outsiders can be useful by politely pointing out the situation and encouraging self-reflection.

Power/knowledge mapping is indeed complex, as different sorts of knowledge frame each other and compete with each other on a daily basis, while long-term trends can be barely visible, hidden in assumptions of local policy and planning. An actor in power can be clearly linked to a knowledge perspective, a sort of preferred expertise. For example,

she may hire only sociologists for community planning. Conversely, others may be suspicious of any specialized expertise whatsoever, and try to sell a narrative in which effective community management is limited to basic bookkeeping. As with the other aspects of mapping, a communal exploration of the relationships between power and knowledge, including the selectivities in knowledge which power introduces and manipulates and the stories which generate power, can have a therapeutic effect by shedding light on issues.

● If, in Edmonton, Alberta, the public believes and is critical of the idea that planners can develop visions and carry out design, and it is mostly their power/knowledge which frames the creation of spaces, then a path mapping of power/knowledge can bring to light that it is in reality a different set of players which makes city space. The analysis can reveal to the public that not the planners but the interplay between private developers, city engineers, and council members, with and without connections to developers, leads to the things they are critical of. It is that combination of actors which should be scrutinized and addressed. A second insight path mapping could bring is that not only planners, as a group, but also design, as a perspective, is not as important as one might think. Developers can employ designers; the city can have good designers, but their visions can be undermined by political calculations and, within administration, by traditions of planning passivity and privileged engineering expertise.

If we see local knowledge as a possible corrective to these issues, one has to refrain from thinking immediately and uniquely about local community groups at the neighborhood level (in Edmonton called 'leagues'), as these are, naturally, selective in voices, knowledge, and sensitivities, and, secondly because "local", just as "community", can refer to many things besides a neighbourhood as a unit built by one developer. ●

Openness to local knowledge cannot be confused with taking every form of local knowledge at its face value. It does not require an entirely localist attitude to governance, turning every little village into a closed kingdom. Maximal inclusivity for diverse forms of local knowledge is not always the best way to move forwards, as each situation can benefit from a different combination of expert and local knowledge, and from mutual enrichment, correction, and confrontation.

● In Prince George, BC, pulp mills were central to the community for many decades and community development was seen in the context of improvement to the mills. Knowledge of the pulp industry, its technology and economics, could harness political power, as all parties saw the

future as a future of pulp mills, with the same actors or same kinds of actors remaining in place. In recent years, mining, industrial services, and higher education have changed the character of the place, and mining inside knowledge no longer holds the same political value or impact. The pulling back of Canfor, the milling company formerly at the centre of community development, from direct interventions in the community as it tries to become a lean global operation has also shaped this change. For many, Canfor has come to embody this new northern business culture of distancing from community. ●

Specific local linkages between power and knowledge deserve consideration when devising strategies for the future, and when analyzing the past. While it is always tempting to project the assumptions of the present on our analysis of the past and the future, this does not improve our quality of understanding. Path mapping of power and knowledge reveals how the present came to be, the functioning of governance to date and the stories about that functioning. It provides another stepping stone for strategy building, as power relations and configurations of knowledge in the present contain the conditions for changing them. Understanding power and knowledge means seeing more clearly how current conditions embody obstacles for change, and how they may be amenable to it.

Further issues of concentration

We are not done quite yet with the concentration problem, wherein like-minded and like-experienced individuals tend to group together in small and limited industry towns. In boom and bust communities, this issue is associated with special features in the configuration of power/knowledge. Power/knowledge is simplified, narrowed, and so closely entwined that new stories or new proposed activities often face stiff opposition.

Path mapping might reveal the impact and importance of speed. The speed of development in early boom places has effects on power/ knowledge. Actors and stories arriving early, surviving initial instability, can stay in place for a long time and can be hard to replace later on. In such cases, distribution of knowledge is more limited and concentrated than in slowly growing towns, but also more haphazard, contingent on the level of chaos in the beginning and the ups and downs experienced later. A high speed of development makes it harder for rules and roles to crystallize, for a diversity of perspectives and appropriate checks and balances to become institutionalized.

In Northern BC, not too far from Terrace, a company mining the mineral molybdenum built a town which existed for three years. Can we call this a community? Can other actors, outside the company and a supportive provincial government, be imagined? What other knowledge, beyond specialized mining knowledge, could have played a role in the making of major decisions affecting such a community?

Kitimat, BC, on the other hand, has survived much longer than three years. It has a preceding history, an established First Nations community that is likely to inhabit Kitimat Village for many more generations, weathering the ups and downs of industry. For Kitimat proper, in its early years, the aluminum smelter and nearby mine was central to social and physical development. Extensive social research preceded the formal planning of Kitimat, and planning itself was integrated into the town plan content as valued expertise. However, this was all at the service of the company, then a state company with a long-term perspective and a mission to develop the "North", which included the goal of establishing a sustainable community. In this case, an acceptance of specialized planning expertise came with that goal.

In boom times, the speed that money is being made also means that deliberation, confrontation, and combination of different stories is seen as wasteful. This further undermines cognitive complexity and diversity of knowledge in governance. In the long run, this diversity would provide adaptive capacity, but in such situations there is often no long run envisioned. The lack of consideration of long-term perspectives, in combination with speed and the concentration problem, plus a dependency on a single and limited resource, makes it harder to anticipate and buffer the shocks of booms and busts. Without diversity, shocks will likely have more effect on the governance system and the community beyond.

Lack of foresight and simplified power/knowledge aggravate shocks and often lead to polarization and further simplification in power/knowledge. When times get tough, the choice is often to hunker down, fasten seat belts and do "what we're good at", or, the opposite. Responses to the

next shock are often even more narrow. In practice, the knowledge in governance will either become a further entrenched version of the present one as leadership and actors "dig in", or, a radical shift in another direction, similarly contingent on narrow current knowledge and expertise, and similarly missing in diversity, checks and balances, and foresight.

4. Mapping dependencies

The concentration problem that rears its head often on these pages implies a strong set of *path dependencies*, in terms of a limited set of actors, institutions, and power/knowledge keeping each other in place. In path mapping, the tracing of path dependence will provide support later in the building of strategy. Path dependencies do not mean that all is predictable and nothing can be changed; rather, understanding fine-grained patterns of path dependencies can show a community more about the reasons why they work the way they work. It can indicate where leverage points for change can be found. After analysis of path dependencies, some options for the future might be abandoned, some tools reconsidered. Equally possible may be finding a different route to the same objective, via different actors or different stories, employing different, possibly informal, institutions.

Material dependencies

If we keep in mind the rapid development, unstable nature, concentration problems, and short-term thinking at work in many boom/bust communities, we can point out certain common path dependencies:

• a few actors dominate the game, and
• relatively few institutions, so
• tight and simplified power/knowledge configurations, this means
• few tools and sites of policy integration,
• little planning,
• few comprehensive policies towards community development,
• a dominance of economics, engineering, and possibly environmental (mitigation, exploration) expertise,
• no attention to local knowledges except when helpful in exploration,
• a narrowing of future visioning to the future of one industry, and
• development understood as a repetition and expansion of the present.

Such dependencies demonstrate many of the patterns described earlier in this book. The first four speak to the dynamics of homophily and concentration, and the implications in terms of innovation, change,

and linkages to new ideas, people, or opportunities. The other ones reflect broader patterns in much of contemporary public policy, in particular, an emphasis upon technical expertise and knowledge, a reliance on linear thinking and models rather than systems or complexity-based thinking, and a tendency to reduce economic and community development to its component parts, that is, what many people refer to as "siloing". Unfortunately, we now have a wealth of evidence that shows that while working within dedicated bureaucratic structures (silos) works for simple problems such as getting new passports or enrolling people into classes at a school, these structures really struggle when faced with complexity, non-linearity, and change — the very dynamics that local governments and governance face every day! The particular character of boom/bust communities gives these general tendencies a new poignancy.

We already know the shocks coming with boom and bust do not often change these dependencies or alter these continuities. The memory of bust does not prevent bust, nor does it trigger critical examination of governance and community. We know that the self-selection of boom development brings in a concentration of like-minded people and stories that crowd out others, and that the resulting identity narrative can, if one-dimensional, easily bring about a rigid mode of governance. If governance is dominated by such identity politics, then the memory of many busts will likely lead to only more nostalgia, to an entrenched idea that everything was better in the past, and that the only way forward is a return to that mythical past. The only "real" jobs and "real" economic development modes will then be seen as the mostly imagined well-paying, safe jobs from the past in the industry of the past.

A special form of path dependence relevant to many boom/bust places is material path dependence. We introduced this concept earlier, in Part I of this guide. We can now distinguish a few different versions of material dependency:

• infrastructural dependencies,
• environmental dependencies, and
• the materiality of the resource.

In path mapping, it will become clear rather quickly that these different elements can influence each other, as material and other path dependencies tend to reinforce others. If a village is designed for the needs of one industry, all infrastructure in and around it will be there to optimize one land use, to go to certain spots in a certain way and time, to develop and maintain certain networks and not others, and to bring certain services and goods to specific places. This state of infrastructure networks will shape the further development or lack of development of a place. The rigidity, size, maintenance cost, replacement cost,

and redesign cost of such infrastructures necessarily shapes how communities can think about their future. Large-scale irrigation systems in dry areas are a notorious example, narrowing down futures dramatically. Less dramatic, but similar, material dependencies can include patterns of logging and fire roads in forestry regions, or urban street patterns and the quality of workers' housing in industrial complexes.

Image: Adam Roy, Terrace, BC

In northwestern BC, business offices, hotels, and big box stores prefer to locate themselves in Terrace, for its centrality. Even as large-scale operations take place in nearby Kitimat or Prince Rupert, Terrace's key location allows it to remain a relevant checkpoint within the region, for both tourists and workers. As a result, in recent years, the town has remained relatively stable in comparison to other communities, experiencing no major "booms" or "busts" in recent memory. There was, however, sharp population decline in the period after the closure of the town's two main mills. This bust came earlier than in other communities dependent on the forest sector — closures were due to poor quality wood and inaccessible forest lots. The development of the city as a retail hub was an active and deliberate strategy on the part of the city's economic development office and council. The strategy to capitalize on its central location can thus be seen as an adaptation to previous hard times, a combination of material path dependence and strategy. And, despite its success, it is not all roses — retail jobs pay low wages and offer limited benefits compared to mill jobs. Inequality and lack of wages to support housing options remain ongoing problems. Some vulnerabilities, in this case, industry collapse, have been replaced by other vulnerabilities. In other words, resilience is relative.

The materiality of resources can affect the infrastructural path dependencies, but can also generate other forms of dependency. "Natural resources" can vary significantly in extraction, processing, shipping, and use, and "resource development" and "resource towns"

can be similarly distinct. Over-emphasizing the similarity between "resource-based communities" obscures the uniqueness of dependencies, the unique interactions between resource, infrastructure, environment, and the other dependencies. For example, a diamond mine is not a coal mine is not a forest is not a sea with fish. The unique path dependencies stemming from the character of the resource and magnified through identity narratives can be truly staggering.

We can describe environmental path dependencies as environmental effects of the exploitation history and their consequences for future development. They can be observed and recognized in the community, or not. Often, associated with the concentration problem, there is a lack of recognition of the consequences of long-term environmental exploitation on the town environs, or even within the town itself. If these environmental dependencies are not seen, any linkages with infrastructural dependencies and limitations for strategy stemming from environmental dependencies are almost certainly beyond the scope of local consideration. In such cases, a clear-headed assessment of assets cannot be expected.

Image: Adam Roy, Terrace, BC

Imagine a place that is covered in black dust, with neighbourhoods that are rickety and ravaged by rampant tunneling for coal for over a century. In and around the town big buildings and other structures associated with mining are falling apart, and artificial black hills of coal slacks hurt the eye. The water quality is poor and residential amenities and services have been neglected for generations.

Certainly unless this environmental path dependency is fully faced and grasped by the community, and some cleanup is undertaken, options for future growth and development are limited.

Take Prince Rupert, BC as an example of a place which sees itself as a fishing community, a place where "fisherman values" dominate. It is expected that one or more council members will be fishermen from an old fishing family, and young men leave school before graduation because a "real man" is expected to be at sea. A "real community", in such circumstances, consists of "real men". As dominant discourses reinforce themselves, alternative perspectives are pushed aside. Experts or other onlookers that point out the limits of the central resource are considered dangerous outsiders. Likewise, ideas that could help manage the sustainability of the fish supply as a resource, or calls to consider tourism development, both of which could contribute to the long-term survival of the community in modified form, are dismissed because of their external origin and their nature.

In cases such as this, ideologies and discourses reinforce the impact of material path dependencies, ignoring warning signs and exacerbating the physical impacts or limitations of one kind of resource extraction or processing.

Interdependencies

Actors, even when competing, can rely on one another and keep each other in place. Actors and institutions do the same, and institutions rely on other institutions for their understanding and functioning. Grasping *interdependencies* is part of the path mapping work a community can undertake to investigate its options for transformation. As with the other aspects of path mapping, discerning, revealing, and discussing interdependencies is a political act, and is likely to raise eyebrows or affect sensitivities. Analyzing who and what keeps each other in place means directly exposing power relations and informal institutions, not always to the benefit of those in power. Boom/bust communities, often only marginally inclined towards self-analysis, are likely less inclined to engage in mapping interdependencies. More circumspection might be needed — careful timing and a listening ear for questions coming up *within* the community are advisable. For example, if one local land owner in a prairie town holds the council in a stranglehold because

they are dependent on his goodwill for development, campaign financing, or infrastructure maintenance, then nobody of significance will benefit from exposing this interdependence. However, participatory visioning without at least acknowledging this power dynamic will likely lead nowhere.

Goal dependencies

Goal dependencies in boom/bust places are notoriously weak. More specifically, the influence of plans and policies towards diversification and alternative development is fragile. The power of any long-term strategy tends to be minimal because it has not been tested and developed. For many resource communities the future is seen to be in the hands of an industry or external market and is thus not controllable. Tools for coordination towards a long-term perspective are not there, or exist only on paper, and are felt as something imposed by outside parties — "yes, we had to do zoning". In other cases, these tools are used for window dressing or to check off administrative boxes — "look, nature conservation".

On the other hand, the initial and simple goal of establishing a resource town is often visible everywhere. This is especially the case when the story of place identity contains a kernel of a vision, and that identity narrative dominates local governance. Such a strong initial vision can override any alternative, and all other and later formal tools of coordination that point towards alternative futures, even industry-based futures, remain unable to withstand a challenge.

Building adaptive capacity and resilience in boom/bust communities will therefore strengthen goal dependencies. This can take several forms, including:

• testing plans and policy integration at a smaller scale, with less ambitious goals,
• demonstrating the work of long-term coordination in other places,
• showing that reinvention is possible and
• in these efforts goal dependencies had to be strengthened,
• stronger institutions for coordination had to be built and used.

Again, in our exploration of goal dependencies, we have stumbled into the territory of strategy making, which we will expand on in Parts V and VI of this guide. Strengthening of goal dependencies might, however, be a natural outcome of path mapping, and being aware of the existence of such positive patterns might help with identifying and, subsequently, building upon them.

The planning legacies of Edmonton, Alberta show traces of several ups and downs. A dismantling of formal city planning since the 1980s, the material legacy of the 1970s boom, and the speculative subdivision before WWI all left traces on the city and the way it is organizing its further development. In recent years, planners have had to be brought in quickly from other places, without institutional memory, to manage rapid growth. Although this made the newcomers vulnerable to potential future shifts, it also had the effect of injecting new planning ideas into the city, which have been supported by a new mayor. ●

Goal dependencies can evolve over time and impact a community's physical, social, and political reality. Therefore, the structure and functioning of the governance system, as well as the options and availability of tools for change, can exhibit the consequences of many different periods. One boom might have led to a new position for developers, a position which still remains. Another boom might have produced a physical infrastructure which was substantial for the next generation, while a bust might have led to the disappearance of planning expertise within the town, making it hard to rebuild. Planners hired during the next boom may automatically be at a disadvantage to other local experts, such as engineers and lawyers, who were not fired in the last bust, who know the game, and have had the time to shape informal rules to suit their interests.

5. Mapping context and paths

When beginning the process of context mapping, one can always start with a brief sketch of relevant contexts, such as certain provincial laws or plans, the world market for goods, environmental regulation, or the emergence of new actors at higher levels with local impact. Most importantly, we need to become inspired by the findings in the path analysis. A provincial definition of a municipality is always relevant to development planning, but local path mapping can indicate whether it is a key obstacle or driver of change, or rather a more or less neutral frame in which communities shape their own destiny.

In the case of the Canadian west, we already know a few relevant governance-related contexts that apply to most, if not all, boom and bust communities:

• the Municipal Government Act (Alberta),
• definitions of types of municipality,

- predictability or unpredictability of provincial and federal funding of local governments,
- possibilities and limits of regional cooperation, and
- rules and traditions regarding spreading of benefits and risks of resource exploitation.

We can further add:

- differing provincial traditions and legislations regarding planning, environment, economic development, and
- perceived desirable forms of democracy.

Other common external factors and contexts that are important to map may include the actions of the mother corporation of a company active in town or an international trade deal impacting supply and demand of a core resource. An encyclopedia of the world cannot generate the local insights needed for community-specific context mapping, but a few things in the larger world can help to explain local governance paths. In the Canadian context, a highly federalized country, the province will certainly be an actor with which to reckon.

Path mapping and context mapping rely on other methods. They are meta- or umbrella methods that help us structure community self-analysis. Other methods of investigation will be needed to give them more body, to implement them.
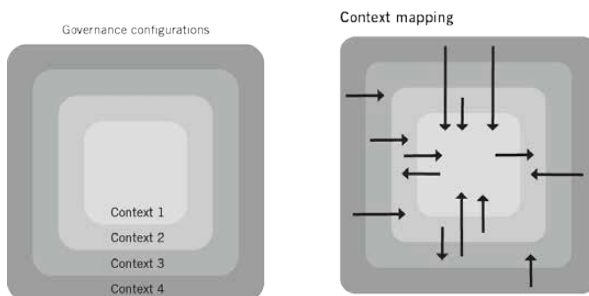
Figure 10. Governance always exists in context: material contexts and other levels of governance. Context mapping is discerning the most relevant contexts and the strongest linkages between them; it helps to see the limits of local autonomy but also the resources to be tapped at other levels.

Path and context mapping can be conceived in many ways:

- a longer, more involved process or a shorter quick scan,
- a more or less participatory approach,
- a more or less political process,
- a more or less therapeutic process (deeper self- analysis, working through trauma).

Path and context mapping
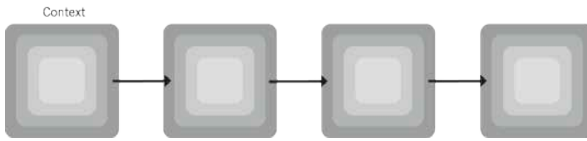
Context

Figure 11. Self-analysis by a community ideally combines aspects of path mapping and context mapping. The community decides how far it wants to go in this. If issues are serious and questions of autonomy urgent, a combination of the two forms of mapping, in depth, can be recommended.

We already encountered some of these versions of path and context mapping, and will explore more in the following pages. For now, we simply want to emphasize that communities can craft how they want to undertake self-analysis, choose less elaborate versions, versions focused on certain aspects of governance, and can decide for themselves how much time and resources are to be devoted, how many people will be involved and how often. Many things can fit under this umbrella and the umbrella can serve several purposes. We know activities usually have different meanings and functions — path mapping is self-study in governance for governance, looking for narratives and identities and possibly creating new ones.

A flexible approach is highly recommended, meaning that what is found in the process of path mapping, in terms of content, and what occurs, in terms of the community effects of the process, ought to inspire the next steps. Hence we call path and context mapping *adaptive methods* — they should change along the way, as the findings they produce come to light.

Maybe a mapping intended to be short brings up a more complex history and present reality than previously conceived, so more time and additional methods would prove useful. Or, an extensive community analysis may originally be intended as an expert-driven exercise, but controversy arises fast and it is wisely decided to open up and politicize the process more directly; research then quickly turns into community building and soul searching. Just as psychoanalysis is not for everybody, and just as every psychoanalytic therapy is tailored to support individual needs, finding a new and unique path or access to formerly repressed realities, path mapping is not to be taken lightly, not be understood as a formulaic or set process. Further, it cannot be conceived and presented as a necessarily pleasant activity.

This self-investigation, as flexible it might be, is necessarily political, and it will likely yield tense moments. The results of such "working through" community tensions can nonetheless be enlightening and liberating, and open up new pathways. Self-analysis is the start of a rewriting of identity, so the line between analysis and strategy can be

easily crossed. A community decision, a clearly stated intention to work on strategy, is nevertheless useful to focus energy and articulate steps from that point onwards.

If we see path and context mapping as adaptive methods, they require a cultivation of reflexivity, to make the process more flexible. The more ingrained the habit of self-reflection, of positioning oneself in relation to internal and external environments, the easier it becomes to adapt to those environments. The mapping process itself can further improve reflexivity: it will confront the community with itself, with different versions of its history and functioning. A more participatory character of mapping can either slow down or speed up this work on reflexivity — it can speed up the process because the community is more closely involved and invested, possibly shocked when confronted with and seeing new qualities in itself. A slower process can follow out of the same approach, however — while experts or small groups of locals can work fast at first, they can then open discussion up to the population to let the more therapeutic community work begin. It is possible that an immediate start with a highly participatory approach can bring the mapping and planning process to a grinding halt right away, while a slow and smooth, participatory intro might work better in other communities.

CASE STORY: CONTEXT AND SLAUGHTER

Patterns of municipal growth and contraction are often referred to as cycles. This terminology can reflect the experience of the ups and downs of an economy, particularly if economic health is dependent on the relatively predictable ups and downs of a resource market. However, the terminology can be misleading and it is essential that communities are able to recognize and build adaptation strategies to that wider shifts that leave communities vulnerable. Ups and downs in a community are not always the same as economic cycles, and they are dependent on what's happening at several scales. The success or failure of a community to sustain itself is closely related to how a community is supported within a network of other places, markets, and relationships. Understanding such networks is one way to conceive context mapping. A town or city, to different degrees, is a hub connecting supply chains, the movement of people, and flows of commerce. Reflexively mapping these relationships and understanding how a community shifts in its position to these networks is an essential first step to identifying new pathways, networks, and relations which can support more resilient strategies for development.

For example, many of Alberta's rural communities share a rich ranching

history that is deeply entangled with the identity of the province. However, the industry has changed rapidly over the past several decades and, following trends across North America, has become dominated by a small number of global food corporations and oriented towards highly productive and export-based models. These companies have, over time, centralized the processing and packing industries within two major plants, and production has followed similar trends with large ranches and feedlots as the dominant players. Previously, small family farms serviced by local towns provided a possible social and economic model for organizing community; however, many of these farming communities now struggle to be viable. Within this context, some smaller scale cattle producers continue to try to make it through the conventional marketplace. Emblematic of these shifts are the slaughterhouses: large ones, specializing in export, connect large farmers and food companies. Some remaining smaller slaughterhouses have reoriented towards local communities and smaller farms, and are exploring niche markets such as meats branded local or organic. Some space for a place-based economy remains, and it is a challenge now for local communities to expand this currently narrow, but promising, niche.

Many people faced with the question of how to incorporate community participation into a rather stringent self-analysis are not prepared. Tackling tough questions without preparation can be counter-productive and lead to delays and unproductive conflict. Informed local leaders can prepare their fellows, can explain the process and take away anxieties and doubts, helping them frame the process in advance to reduce chances of it stalling later. We can recommend an episodic structure for the process, alternating between smaller and larger groups, of experts and locals undertaking parts of the mapping activity. Mediators can organize the larger events and advisors assist in process design, in continuous consultation with the community.

Path and context mapping can be directly linked to strategy building, as we propose in this book, or it can be conceived *as a separate process*. The question of linking or not has to be considered for analytic and political reasons. A direct link implies a promise between the two, and as politics requires managing expectations, this makes it a riskier yet potentially more powerful approach. Some of the complementary methods briefly discussed below will make most sense undertaking a combination of both path mapping and strategy building. Others fit more into the frame of path mapping by itself. All of the methods discussed can be studied more extensively; refer to the literature and community resources listed at the end of Part III for recommendations on where to start in your own explorations.

6. Participatory methods for mapping

If a community is ready to embark on a participatory version of path mapping, and potentially strategizing, techniques of participatory governance deserve a closer look. Some of these techniques can be useful beyond the preliminary mapping stage — groups and organizational structures built during the self-analysis phase can simply stay in place and support community strategizing and visioning later. A brief menu:

• Open houses

In this method, actors organizing or co-organizing the mapping process invite all community members to a place where they can see the process at work, or a place where it is explained. Open houses can be part of self-analysis and strategy. The perception of openness, particularly in the first stages after initial process design, is crucial.

• Citizen juries

Small groups of citizens can discuss preliminary results of the path mapping process. As a participatory method, such discussion can be public, a tool to bring more people into the fold.

• "Charrettes"

Charrettes are short, fast, intensive planning, design, or visioning workshops, led and undertaken by experts or a combination of experts and local non-experts. They can be part of visioning later on, but can also be used as a research tool in participatory path and context mapping. Participants can sketch possible interpretations of community evolution, discuss potential scenarios, and link contexts to options for the future. Results can be discussed in public, and a larger group can have input earlier on during the strategizing process.

• Public meetings

Although public meetings cannot feasibly be the core of a manageable and effective community mapping process, they can be important to its success when used sparingly to mark phases in the process.

• Debates

Similar to public meetings, debates are not recommended as a core component of a public participatory process. They can develop their own

dynamic, perhaps even be too polarizing, where ad hoc statements gain more traction than deserved, to be useful in realistic self-analysis. Simple stories get the upper hand. Yet, as supplements to other techniques, debates can also sharpen and speed up the process of self-reflection, and bring stories to the surface which were not previously acknowledged.

• Discussion of statements or pre-studies

In public or in council, with actors involved in the process, a mediated discussion of the coming process can be of service to community mapping efforts, particularly when inspired by early studies or, if those are not available, a set of guiding statements prepared by a small project team.

• Introductory self-studies on local identity

This method provides a more cursory self-interrogation on local identity, strengths, weaknesses, and shifting values, and can be an innocuous introduction to a more substantial self-analysis later.

• Small and large workshops

Path and context mapping can be carried out by locals and experts, in slower and intensive phases, where the intensity can be found in community workshops. An early gathering can appoint smaller groups to work on key themes. These groups can have expert advisors or research assistants, and thematic groups can come together for more synthetic discussions later.

• Essay, photo, or art exhibits, competitions, and awards

Different forms of representation of the community can trigger renewed reflection in a larger circle, and inspire community leaders when identifying community contexts, narratives, and dependencies. The effect can be magnified by press attention, school visits, award ceremonies, and jury reports.

• Public discussion of design sketches and policy scenarios

This technique is also evidently useful in later strategy-making, but can also support mapping activities. Both old and new plans, designs, and scenarios can serve as a starting point for a discussion on a community's identity, its changing hopes and ideals, and its changing relationships and resources.

- ## Special debate and targeted media and public awareness campaign

  Local media can focus attention and force conversation by encouraging debate and analysis in condensed form. More than a letter to the editor or a pasted public service announcement, thematic issues or programs can spark collective reflection.

- ## Quick surveys and public discussion of results

  Even if detailed data are available on aspects of past governance paths, a quick survey, published and presented in the media, can have strong rhetorical effect. Even if most could predict the findings, it can confirm predictions or be a starter for debate. Findings can be questioned, for example, or stories can be compared and confronted.

- ## Citizen science

  Citizens can be included in even the more academic aspects of path and context mapping, such as the actual collection and analysis of information. Citizen-engaged data collection methods are conducted preferably in small teams, guided by experts, and directed by clear questions and tasks.

- ## Participatory agenda-setting for the path mapping process

  This may be the most daunting aspect of participation. Designing a participatory process can be participatory itself, within limits. Leadership, that is, current community leadership or the leadership of an emerging group advocating for rethinking and reinvention, will have to kick-start the process of process design. If the community is sold on the idea, participatory agenda-setting can be very productive and expand the scope and depth of the process. However, avoiding early derailment is crucial — expectations have to be clarified and, yes, managed.

  For more technical explanations of each of these techniques and others, please take a look at the literature and community resources section at the end of this section. We do not want to overemphasize technical aspects and we want to avoid the impression that such techniques are the core and the key of community analysis, strategizing, reinvention. Don't be too respectful of these techniques; be creative, see them for what they are, how simple their essence is, and how they might work for you in your process of self-analysis and strategizing. They are only ways to figure

out what people think, and ways to get people together, to see more and talk, to listen more and talk, to think more and talk. New techniques or combinations of techniques can easily be invented on the spot, opening up unique aspects of local governance in new, locally useful ways.

With all this in mind, rather than applying participatory *techniques* of governance, it is better to think of a temporary shift towards actual participation, at the expense of more formal representation, stable expectations, expert knowledge, administration, and entrenched checks and balances. This can be a good thing under particular circumstances, and it seems like a boom/bust community ready for reinvention is a prime candidate. The phase of self-study and community strategizing can be a transitional phase, a time of *transitional governance*.

7. Popular techniques of investigation for mapping and visioning

Once the timing and degree of participation is decided upon, one can reflect on the techniques of investigation more traditionally classified as formal. Some of the usual and useful suspects:

• Interviews, formal and informal, and more structured focus groups

In focus groups, small groups addressing an issue with a moderator, the idea is not just to see what people think, but to explore how their stories relate to and influence each other, how new ideas come up, and what stories are persuasive. Interviews and focus groups ideally include a diverse community cross-section, comprising different age groups, professions, perspectives, ideologies, and community identities, sometimes including people who cannot stand each other. Managing such differences in group settings is essential, and skilled local or external mediators play an important role. With respect to interviews, in identifying people to speak with, one may stumble upon people who turn out to be key informants. For path mapping, good key informants are people who are well versed in both formal and informal aspects of governance, for example, members of local elites, a farmer who always attended the community breakfast at the local cafe, or a retired city clerk who is aware of different factions and informal dealings, without belonging to one of them.

• Biographical and autobiographical methods

Biographical and autobiographical data collection methods are especially useful for tracing the causes, factors, and effects of dramatic economic and social swings in a place. People can tell their own and each other's stories, interrogate themselves and each other on their experiences in and of the place, and explore the relationships between their individual life and the changing community. Additional methods and sources of data can be used, such as old maps, photos, or newspaper clippings, to enrich the picture and elicit further recollection and discussion. Participants may include elderly individuals, still in town, or who have moved on, people who experienced different phases of the community's past, came in and left for different reasons, saw the pros and cons of resource dependence from different viewpoints, or had access to different aspects of governance. Life histories are a biographical method, a respectful series of interviews with people whose lives are likely to shed a unique light on boom/bust dynamics and place identity. Versions of these biographies may be combined with biographies of local historical figures, and, with permission, may also be displayed as a community exhibition or used as input in public discussion, which can in turn serve as both research and part of governance by reinforcing and communicating important local narratives.

• Mapping methods

Mapping, in the literal sense of visual representations of physical space, can be useful. Collecting a variety of old and recent maps to establish the geographical, economic, and sociological background for path mapping and visioning will save time and effort later. Making maps, even if utterly unprofessional, can, in addition to providing information to others, also help the map makers themselves (say, a group of citizens) to increase their own knowledge of the community, beyond the map. Self-made maps can be designed specifically to support path mapping. One can ask locals to draw mental maps of the town, discuss them, compare them, and link them to local narratives about the community. And one can use imaginary maps, of ideal and horrible towns, or best and worst case scenarios for their town, to provoke discussion and unearth assumptions about the future.

• Historical methods

Historical research may already exist locally, collected by local experts and externals, but additional work can often be very useful. This does not necessarily mean writing new books on the history of the town, but rather re-interpreting existing sources and historical texts produced by experts

for traditional academic work, for the specific purpose of feeding path mapping discussions. A community can decide to pay special attention to a rewriting of history, bringing in an expert for a more thorough study, or asking locals to devote time to a historical study. Historical methodology goes beyond fact finding; it maps out who, how, and why certain local histories were written, and others not written, in order to critically analyze and identify links and lineages of sources. It traces the self-image of the community as it has emerged out of historical circumstances.

• Observation, ethnography, and autoethnography

Observation and ethnography can be part of the repertoire of path mapping, used for understanding the present and, after historical investigation and other ways of unveiling the past, for finding traces of the past in the present. Ethnography is traditionally employed by outsiders to grasp what is unique in a community, its values, its interaction rules, its character, its traditions, and its assumptions and unique political and economic forms. Good ethnography takes time and immersion, and the results of such observational study are often not immediately recognized or accepted by the observed individuals and community. In addition, we can also consider an autoethnography of the community, in which a place studies itself. This can only be productive when the assumptions of the community are challenged in this self-study.

• Group conversations

Group conversations can be part of ethnographic methods, and can potentially function as an interview or focus group. When part of ethnography, the focus is on observation of the group or talking with them about local culture. When part of an interview, the focus is on finding facts, and when part of a focus group, it is about the dynamics of their stories. One can also use photos or old and new media items as starting points for group discussions, which can then be analyzed for differences in perspective, for interpretations of actors, institutions, power/knowledge, and dependencies.

• Analysis of responses to design, planning, or policy alternatives

This kind of observational analysis can happen in more participatory settings (see previous chapter) but also in one-on-one interviews, in walks through town, and via longer form questionnaires. Longer one-on-one interviews can provide an important depth of insight, but of course, this would not be possible for the whole community. Combining these

deeper methods of qualitative analysis with other, more quantitative data sources, such as statistics, is therefore recommended. The "alternatives" considered in such discussions or questionnaires can be current or past policies; for path mapping, mostly past policies, for developing strategies, mostly current. Follow-up questions can probe into the reasons of like or dislike, into the connections with values, stories, identifications, and an image of the community and its evolution.

• Gathering and analysis of basic community statistics and surveys

For path mapping and strategizing, highly sophisticated statistics are usually not necessary, but numbers on key community indicators, over time, can help structure the discussion and guide self-analysis. Even questioning the numbers, or producing alternative data, can be a valid part of the process. In-house statistics can be combined with data derived from academic literature or obtained from higher level governments, NGOs, or think tanks. Experts can play a role in explaining the data or presenting different possible interpretations, and this can be integral to a mapping or visioning discussion.

• Semiotic, discourse, narrative, or rhetorical analysis of plans, local laws, policies, local media, interview results, and observation

Semiotic analysis looks at the use and interpretation of symbols in the community. It distinguishes different sign systems beyond language: people express themselves and their culture in many ways, including through the organization of space, modes of organization, decoration, and stories in local media. One style of architecture, one accent, one style of gardening — each has a different meaning in different jurisdictions. Semiotic analyses look for structure in expression and for underlying assumptions: What are the signs? What do they mean? and Why? Rhetorical analysis is interested in the question of who is convincing whom and how. Discursive analysis looks for patterns in underlying assumptions. Narratives, we know, are a special form of discourse, and narrative analysis looks for narrative forms, and interprets the functions and meanings of stories in the community. As input for these analyses, actors can use text from interviews, local media, and policies, but should also draw on observation of space and people.

• Asset mapping

Assets are things in or aspects of the community which are valued, inside or outside the community. Asset mapping means analyzing which assets have created economic and other value and how the community has understood its assets and their pertinence for the future. If conceived in a participatory manner, asset mapping can be part of strategizing as well, since it is bound to elicit reflection on viable futures.

8. Bringing it all together

Analyzing patterns of dependency, path dependence, interdependence, and goal dependence, as they evolve over time only becomes possible later in the process, after the initial mapping of actors, institutions, and power/knowledge, after historical research, and after the community has looked at itself from different angles and gained some familiarity with itself.

Legacies from the past, as they influence current governance, are manifold, and it is entirely possible that an essential element will show up only late in analysis. Interdependencies can be visible and invisible, and the reliance of a set of actors in power on a specific combination of formal and informal institutions can come to light in a less apparent fashion, as nobody considered them, or as the actors in question had no interest whatsoever in rendering explicit their modus operandi. Goal dependencies, perhaps the most complex to analyze, are sometimes elusive, yet they require careful scrutiny, as a thorough understanding of them will smooth the transition from analysis to strategy-making, wherein new goal dependencies will be invoked.

● *Imagine we find that the effect of new environmental laws on a particular community was that the local mining company employs environmental and legal experts to determine how to minimally implement or circumvent the laws. Upon analysis, we also find that with previous environmental laws intended to minimize damage and leave open alternative development options for the community, industry was not consulted prior to implementation.*

In such a situation, it can be useful to rethink how new environmental laws and policies are developed and introduced going forward. Perhaps this means lowering expectations for the law, choosing an alternative method for limiting environmental damage, or else actively

including industry in more conversations up front, without assuming
complete transparency on their side. Intimate knowledge of the central
actor, that is, the mine, can shed light on the goal dependencies
at play, which may better delineate the options for a class of tools
(the environmental laws). ● ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

The first versions of local stories, historical legacies, and path
dependencies that arise in path analysis are often limited. What people
will initially see and say about legacies is closely tied to the image of
the community and themselves that they want to project. People are
never fully transparent with themselves or with others, for understandable
reasons. If our goal, and the goal of the community, is to trace
dependencies, then we have to dig deeper to get beyond those initial
self-descriptions, to grasp how different stories, roles, and rules came
about in evolving governance, and which legacies of the past play a role
in the current game.

▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬● *Often, when first looking at a community, or when a community*
takes a preliminary look at itself, it comes up with an initial label: this is
a rural place, with typical small town and family values; or, it is rugged,
entrepreneurial, or innovative. Both outsiders and the community itself,
when it tries to take a closer look, ought to look beyond these initial
self-images. They should not stop the thinking. It's important to critically
examine them to see where they came from, how they function, and to
what extent they make sense. If there is a strong belief that "the market"
dictates the fate of "the family-values community", what does that say
about underlying ideologies in the area? About ways to foster these family
values in a more stable community? ● ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬

Truly understanding dependencies requires looking for complex patterns
in evolving governance — this is not *description*, but rather *analysis*.
Dependencies play out over time, so it pays to look at longer periods of
time, at chain reactions around decision-making: How did this particular
policy betray the influence of certain actors? of certain stories? How is
it tied to other actors and institutions? What were its impacts on other
actors, institutions, or the environment? on stories about the topic of the
policy or the community itself?

There are no simple recipes for tracing dependencies; it is a method
which requires careful judgment, accumulated insight, and a combination
of many of the methods mentioned above. Historical and current work will
have to be combined, and the effects of different elements of governance
on each other distinguished. Chain reactions have effects in the future of

An existing local awareness in Prince George, BC of the potential for regional centrality and the need for diversification led to a grassroots lobby for a university, which was successful when UNBC was founded three decades ago. Previously, many were worried about brain drain, and even successful companies had trouble recruiting skilled workers to the area. Once UNBC was there, different people moved into town, asking for a different downtown environment. UNBC itself became an actor in local and regional governance, and its graduates contributed quickly to changes in the economic and cultural climate, asking for different stories to be told at city council.

and elsewhere in governance, because of its interconnected nature and because of the co-evolution of all its elements. These elements shape each other over time, and will therefore be the product of time *and* of the whole system.

In the case of informal institutions and actors, tracing dependencies means unveiling hidden histories and discovering new perspectives. Discerning dependencies for narratives, for power/knowledge, entails the search for shared assumptions, surviving stories, traveling concepts, contested discourses, and changing manners in which actors and the community construct themselves on the basis of stories. The stories that are persuasive change over time, the dominant images of self, of environment, and of the good community. These stories are associated with shifting power relations, transforming patterns of actors and institutions.

If extensive water and logging rights had been granted to a former governmental corporation, and the logging rights are first privatized, then concentrated, then lose value for the now larger company, such a company can, even as it distances its operations from a community, still stand in the way of a potential diversification strategy, as has happened in parts of British Columbia. If local actors see the green spaces around town as purely logging territory, and entirely out of their hands, not much is likely to happen. However, if there is any idea of possible control over these green spaces, or if alternative uses are considered for a long time, then a lobby network of private and governmental actors can form and generate other uses for that space, such as community forestry, or else a different style of forestry that allows mixed land uses (e.g., nature conservation and/or ski tourism, as in Revelstoke and Smithers, BC).

9. Summarizing

Path mapping reveals itself as a significant undertaking. It can partially uproot the community by exposing hidden truths, a risky endeavour that may only be worthwhile when the community is already in trouble. Lighter versions of path mapping may come with lower risk, as counseling might relate to a confrontational and intensive psychoanalysis. However, uprooting might be very productive, for the simple reason that the roots proved counter-productive and a rewriting of stories and relations has already proved necessary towards reinvention. Unfortunately, path mapping does not always work, as not every therapy works. But, when it succeeds, a new understanding of the past and of the community opens the door to new possibilities for the future, for new perceptions of risk and opportunity, new assessments of strengths, assets, and weaknesses.

● *In Revelstoke, BC, trains, highway construction, and later, dam projects were the backbone of the local economy for most of the 20th century. However, Norwegians brought Nordic style skiing to the place in the 1880s, and by the 1920s, it had become a world centre for ski jumping, with world championships being organized in the town, and world champions raised and trained locally. After WWII, ski jumping lost popularity, but downhill skiing in the surrounding mountains started to look more promising. Blue collar and white collar workers in the 1970s still remembered at least some stories about skiing. Skiing as a community activity and shared identity never really ceased, and all residents had or remembered some relatives who hosted skiing winter guests. These memories kept the idea of an alternative future alive, and the cultivation of these memories enabled the cultivation of long-term perspectives that diverged from industrial development. The town bought a small ski hill in the 1970s, and with that, the story and the plan for a big hill and a ski future was institutionalized. In 2007, it finally developed the ski hill and this proved a catalytic moment, changing the town and attracting different people and businesses that will likely, in the near future, change local politics.* ●

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Part IV:

Moving forwards:
Strategy-making

Strategies rarely follow directly out of analyses. Designs rarely follow out of design studies, and good managers often don't know exactly what they're doing. For boom/bust communities, no analyses, including the ones we have proposed, will tell you exactly what to do or how to generate a good strategy without risk and with perfect adaptation to the circumstances. The path/context mapping approach does have many benefits: it can be as participatory as one wants, it can blend analysis and strategy-making naturally, and it is a useful self-analysis that can help develop a community's adaptive capacity.

Building a strategy for mitigating boom/bust cycles is first of all a governance matter, not a matter for technical specialists — less so even than the preceding analyses. Nobody should tell a community how to face boom and bust cycles. If a place does not see itself as unified, or if citizens are attached too deeply to an entrenched industry, or else to the place as it is and accept things as they are (a curious form of resilience), then much of what we have said will fall by the wayside, and that is fine. If, on the other hand, there is a shared desire within the community to move on, become more adaptive, diversified, and in general build a better place to live, then some form of long-term perspective and common vision will be utterly useful.

A first general principle for community strategizing is that we need a governance strategy inspired by governance analysis. Making plans, writing policies, and convening fora without having a firm grounding in the evolving governance configurations of the community will likely have little or unpredictable effects. Implementation, we know, is not a single step to take after assembling a new strategy or plan; rather, it is a process part and parcel to ongoing governance, in which many of the same actors, institutions, stories, and dependencies play out. Any new rule will be remolded once it lands in the same context it emerged from. It is therefore better to know that context and design your strategy to work within it.

We have structured this chapter around key strategy questions that boom/bust communities should consider when developing a long-term plan. They represent basic choices and fundamental issues for any community seeking to overcome the volatility of boom and bust.

Strategy and tactics
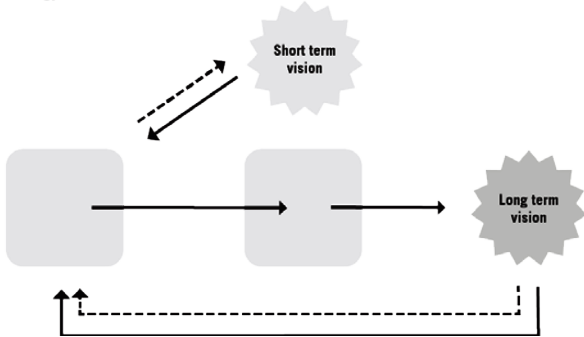
Figure 12. Community development requires both tactics and strategy, short term goals and long term visions. Some tactics can be directly inspired by the strategy, but often, a detailed local knowledge and quick adaptation by leadership are required to see the small possibilities, small windows of opportunity to create new building blocks and stepping stones.

1. Strategy question 1:
   Formal or informal institutions?

Does the community see the outcome of the self-analysis and strategy-making as a new formal institution, plan, policy, or law?

There is no universally superior set of tools for managing boom and bust, only tools that are better adapted to the situation and more suitable to certain groups of actors actors and their skill sets. If unrealistic public expectations are likely to lead to disappointment, external advisers, internal discussions, and most of all local leadership should help in clarifying the situation to the community. The level of local control over boom/bust cycles and their effects, an insight which should have been generated by the analysis described in Part III, should be made clear to all participants. If that degree of autonomy is clear from the start, it will ensure unrealistic options are excluded from the start.

> ● *Maintaining control and local autonomy over local resources and infrastructure is a major challenge as well as an opportunity for many rural communities. The efforts of community forestry in places like Revelstoke, BC are a case in point, in which local control of forest resources has translated directly into local benefits for communities and groups. Another example of the opportunities afforded by local autonomy involves the efforts of local farmers in parts of the west to take control of transportation technologies to move gain, such as railway lines, locomotives, and rail cars. In central Alberta, West Central Road and Rail is a new generation cooperative that owns and operates grain handling facilities to support local farmers and to help sustain local communities along the railway. Producers purchased and took charge of the local transportation infrastructure in response to a decision by CN to discontinue rail service on that line. This formal institution grants the community a degree of autonomy that enables some control over the boom/bust cycles that are attributed, in part, to distant owners and others in charge of resources and industry.* ●

When long-term planning and development by means of creating or changing formal institutions is unlikely, a community can still opt for building a long-term strategy by negotiating and working with both informal and formal institutions. Such combination of formal and informal approaches can work for very diverse types of strategies, from a simple storyline to a detailed playbook, from a comprehensive plan to a recurring

comparison of alternative scenario's. If informality is a strong component of a strategy, local leadership has to provide continuity to glue the formal and informal attribures and tools together into a coherent strategy.

● A small BC town has been planning for decades, without ever drawing a formal plan, without ever translating a general strategy into many formal policies. Their choice was to remain in the sphere of the informal, to create new actors and access new resources, and to assume that a local elite would stay in place for a while, that a local consensus about key points of identity and diversification would remain in place for a considerable time. The translation of the core vision into one formal institution was considered by key players a waste of time, inefficient, and above all, disruptive, attracting critique too easily, of the vision, and of their position. ●

Community plans or strategies have as a major advantage that they can integrate multiple formal and informal policies and other plans easily, translating them into a coherent multi-functional space. Sketch plans, exploratory exercises during strategizing, can serve as research and discussion tools, to compare alternatives and explore options. If however, there is strong resistance against a comprehensive planning approach, then leaders can still fall back on an informal strategy without entirely abandoning the idea of plans. Within the informal strategy, smaller projects can emerge where planning can play a role. The greater vision exists only in the minds of leadership but partial visions can be more public, more detailed, more planned.

● Vancouver, BC opted for a significant period of city planning, in the form of smart growth strategies, in the 1980s. Vancouver was also the site for Expo 87 — a massive event that had a huge impact on the planning, growth, and infrastructural nature of the city. The Expo and an already changing local planning discourse together explain the rather special smart growth choice, special for North America in those days, when the American property rights movement and president Reagan's policies of deregulation and privatization were in effect undermining older planning tools. The term "smart growth" itself was a rebranding of American planning in a more pro-development environment, hence the emphasis on "growth", rather than "planning".

Vancouver had the benefit of being in Canada, of having a population generally sensitive to environmental quality and of being surrounded by mountains and sea, making the argument for planning stronger and easier to digest. In addition, many immigrants wanted to live in that mildest

of Canadian climates. Formal planning could therefore not only survive, but thrive, and the results could be conveyed across North America. This helped to boost the image of Vancouver planning externally but also internally. Mixed land use, public transit, high but diversified densities, green space, public space in general, these material results, serving a set of different goals, could all be realized by means of spatial planning, in a formal sense, making use of plans as designs. Copying Vancouver however usually does not work, at least not as a whole. ●

A community strategy will not likely be an established law, but laws and bylaws can support its implementation and enforcement. Having a legal advisor when developing a community strategy is advisable, even if there is no city attorney. The same applies to planning, where even in absence of a city planner, and even when embarking on a planning process without professional planners in the lead, we would recommend a professional at least to take a look at intentions and outcomes. Most likely, the strategy will be a policy framing other policies, or a narrative document without the status of official policy, yet guiding and coordinating the use and development of more formal policies, and hopefully plans and laws.

2. Strategy question 2:
Short-term or long-term perspectives?

The distinction between tactics and strategy has to be very clear when dealing with boom and bust.

Do we want to respond ad hoc to changes? Or anticipate them, analyze new situations, and frame the response in reference to longer-term visions? Both are forms of adaptation. The authors advocate for long-term strategies, but we also support communities deciding for themselves. More precisely, we believe that tactics and strategy are both needed, but that tactics work better when in the presence of strategy. If one does not see boom/bust as a problem for the community, so be it. If one sees it as a problem, but wants to stay a one industry town, that is always an option. Even in that case, a distinction between tactics and strategy is useful. For example, a mining town can make the decision to remain tied to mining, but can use changes in the environment as input for governance for the long-term, and become more or less resilient through decisions or actions taken.

Mines, trees, oil sands, fish, or grass can be a focus resource for a community, and just as fish stocks can be managed in many ways, forestry can also be carried out in several guises, in different combinations of actors, trees, or land uses. Large areas planted with one tree, managed by one company, with little recreational networks and little ecological diversity, as often found in BC, are not the only "rational" or effective way to focus on forestry. This approach only looks rational to so many communities because local assumptions and histories have been forgotten, and because alternative strategies and experiences of other places have not been considered.

An unfortunate coincidence becomes more and more apparent: ***Boom/ bust communities are more in need of long-term perspectives than others, but the obstacles for their introduction and implementation are higher than elsewhere.***

Boom/bust communities can use a long-term vision more than other places because the current set of institutions does not deliver or respond in ways that are suited to the boom/bust cycles. If one aims at long-term survival, the strength of market forces and industry actors at work in a resource-dependent community obligate a strong counter-force in governance. Those counter-forces can appear in the form of unions striving to improve workers' positions in one industry, but also in the form of a set of actors that, together, is capable of pursuing a public good and envisioning a long-term perspective.

● If, as in some BC towns, governance is framed solely in terms of mills versus milling unions, or, similarly, commercial port versus fisheries union, then there is only a slight chance that a long-term perspective for the community will emerge, and an even slighter chance that that perspective will adequately represent the common interest — the totality of all public goods — in the community. ●

Obstacles for building and following long-term visions in boom/bust communities are formidable. The concentration problem mentioned in Part II of this guide is a source of low adaptive capacity but also an obstacle for the introduction of long-term perspectives. The more narratives of identity become tied to a mono-functional community, to a perceived lack of utility of governance for the long-term — since the company, rather than government supposedly takes care of community needs — the harder it will be to reinvent governance and community through long-term perspectives. The tools atrophy, the stories about self and environment overlook the need for looking forwards, and histories are forgotten.

● *In many BC and Alberta communities, we met residents and administrators who could point at a shelf full of plans and diversification policies. A sigh with resignation, and more talk of old provincial and federal promises, speaks to their disappointment, not just with a particular policy, but with any long-term vision. Moreover, belief is often disappearing amongst these actors that local communities can meaningfully impact any change. Even the best narratives and visions are hampered by external actors.* ●

3. Strategy question 3: Shock therapy or capacity building?

What to do about this paradox, the higher need for long term perspectives, and the greater obstacles for their introduction? We see two routes: shock therapy and slow capacity building.

Shock therapy would entail a series of community events that function as an intervention, an aggressive revisioning process that has to be experienced as self-confrontation, not as a radical change imposed from outside forces. Such therapy may include a call to action, an urgent message from leadership that things have gone seriously awry and that a vision is needed and fast, that otherwise the road leads to nowhere. This approach only works under strong leadership, dire conditions, and when leaders are also able to see a space for re-negotiating local identity and rebuilding governance capacity. If necessary, external consultants can be used to bear the bad news, after which leadership can present a series of prepared options to the table. Participatory agenda-setting would not be an option; process design would have to take place beforehand by a small circle of stakeholders, with the aim that it will be trusted enough

by the rest to have an impact. Shock therapy may be necessary, especially after a situation has gotten dire, but is not the ideal, or most democratic, approach.

As a rule, we recommend slow capacity building whenever possible. More specifically, we recommend slow capacity building not as hiring and developing skills, but rather as deliberately increasing *reflexivity* and *observational capacity* in the governance system. *Reflexivity*, as reviewed in Part III, is the ability and habit to reflect on one's own actions and thoughts. Exposing assumptions, ideologies, dependencies, and informalities in local governance creates a new perspective which sees new limitations and new options for development. *Observational capacity* is the capacity to observe real drivers of the cycles, actual actors and institutions, the dynamics of power/knowledge playing out, and the effects of past and current governance on the environment. The tracing of dependencies is in fact already a community activity which sharpens observational capacity. *Path and context analyses are stepping stones for developing reflexivity and observational capacity.*

Reflexivity can be encouraged in many ways:

• ordering studies, inviting visitors (external experts, people from places with similar issues, or simply outsiders with a different and possibly refreshing perspective)
• revisiting older studies, local media, histories,
• asking questions, asking others to ask questions,
• mixing up governance modes and forms, both in the sense of shaking up and of combining, both ways to keep citizens and leaders awake.
• bringing new actors and perspectives around the table in facilitated community engagement/participatory governance,
• creating places and moments where doubt can be expressed and explored without harm or consequence,
• making a habit of comparing other places and perspectives in neutral settings,
• switching governance and community leadership roles on a regular basis, and
• leadership not being afraid to confront the community with itself.

Many of those are already built into path and context mapping, which encourages reflexivity and observational capacity throughout the process. Afterwards these capacities need to be built into governance routines.

━━━━━━━━━━● *In several Alberta towns, there exists a strong self-description as a rural town, and the implication that agriculture is the backbone of the economy and the driver of future development. The reality in many*

of these places is that few people still have farms or work in agriculture, and, in some cases, the economy diversified decades ago. In some of these cases, the next generation of local leaders is working hard to change the narrative, to show that the community is on a different path, and that understanding this new path is key to envisioning a prosperous future. We talked to several mayors in such a situation. They saw part of their task as including more voices in local governance, so that the new community narrative comes from multiple voices, not only those of the new politicians, and the backlash can better managed. ●

We believe that climbing out of the pit of the concentration problem requires strong and flexible institutions for self-governance, as well as strong leadership that can facilitate, sometimes guide, and sometimes restart self-governance. Strong leadership can help devise and maintain visions, as well as to enhance reflexivity and observational capacity in governance, the foundation for future strategizing. Of course, these qualities are rarely combined in one person. It is not strange, therefore, that we often found in successful communities civic elites remaining in place for a long time, safeguarding long-term perspectives in governance. Not all voices are equal, equally interested, equally reasonable or justified, nor informed. Leadership can help a community understand itself better in context and navigate that context.

●   *In Smithers, BC, leadership seems to provide a stable perspective, a foundation, from which "the community's" views can be assessed and interpreted. While there is a corporate presence, which includes entities such as CN (rail) and Fraser (sawmills), corporations in Smithers have not had as great of an effect on the town's character and progress. Social and environmental concerns occupy a relatively central place. The town, according to interviewees both within and outside of government, has embraced environmentalist concepts of "livability" based on the town's history of environmental activity and participation. While in contemporary times this push for so-called "livability" has been enhanced and spearheaded by the public, the original catalyst was a group, a political elite from the 1970s. Their views gained general acceptance over time, having eventually been embraced and become part of the town's identity.* ●

Rebuilding reflexivity and observational capacity lays the foundation for content-driven strategies. Restoring a multiplicity of truly different perspectives, and building capacity to compare those perspectives, can slowly open up new avenues of thinking. The substance of the strategies for the long term can then be decided through a higher quality process.

4. Strategy question 4: Expert or local knowledge driving visions?

Experts ready to give an immediate and complete answer, in procedural or substantive terms, ought to be distrusted. On the other hand, absolute emphasis on participation as the only source of adequate knowledge, on local knowledge as the core of strategizing, can also create false certainties, in which no reflexive governance nor adaptation ever seems necessary.

Many isolated fishing communities in BC fell into the trap of relying too heavily on local knowledge. An absolute belief in local knowledge, in the value of local management practices, blinded the community to both old and new problems with these practices. Many years later, government and their experts, or foreign fishermen, were blamed for declining stocks, partly correctly, partly incorrectly.

Which expert knowledge to use and how to build it into governance? Path mapping shows how topics evolved, how problems were defined over time, which forms of knowledge were deployed, how they were institutionalized and built into governance. From the past, we can learn which expertise was embraced why, what influence it had in governance, and which community issues the expertise was supposed to address. The past does not tell us exactly what to do, however. It does not show us in a direct manner which expertise is missing and can get us out of a slump. Which particular expertise might be missing or could be underutilized or overemphasized, and which particular balance between local and expert

knowledge might work can only be decided by the community itself. This is a matter of analysis and decision-making, and the combination of path/context mapping and strategizing can assist with finding answers. The analysis tells something about a possible path, sometimes about clearly missing knowledge, and the strategy later has its own demands on expert and local knowledge. The answer to the question of the right expertise, in other words, reveals itself slowly.

● *If analysis of dependencies shows that one sort of expert knowledge dominated in a town to such an extent that alternative understandings and solutions of issues became invisible, then other doors remain open. One can strategize in different directions by slowly working on the institutionalization of other forms of knowledge, and by working on bridges between the dominant expertise and alternative and useful understandings.If eg engineering knowledge dominated and environmental impacts of industry have been neglected in a BC mining town, environmental expertise can be rented for a while (consultants, academics). In some cases, this can lead to bringing this external expertise on permanently, hired into government administration as an internal civil servant. Or, as another example of the diverse ways of seeing and filling in knowledge gaps: an NGO can criticize local government first, leading to a visit from an external environmental consultant and then discussion in council, where some new faces were voted in. A grant enables the town to hire an environmental scientist (a re-labeled ecologist) on a short contract. Her experience allows her to see missing pieces of expertise, and to find a way to build it into new policies. She gets along with the engineers and council and her contract is prolonged.* ●

Knowledge brokers, people with a basic understanding of different fields, and of the community, are valuable in governance. These individuals are bridge builders who can facilitate communication between different expert and interest groups and other community actors. Politicians, government administrators, community organizations, or local media can all play such role — it is not tied to an academic discipline.

5. Strategy question 5:
How to decide on ambition and assets?

When thinking of strategy, and, hopefully, long-term strategy, a community cannot control every element. Actors and institutions working on larger scales co-define the autonomy of local communities and the ability to control their destiny. Results from this aspect of community context analysis, in combination with findings from path analysis, will have to set the stage for the ambition level of local strategizing. What is desirable and what is possible are different things, and strategizing means maximizing what is possible in order to minimize the gap between reality and what is desirable. If ambitions are high, the dependencies on external contexts deserve extra scrutiny, while internally, observational capacity, cohesion, and resolve will be tested. Higher ambitions entail more obstacles on the way, higher risk and higher demands on the quality of analysis. Successful strategy hinges on autonomy — however, strategy can also aim to expand autonomy, before or in parallel with other community goals. Building autonomy, building space for strategizing, is like reclaiming land, both constructing and stabilizing new terrain on which many activities can take place. Which activity will dominate in the end is still open. Strategies will be chosen later. One institution can support another, actors bolster each other, and new power/knowledge configurations, in a process of transformation that keeps going until a strategy has been chosen and implemented, until a new and more powerful configuration keeps itself in place.

Any successful strategy will recognize and build on existing assets, aspects, or features in and of the community that have the power to drive community development or create value in the future. Asset mapping, arguably a valuable part of path mapping, has an important place in strategizing. Assets are only assets within a broader narrative or story, wherein actors or institutions attribute value to them. Asset mapping, therefore, needs to be undertaken in connection with the (earlier) mapping of power/knowledge, in which one identifies stories that hold power and shape identities within the community. Recognition of an asset's value at a given time can come from the outside, as in the case of the resource or resources driving the boom and bust economy. Recognition can also come from within, based on how a community uses and views a given asset. Both path mapping and strategy-building can help communities identify and take stock of their assets.

For example, a forest can be nothing more than an obsolete timber supply until people start to mountain bike there, hike, and climb the neighbouring rocks. Perhaps forestry workers may use their equipment to make trails and a few policy entrepreneurs in city council may use this as an argument to link up the trails into an informal trail system, which can then be granted informal protection after conversations with the logging company. In BC, the Ministry of Forests used to build and maintain trails and camping sites across the Province. Cutbacks have, over time, shrunk these roles, but they still exist and are maintained by foresters and local communities. Current forest policy acknowledges the multiplicity of value held in the forest, including both economic and cultural, but has very little resources to support or enact values beyond fiber production.

● *In Revelstoke, BC, we found a good example of how previously obsolete assets became renewed assets once a new story, a new identity began to develop within the community. The town had been created as a railroad town and the railroad company had always been the main employer, until it shrank and kept shrinking for decades. After jumping from one large infrastructure project to the next in search of stability, economic recession was imminent. Despite the difficult times, community leaders managed to push forward a downtown revitalization project which, together with other strategies to redirect commercial activities to the downtown core, brought visitors to the Mount Revelstoke National Park and close-by skiing area to spend time in the town. With time, the vibrant downtown became an attractive place to live and to work for some younger ski-lovers between seasons. As more and more young outdoor adventurers considered the option of staying in Revelstoke between seasons, working in the tree farms became a source of employment. And, if trees were being cut during the summer for industry, they might as well be removed in such a way as to create trails for mountain biking and Nordic skiing, expanding on the "story" of Revelstoke as a natural playground.* ●

Image: Adam Roy, Royal Tyrell Museum. Drumheller, AB

In Drumheller, Alberta, many assets are known, but the paths of these assets, their stories and their meanings, have become disconnected from governance. The Royal Tyrell Museum, Drumheller's premier tourist attraction, and the nearby federal penitentiary, one of the largest employers in the region, are both federally owned and operated and often weighed very heavily against the town's other potentially valuable assets: the "old" downtown and the many heritage sites from the coal mining days. These last two are well-known, but are typically viewed in terms of their former importance, as "old", and therefore, as less valuable. While there is a Heritage Committee in place to determine heritage structures and preserve "old" assets as resources and tourist attractions, access to secure historical resource funding, provincial and federal, is hard. Moreover, a lack of consensus and a distrust of municipal involvement impedes a clear, goal-oriented plan for the development of these assets to form within the town itself. A reassessment of the value and potential of Drumheller's under-utilized and, it may be argued, under-appreciated assets may bring to light ways in which they can be better integrated and better managed, and in turn, can further contribute to not only the tourism economy, but quality of life in town more generally.

Asset mapping and reinvention of the community are closely linked. This ought to be the case because strategy-building is, in the case of boom/bust places, an attempt at *rewriting the community*, of unhinging governance to un-make place identities and re-root them in alternative stories that highlight other aspects of the environment, the people, and the community's histories. In other words, to identify and take advantage of different patterns of assets that can be connected to a new story, and which offer alternative development paths. We can expect this to be a tough and iterative process, where a community may test alternative stories and revised identities, potentially through scenario studies, heated debate, or other strategies. When strategies are used depends on the community.

One way of thinking through and testing alternative stories is to deduce which assets become visible and valuable in these alternatives, and which possible courses of action are possible. How far one wants to go in the articulation of this iterative process, how many scenarios one wants to consider, how many stories, how many asset mapping exercises, how expert driven, how politicized, and how close to the existing place identity and commonplace asset mapping (likely centered around "The Resource"), depends, again, entirely on the community. Rewriting can be a matter of rather technical re-branding of the community, through cool and purposeful deliberation. Alternatively, this rewriting can be an unhinged working through of collective trauma, or an exposure of a collective fantasy of certainty, safety, and eternal prosperity. What is also possible, and what we have been arguing for all along: a realistic assessment of options and an informed choice for one strategy or another.

6. Strategy question 6:
What about the material environment?

Strategies stand a better chance when they are grounded, grounded in place and in community. For boom/bust communities, the importance of materiality, material path dependencies, and material assets (resources, environmental features, heritage) deserve extra attention. Explicitly speaking of the landscape as a bundle of assets, as a place to live, a place to extract resources, a place affected by everything we do, can be a way of testing, grounding, and further developing strategy. This is a matter of adopting a different perspective in strategy-making, of institutionalizing this perspective in everyday governance afterwards, and when appropriate, of bringing in external expertise to fully understand material impacts and legacies.

• Not all trees are the same. All species have different ecological effects and vulnerabilities. If a tree plantation has little internal ecological diversity, for example, its resilience will be lower and its vulnerability to pests and weather changes will be higher. If no expertise of alternative forestry systems, of their ecological and economic features, was developed in a community or built into their development strategies, then the measuring of "environmental impact" will always be coloured by limited knowledge and narrow perspectives. Alternatives will not be seen and counted, and the particular connections seen between material and social environment will be limited. •

Because the material world is not a sum of places and elements but rather a system, an ecological system tied to communities into a *socio-ecological system*, strategies have to take into account the multiplicity of relationships within the system. Partial solutions or strategies aiming at one area or one aspect of the material environment are fine, if coordinated within a larger frame of reference, where the impacts of the whole strategy on the quality of the socio-ecological system are understood and made visible. Such coordination, such view and steering of the whole, the socio- ecological system, can take place in spatial planning. It can also take place elsewhere, in informal community coordination with ambition, with an eye on a particular development path of place and landscape. And it can happen through comprehensive development policies, involving coordination of politics and various parts of administration, all together aiming to put the community on a certain track.

Some residents in Terrace, BC maintain that the town was a "victim" of provincial policy, that the economic oscillations in Terrace were initiated by the provincial government, which destabilized the community at critical points. A series of background studies conducted in the 1980s provided a history of the different economic sectors and outlined planning processes for Terrace and area during that time. The province had over-allocated the annual allowable cut for the processing facilities in the community. In other words, the available timber was less than the logging permitted by the province. Some assert that "they were doomed for a collapse". Apparently nobody noticed that a permit is not an obligation, and few noticed that the system was not sustainable. The region's forest industry "busted" in 1997. From that point forward, local politicians and businesspeople deemed that in order to diversify, taking into consideration its strategic geographic placement, Terrace was to become a service centre for the surrounding region -which also happened.

• In Revelstoke, BC, people knew for decades that the quantity and quality of snow in their area was eminently usable for skiing in all its versions. Shared memories, stories and histories of early skiing in the community kept this dream alive. Everybody had at least a great-aunt who knew the home-grown world champion ski jumper a century ago, or a grandfather who hosted a funny Swedish cross country group every winter. Even the people working on highways and preventing avalanches shared with locals that, in fact, they had very good snow. The older ski experience, and the detailed material knowledge of the environment (both snow quality and avalanche risk) made it possible to link the community's development strategy and material environment closely. This way of thinking also made locals sensitive to the risks of pollution, including visual pollution, and encouraged careful monitoring of other economic activities such as logging, railroad services, and highway development, for their potential impact on potential tourism and skiing-related development. ●

7. Strategy question 7: How to manage dependencies?

If the path and context analyses gave us a better picture of the rigidity at work in governance, it can also help actors discern the latent transformation mechanisms and tools available in the community. How things evolved in the past can bring to light the obstacles to change, as well as potential modes of change. Path, goal, and interdependence embody different aspects of rigidity in governance, and grasping their interplay shows ways forward. It does not tell us what we ought to do, but it can reveal what will likely happen to new ideas, stories, actors, or institutions — what strategy elements and developmental approaches are likely to work and be adopted within the community.

In Rosebud, Alberta, a theatre school moved in decades ago, bringing students to the village, typically staying with families. Over time, this changed the character of the place, physically located in a small valley in the fold of small prairie hills. The school started a theatre and people hosting students now started bed and breakfasts for theatre guests as well. Several restaurants, shops, and coffee shops opened, and arts and crafts already practiced were commercialized. None of this was formally planned, or part of an official policy, yet policies played a role in supporting a revitalization, and local government recently decided to renovate its fire hall and encouraged other residents to follow suit in home renovations. The character of the town had changed into an agricultural cum cultural tourist destination, and residents and local government were aware of the path, of dependencies, and of ways to link formal and informal institutions to move forward on that path.

Dependencies have to be studied, assessed, and managed. We cannot get rid of dependencies, only manage them. As with other forms of management this is not a science but largely an art. Quality leadership is of the essence. Even the best possible institutional configurations will need maintenance, updating, and ongoing adaptation. This does not happen by itself. Good decisions can never be entirely derived from procedures and rules, legal, bureaucratic, or otherwise. Seeing, and understanding dependencies paves the way for sound judgment by leadership. Observed dependencies can be understood as negative, positive, or both. Good leadership requires sometimes riding the waves and sometimes building a wave breaker.

● *When Smithers, BC was faced with a changing community and a decline in forestry, mining, and agriculture, the town needed to reassess its assets and development path. Awareness of local history rooted in Swiss settlement, as well as geographic assets reminiscent of the Swiss Alps, made it possible for local leadership to be proactive and build on the existing narrative of a beautiful alpine village. In order to mitigate the economic impacts of industry busts, local leadership tapped into the tourism potential of this narrative, as well as the potential for distance working. This opened the doorway to a modest community of high-tech workers with a penchant for the outdoors. New arrivals were not necessarily tied to a European heritage, but were attracted by and improved upon the overall quality of the environment, and the assets preserved and built upon by previous generations. The older leadership was able to observe and manage dependencies in a way that allowed them to respond to changing circumstances and capitalize on assets, transforming the community without disrupting it.* ●

Managing dependencies is integral to implementing strategy, and seeing these dependencies is essential for strategy-making. However, governance is complex and evolving, and the act of strategizing changes it. Thus, no one can map out dependencies comprehensively and then move on happily to strategizing and implementation. Management of dependencies is an ongoing business, and requires *continuous internal assessment of strategy*. Internal and continuous are opposed here to 'evaluated at the end by consultants'. Ongoing strategy reassessment should include consideration of all tools available, reflection at each step on the way assessing quality of the tools to move forward in the strategy. Some strategy tools are useful but keep us on the same track, while others enable more innovation in governance. One can say that some tools, in a given context, enable path creation. As mentioned before, no tools have an inherent value in and by themselves, and all governance tools and institutions will naturally lose their edge through

overuse, underuse, or as a result of changing circumstances in terms of actors, institutions, and power/knowledge relations.

If the community strategy is ambitious and comprehensive, that strategy likely needs a dedicated platform for its ongoing implementation and maintenance. This platform provides a new governance space where policies can be integrated, where the big picture is envisioned, the unfolding of strategy monitored, and where tools can be coordinated and assessed. If strategizing leads to a vision which is then translated into smaller parts and left alone, it will disintegrate. Such parceling up of strategy and then forgetting to coordinate the parts, is not to be recommended. Without strategy-wide oversight, the smaller components tend to live their own life, becoming entrenched in their own relations with other actors, stories, and institutions. Also, in adaptive governance, an eye on the unity of strategy, not its conformity with an older version of itself, remains important. A planning department can take the lead, but a designated task force, a community development director, a mixed committee can also be in that role.

8. Strategy question 8:
So, what about the content?

But, what do we *have* to do? Nothing. Nothing *has* to happen. Nothing forces a community on one single track towards salvation. A community always has choices. In these pages, we try to assist communities in clarifying those choices. What remains as an important question is *which content might be useful to give body to the community strategy*? We talked a lot about procedures, for analysis and strategy, but what about substance, that is, the ideas making up the content of possible strategies? Good procedures do not always generate good ideas. Self-analysis can show the presence of certain ideas in old strategies, certain stories and forms of expertise, certain goals and emphases. Yet a new strategy might require new ideas, and even staying on course can require a new version of the old strategy. Where does the content come from?

The community decides which content will work for them. In the following paragraphs, we discuss different sources of ideas. We can already say that if people are inspired by ideas from somewhere else, such inspirations require conceptual rethinking. Simply dropping ideas in a community, into a governance system always marked by co-evolution (dependencies), does not work, will not produce the same results as in the past and elsewhere. It is more productive to reflect on the *learning capacities* of communities.

• Nelson, BC, was a thriving river town in the 19th and early 20th century, surrounded by the Kootenay mountains. Its trade was with the south, with US towns where the Canadian rivers flowed, and Spokane, Washington was the place of processing and further trade. Natural and artificial infrastructures created strong path dependencies which led to a disaster when the rivers were cut off because of hydropower development, and a change in policy thinking which emphasized east-west internal connections over connectivity with the US. Nelson was a victim of positive infrastructures turned sour, of Canadian industrial development policies suspicious of too-close American ties. In its early heydays the town did boom fast, accounting for a vast and rich inventory of historical buildings. However, when its fortunes turned, it declined fast, explaining low housing prices in the 1960s, when the first artistic and environmentalist types arrived. In the 1970s, the province of BC, aiming to diversify its economy and becoming more aware of the effects of its resource development policies, started to support programs for heritage planning and downtown redevelopment. Nelson, with its scenery, its heritage, its low prices, and its creative population tied to the place and used to low wages, was suddenly considered rich in assets and became a poster child for redevelopment. Tourism boomed, the creative community grew and was linked to the tourist flow in a double sense: some creative figures came as tourists and stayed, and the creative community in turn was supported by tourist buyers. The popularity of surrounding areas for retirement living rendered the web of businesses and services even more sustainable. •

Governance as co-evolution entails that whatever element is thrown into a community, be it a new actor, a new plan, or a new piece of knowledge, will have effects determined by the overall governance configuration, a unique structure resulting from the community's unique path and set of contexts. So, any new idea picked up from elsewhere will have other effects specific to that community, any new actor invited will act differently than they would in another community, whatever form of planning is tried, will have different results. Context is key, and needs to be considered.

A new idea, whether a small piece of information or a grand new strategy, can only be acted upon if it makes sense within and for the governance system currently in place within the community. If it sounds like nothing, like a bad idea, like an old idea, too much like something else, or as irrelevant given the dominant stories in the town, then it will not find a place. Often, what external advisers are unknowingly selling to a community is not a small piece of technical info or a clearly beneficial organizational principle, but a bigger underlying story, which does not entirely fit with the ruling narratives. Other advisors knowingly sell

an ideology, and if it fits with the community, the technical expertise attached to that ideology will find easy customers.

In our view, communities can learn and draw content for their development strategy from:

• their own past, especially if analyzed by path and context mapping;
• other places' pasts, their experiences with boom/bust, and their solutions, if interpreted with the current context in mind;
• general ideas and theories on community development on boom/bust (i.e., from academia);
• internal discussion and construction of ideas - going beyond discussion as confrontation of existing opinions and deliberation as adding up opinions; and
• experimentation, a risky commitment to something new which has to be carefully defined.

The first path of learning, learning from the community's own past, we discussed extensively earlier. Path and context mapping gives insight into existing values and assets, old successes and old failures. They show the local balance between flexibility and rigidity, and the local limits and tools for steering. Path and context mapping show not only the old community and its governance, but also how it learned and adapted.

The same analytic process of path and context mapping can serve to discern options for other forms of learning. They can make it easier to observe what could be imported from other places, after some tinkering, and which ideas floating around in academia, media, politics, or grassroots organizations may be worthwhile. The mapping process itself can also improve the quality of discussion, the possibility to learn internally. If short-term perspectives dominate among the actors in a boom/bust town, then, our proposed pre-strategies of building observational capacity and reflexivity can improve this internal learning process. Slowly, we argue, this can produce a better interpretation of self and environment in governance and provide a more realistic and creative way of figuring out which ideas and practices in the external environment might also work internally. It is not enough to see which ideas exist out there; it is crucial to see what can be used or modified, in relation to the goals and the situation of the community. Our recommended analyses can help to do both: to see better what is out there, and to see what can work here. For the mapping of ideas elsewhere, internal and external experts can be helpful.

For outsiders, such as consultants, no matter how successful, the internal environment of community governance can never be fully grasped. Path mapping as a community project cannot be replaced by outsider

voices or opinions. Consultants can have their place, but their interpretation of the community, and of what was successful elsewhere, is limited and structured by their own ideology, by their shallow insight into the community and by their need to sell ideas to and make their mark on local governments.

CASE STORY: LEARNING FROM NELSON

In British Columbia, we found an interesting example of how strategy development inspiration moved north, from Nelson, to Revelstoke, to Smithers. We have previously discussed how Revelstoke's initiative to revitalize its downtown starting in the 1980s gave the community unexpected opportunities to explore not only economic diversification but also to attract a dynamic young demographic and, in general, new vibrancy. This was not, however, an easy step to take. There had been several attempts to revitalize the downtown, including, for example, an attempt to promote an "alpine" theme (copied not from the Alps but a Washington State town) and which was short-lived and not successful. Its final and well-known attempt at revitalizing the downtown core was inspired by the not-so-distant town of Nelson, further south.

Nelson, on Kootenay Lake, but connected to the Columbia river, hence the US and the Pacific Coast, struck it rich in the late 19th century when a mining boom (silver first) transformed the town quickly from a shacks and rags place to a community filled with well built and elegantly designed homes. The American influence was a bit too big for Canadian authorities -abundant American prospectors, claims, investors, navigators- so they encouraged immigration and resettlement as ways of Canadianizing the place. They also promoted linkages with Revelstoke and Vancouver, but the natural course of the river and the minerals was still south, where Spokane (Washington) flourished under the aegis of Canadian mining and timber wealth. When the mining booms seemed over after World War II, and Americans came up with ideas for hydro- electricity projects, in effect rendering the southward river traffic nearly impossible. Canadian authorities were not only pleased with the prospect of income, but also saw it as the closing chapter of a history of reorientation of the region, from north- south to west- east (via railroads and highways, via trade and immigration barriers).

Nelson meanwhile was left with an unusually rich stock of interesting old architecture, a large downtown, a picturesque location, and low housing prices. In the 1970's, alternative lifestyles and draft dodgers discovered Nelson outdoors lovers, pot lovers, art enthusiasts, yoga practitioners

and people seeking inner peace started to flow in, and lobbied with the Provincial and Federal authorities to develop policy around the distinctive architecture. It was seen as heritage now, and heritage was not only there to be preserved, but to form the core of development strategies, where the old can inspire and orient the new. Nelson suddenly showed up as a unique place, with the most heritage buildings in the Province, after Victoria and Vancouver.Beginning in 1977, the Provincial government began the process of developing a heritage strategy for B.C., which included a heritage registry. A few years later, heritage Canada supported the development of a so-called 'main street program', an approach to community development leaning heavily on heritage planning. In the case of Nelson, the main street program was a further development of the heritage strategy. In the 1980's, Baker Street and many others were re- envisioned, and many buildings were renovated by their owners, with government support. Plaster, plastic, wood, and metal siding was removed, old styles brought back but also reinvented, in a colorful manner compatible with not only the past but also with images attractive for tourists and new residents.

It worked in many respects, and although there still are tensions between different groups, most locals agree that the current diversity, the rich cultural life and the many outdoors activities, in combination with the cosmopolitan vibe in the wilderness, attract residents and entrepreneurs alike, as well as plenty of tourists. Local research carried out ten and twenty years ago confirms these features as valuable for entrepreneurs and other residents. The internet made it easier for small niche players to settle in this marginal location, and in some cases, the location made it attractive for buyers and for new employees. In 2012, the Community Heritage Commission, a site for bottom- up heritage activism and direct participation, was disbanded and merged with several others, in a sign of fatigue with the dominance of heritage in local planning. However backlash followed and in 2015, a new downtown development strategy emerged which seems to incorporate many of the original insights of the 1979 study.

In the 1980s, the example of Nelson's successful downtown transformation had become alluring, and some of the same designers involved in the Nelson project were attracted to Revelstoke - one prominent figure was Robert Inwood, a former cartoonist and self- taught heritage planner. Revelstoke chose not to fully restore the downtown, but rather to restore some buildings, and reconstruct or rebuild others in styles reminiscent of the old frontier, the old trade routes, Victorian craftsmanship, and local vernacular. A policy to govern the downtown core was drafted, and other neighborhoods followed when they noticed positive results. Highway development and strip development near town was fiercely

opposed, in order to better promote local business and infrastructure. Taxes had to be raised amidst a financial crisis, when home values were declining, and local leadership had to lobby vigorously and take serious risks to achieve their vision. Results came fast enough and the local leadership was strongly established, so the risk proved manageable.

More recently, the town of Smithers to the north of Revelstoke had also begun its own revitalization strategy based on the positive experience of its counterparts further south. In this case, we see how each community learned from and was inspired by their neighbour, but it is not to say that an internal learning process did not take place. The decision within Revelstoke to follow Nelson's example, and then within Smithers to follow Revelstoke's example, came after internal reflection, discussions, and adaptation took place, so that the specific approach taken suited each town's unique contexts. Interestingly, an alpine theme, having failed in Revelstoke, was in fact successfully adopted in Smithers due to the community's significant Swiss population, which arrived en masse in the late 1930s.

9. Summary

The best spent energy for the stabilization of boom/bust communities in the long run is to work on the re-introduction of long-term perspectives in local governance, and on the conditions for such re-introduction. Long-term perspectives enable strategy and, on the flip side, solid strategy enables long-term perspectives.

In the presence of long-term strategy and internal checks, the *different paths of learning will become more productive*:

- *Learning from the past* is easier when there is an initial long-term perspective in place, as well as a desire to refine it and the initiative to derive a strategy from it. Path analysis and a long term perspective work together here.

- *Learning from other places* is more likely and productive when context analysis has generated insight in the relation between different scales and places. In a long term perspective it becomes easier to select useful examples in other places. Context analysis, path analysis (including old relations with other places) work together with a long term perspective to improve this form of learning.

- *Learning from internal discussion* is also furthered if there is a minimal long term perspective, an agreement on the basics for the long run. New ideas can more easily emerge in discussion and debate, when false oppositions between ideas are avoided (e.g. environment versus development), and real oppositions are treated with a reflexive attitude, which scrutinizes assumptions and alternatives. A quality path analysis will show that most harsh oppositions are false, that more options were and are possible, and a long term perspective will marshall the discussion towards productivity by means of shared goals.

- *Learning from academia / external experts* is more fruitful when there is a minimal shared perspective on the future. There is a world of ideas on good planning, good governance, good community development, rural development, and economic development. They do not cohere, which is normal, nor are they absolute, even if they pretend to be, yet they can all be useful. They are all associated with a set of nested narratives on what the world is like, what it should be, and what we can do about it. In the following chapters (Part V), we present the more influential models of community development which resonate particularly well in communities facing boom and bust in order to guide and inspire your own unique strategy.

Visioning as scenario building

Senario 1

Senario 2

Senario 3

Vision of the future
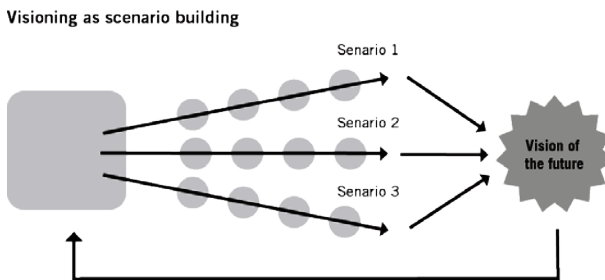
Figure 13. One way of developing strategy is by means of scenario building. Exploring different possible governance evolutions (not just different possible targets or different economic contexts) can show which assets are really assets and which obstacles are harder than others. Some scenario's can start more from current conditions, and develop goals and steering mechanisms from there, while others can start with bold goals and reason back to the present: what is needed now to get there? Public discussion of the alternatives is valuable by itself, as it can reveal new assets, unknown power relations, possibilities to cooperate.

Prince Rupert, BC, was created more than a century ago as part of a grand scheme by a railway man to develop northern British Columbia and connect it via Edmonton to the American hinterland. Unfortunately, WWI intervened, and the place previously envisioned as an international hub, designed with ambition, reverted to more traditional fishing, canning, and logging activities, profiting from the railroad already there. Yet, with the rise of China, cheaper sea cargo, and an oil boom in Alberta, the old crazy plan seemed less crazy, and its half-implementation in the past has made implementation now seem more realistic.

CASE STORY: GRANDE PRAIRIE

Grande Prairie is the seventh-largest city in Alberta, with a population 68,556 as of the 2015 Municipal Census, and is one the larger cities studied as a part of this research. Since the early 2000s, Grande Prairie has undergone a period of excellerated growth, experiencing approximately a 40% population increase from 2007 to 2015. This has earned it a reputation as Canada's fastest growing municipality. While this "boom" speaks to the broad economic success of municipality of Grande Prairie and the northern Alberta region at-large, drastic increases in activity in such a short period of time present multiple developmental issues to which residents and government must adapt.

Grande Prairie is home to multiple major industries, including oil and gas, hospitality and retail services, and significant economic mainstays such as agriculture and forestry. Due to a large surrounding trading area, oil and gas, followed by forestry and retail are the top economic sectors in the area. The geographic context of Grande Prairie contributes to its status as a regional hub of commerce, retail, and to an increasing extent, tourism.

While tourism is often referred to as a "soft" industry or as a way of simply surviving rather than thriving, Grande Prairie serves as an important shopping, sports, health, and corporate destination for people across the Northwest Territories and northern BC, as well as for highway traffic going up to Alaska. Because of Grande Prairie's location, the travel

of people to the city to obtain medical treatment is gaining traction. The city recently began promoting tourism and formed an arm's-length destination marketing organization,, devised a sport tourism plan, and funded new facilities, including a new hospital.

The increasingly diverse economy of Grande Prairie continues to be susceptible to population concentrations and intense sector-specific economic fluctuations, often with wide-ranging and broad repercussions. The cost of living and doing business oscillates on a habitual basis. In a reactionary manner, much operates according to demand. For example, oil and gas remain the most important yet most volatile sectors upon which much of the large transient labour force within the city relies. As a result, multiple other sectors are indirectly and directly tied to the industry.

Although the oil and gas industry is often credited with driving the growth, it is vulnerable to production costs. When commodity prices rise, an influx of producers fills supply gaps. When commodity prices fall, demand decreases, unemployment increases, and much of the city's economic activity stalls. While it varies in scale, this re-occurrence affects housing vacancy and prices, as well as the hotel and accommodation sector, which provides a large amount of the transient workforce's temporary housing.

Utilities serve as another example. Commercial energy costs in and around Grande Prairie are not calculated according to usage, but are instead charged in proportion to demand. A "boom", a spike in consumption, therefore equates to a significant increase in the cost of doing business. Conversely, enrolment rates at Grande Prairie Regional College spike during downturns, and likewise fall when the demand for high-paying trade jobs rebound. At the same time, some criticize the lack of professionals and "local thinkers", which they explain could help address urban sprawl, a high crime rate, and traffic issues, all characteristics commonly said to detract from the prosperity of the city and its hinterland. Beyond these issues, interviewees also expressed a common desire for additional entertainment options for the fast growing city in Alberta, more investments in education to support future generations, an international customs centre at the regional airport, and improved roads and infrastructure for vehicular traffic.

The rapid growth of Grande Prairie has led to the development of the city as a dynamic social and economic hub in northern Alberta. Yet, development and the pace of change have given rise to new challenges as well as exacerbated more longstanding tensions. Challenges to the sustainability and resiliency of a community can be equally concerning during boom periods as they are during times

of contraction. Failures to recognize path and goal dependencies, to build positive community narratives for the future and plan appropriately can easily create vulnerabilities for the future.

For example, the rapid growth of a residential population in Grande Prairie is contributing to urban sprawl both within the city limits, but also in neighbouring municipalities and the surrounding county. Following longstanding development paths in the Canadian prairies, growth has created a competitive environment in which municipal and county governments compete for residential housing starts, as well as for the more tax lucrative commercial and industrial developments. It is a pattern which blurs lines between urban and rural communities and boundaries between municipalities and counties can become obdurate and obstruct coordinated growth planning. Unequal access to services and the unequal distribution of tax burden further increase tensions, and left unattended can cement problematic development pathways and create longstanding planning inertia.

As Grande Prairie goes forward with a recent annexation and a potential amalgamation to address these challenges, community leaders will be mindful of the legacy of Edmonton's failure to coordinate growth regionally and the up-hill struggle to achieve positive growth planning today within the Alberta Capital Region. Edmonton, unlike Calgary, did not get the Provincial support in the 70's and 80's to incorporate its neighbors and keep urban development within city limits, and the decline of regional planning in Alberta since the 1980's made it hard to find an alternative site of coordination there. The Alberta Capital Region was established as another administrative vehicle to tackle the old coordination problem, yet interests were so diverse and the motivations and tools to stay together so weak, that synergies are hard to reach. In Grande Prairie, all are aware of this history.

Image: Stéphane Lavoie. Grande Prairie Regional College. Grande Prairie, AB

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Part V:

Development approaches, for inspiration and guidance

This chapter presents, in brief, a series of approaches to development which can serve as inspiration for communities struggling with boom and bust cycles. They can help to give content to strategies under construction, by showing what happened in other places, and what different theories have to say. Some approaches are more influential in other parts of the world, some are more embraced by theorists, but all have some presence and credence in theory and practice. As discussed in Part IV, communities working on their own development strategy can look to the experiences and approaches adopted elsewhere, successes and failures, to inspire and guide their own strategic efforts. We provide a selection of the most prominent development approaches that can help frame your strategy, or else serve as a jumping off point for the process of path and context mapping and strategy development. As with any governance issue, context is everything, so communities need to consider how each strategy might work within their own set of actors, institutions, and power relations at work in their communities.

1. Planning and design

One potential approach to take when developing your community strategy, is that of land use/spatial planning and design. In essence, a planning-based approach to community development sees the organization of space as the best way to promote a certain track of development. Spatial planning is the coordination of policies and practices affecting the organization of space, and making planning central to a development strategy means that general development issues are translated into questions regarding a different or better organization of space. From a slightly different angle, we can say that spatial planning, in this approach, becomes the most important site of policy integration; plans become the policy tools which can integrate many other policies. Planning is expected to spark development, and development ideas are expected to be translated first of all into spatial plans. In this perspective, spatial plans look as the natural context to implement environmental, social, economic… Policy.

"Design" in this view is not simply a matter of aesthetics, but rather a matter of organizing space, of solving problems and creating qualities. It focuses on interventions in space, to improve its structure, to allow for more combinations of activities, to increase overall spatial quality. Design thinking and perspectives can be part of the ongoing process of the organization of space. Planning can be design (but not all design is planning). Design thinking accompanies governance, rather than

replacing it or giving its decisions a hint of beauty afterwards. If design is part of governance, then the spatial implications of actions and policies can be better understood. Through manipulation of space in different evolving scenarios, one is also in a better position to determine which combinations of land uses are possible, which spatial structures allow for new goals and can fix new problems. If we allow this in place A, then those things in places B and C will happen; if we change A, B and C through design, then A will actually improve C, and make new activities possible.

Choosing a planning or design approach does not give a community all the ideas they need. The strategy needs more content, more substance. That is not a problem, as a planning approach can absorb elements of the other approaches listed below; it remains open for many different substantive choices. For many volatile Canadian communities, we strongly argue for some form of planning approach: spatial planning can improve the quality of the environment, in and around town, and even when not all choices are made initially, starting to work on a cleanup can open many doors, can generate more options for reinvention in the direction a community decides upon.

Coordinating action with a focus on preserving and developing spatial and environmental quality becomes logical in a boom & bust environment. We can do many things in space and allow for many future activities and development paths if we reduce environmental damage, preserve qualities or assets, create new qualities, connect assets, and consider opportunities for multi-functional infrastructure. In a spatial planning perspective, any new policy or proposed activity, in any policy domain and any part of the community, has to be tested against not only spatial planning rules, but more importantly, the ideas behind the plan, the type of environment envisioned. If we forget what the underlying idea or story was, why the plan shows this or that, how it represents older strategic choices, then the plan will not guide the community but become constraining and even suffocating. The plan will become a blunt and blind instrument. Rather, one has to ask: does this new opportunity reinforce or undermine our strategy? And how do we respond in planning terms to it, so we can use it to maximum effect? Can we find synergies by a better integration in spatial plans? It is likely then, that both the proposal and the spatial context have to be adjusted: maybe the affordable housing can look different, can be moved a bit, maybe we can reorganize public space and paths in the vicinity.

If one redesigns public space in a main street of a British Columbia fishing town, this will not likely change much, unless this intervention is embedded in a broader strategy, such as a plan to attract businesses, residents, or tourists. Such embedding makes compliance with that strategy easier and more attractive. The quality of self-analysis undertaken in early stages of strategy development can indicate what design could do to support the strategy, and where it can come in: Should design thinking and public space improvements come first, as a kickstarter to attract newcomers? or later, when more residents have already moved in? Should physical space be improved slowly? These choices ought to be the result of a community's internal self-analysis, and cannot be simply handed over by external experts or designers. In each of these approaches, it's a good idea to have a design ready at the outset, which can be modified later as needed, rather than accepting things which can make any coherent design difficult later.

If the self- analysis is not there, if the design is not embedded in strategy, then expectations are often too high. Too many times, we observed small towns investing in a main street redesign, in a heritage design program, or larger cities in a complete streets program -giving all users their space- without thinking of the fit with general planning, transportation or economic development policies. Then the spark does not happen, people are disappointed, and lose their trust in the power of planning and design.

Design cannot operate in isolation. Other policy tools are needed. Nor can communities independently solve all social problems by spatial means. Design knowledge is not superior to other forms of knowledge. However, adopting a design perspective can be used to draw consistent attention to the quality of our living environment, and can offer solutions some other expertise cannot offer. Further, forethought into spatial design keeps more potential futures open to the community, as an environment which is attractive, useful, and multifunctional can be reused more easily, and can attract and accommodate more people and applications.

● Environmental design can be the base of development strategies for heavily polluted and affected environments. Some would argue that the scale of the oil sands near Fort McMurray, Alberta precludes a design approach, but we would turn it around: the scale of operations, of damages, and the ambition for the future, as well as potential economic assets in the region, make it eminently useful to consider coordinated action for spatial governance and regional landscape design. Regional structures, such as large scale ecological units and connections, water-systems, transportation networks, can preserve environmental quality for people and nature in the long run, and allow for multiple land uses over time. Regional design initiatives and strategies would certainly be revisited and changed many times, and might take generations to unfold, but their value does not depend on full implementation, rather on their influence over coordination of action across actors and institutions and creation of spatial quality. Recreation, different sorts of living environments, exploration possibilities, the option of a service hub for developments further north, all this becomes possible within a regional landscape architecture. One can distinguish in such strategy between the short term nature and the long term nature, between fast (re-)construction of certain ecosystems for quick results (reed wetlands can be created in a few years and can clean water, improve scenery, separate uses,...) and slow construction (think bringing back diverse peatbog environments). Economically, this does not have to be a drag on Fort McMurray residents or businesses - because it can serve as a unifying guide for decisions and investments that would have been made regardless. Politically, it hinges on a few key players, and the willingness of higher-level governments to impose the requirement of a framework on community stakeholders. ●

2. Formalization of informality and vice versa

The formalization perspective or development framework starts from the idea that what is informal ought to be formalized, as informality creates "dead capital", useless assets which cannot be leveraged. If you're in a slum, and don't have title to house or land, you're less likely to invest since others can come in and take your house, and because the banks won't give you a loan given the questionable collateral. Formality is expected to create more predictable enforcement of rules, hence more predictable behaviour by all players. This approach, which is particularly influential in developing countries, leans on the work of economists as Hernando de Soto, who studied slum problems and argued for formal property rights.

For boom/bust towns, it could offer the prospect of stabilization, as property owners and legal land users have more incentives to stay and not to run away, and transient newcomers cannot so easily settle and claim. Formal institutions can slow down development, but could weed out unwanted sorts of settlers. Formalization will slow down boom periods, but will also slow bust periods, and there is more reason to explore alternative futures and development paths. Gold rushes, for example, were possible because of loose regulation and largely informal governance. Formal institutions can also guide development. In present day Western Canada, it's pretty clear, and, in many cases, indisputable, what institutions and rules are formal and informal. Boom towns do not come about by a company simply claiming a site, or by gold diggers simply streaming in and fighting over the best spots. However, this should not stop us from investigating the potential value of formalizing informality, or conversely, dropping formality and giving more space to informality.

Citizen's initiatives can be formalized and organized to be made officially part of local governance, in order to magnify their voice, make them more accountable, and harness their creative and adaptive capacities. This can be a way forward when existing governance structures seem to lack power or flexibility. Formalization of informal initiative can help when there are ideas floating around, but disconnected from governance. It can serve to give initiatives and informal networks which can revitalize local governance more influence.

● In the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, mines have been closing slowly and systematically since the 1950s. Two generations of miners grew up with uncertainty, with unpredictable part-time jobs. Informally, many locals with foreign roots started to rely on hunting, mushroom collecting, gardening, barter, and seasonal work in the prairies; they started to formulate hunting rules to distribute the game in ways perceived as fair. While being very proud of their identity as residents in mining towns, they in fact survived because of an informal economy relying on informal institutions. ●

Informal coordination mechanisms and networks can also be seen as a threat to official power, to democratic power, to innovation and adaptation. Some argue that rendering them visible and luring them into formal governance might transform them, make them more susceptible to the law and more useful for a more tempered development path.

Conversely, there are also voices that in hard times, regulation of any sort should be looser, and that informal coordination allows people to survive, in the form of self-help mechanisms, informal land use, hunting, foraging, squatting, repurposing, and looting.

● Informal institutions can take the shape of rules to break the rules, reinterpret the rules, suspend the rules here and there, and selectively enforce them. This includes rules of democratic participation and planning rules. Most of the successful communities analyzed in our research relied on some level of informality being used wisely by a local leadership that was stable and not self-interested. Planning rules were sometimes hastily suspended or rewritten to stop highway development and maintain control over a local asset, votes were sometimes forced or selectively ignored, coalitions were forged with hasty promises — all for the greater good. Such use of informality are pronounced when the local community is trying to transcend its role and increase its autonomy: in these cases, many formal institutions have to be stretched, and communities need to create semi-governmental organizations that can expand the role of local government. ●

We would argue that neither of these analyses can be true in general, that none of them can be the basis of a universal strategy of development. A community's own self-analysis has to point out which problems are associated with the relationship between formal and informal institutions, and which part of a new strategy should be devoted to redressing that balance.

If the main problem hampering reinvention of a place that experienced a bust is an informal network of coordination, then that network can deserve serious attention. It still does not mean that in all those cases a direct attack on informality will be the best way forward. The informal actors and the associated informal institutions and rules can be lured in, smoked out, waited out, or cornered by means of other strategies; meanwhile a new direction for future development takes shape. If informal institutions locally are a hard stumbling block for innovation or decision-making, a lobby at higher levels might be worthwhile.

● A small Albertan prairie town has been dominated by two families for about a century. They informally controlled the place, and were able to control the procedures to enact formal institutions locally. In the present day, one family has fragmented, the other not, and the economic basis for their power has gone. Still, these families are a stumbling block for making changes in the community, through their residual prestige, land ownership and institutional legacies, traces of old policies that used to favor them. One strategy to deal with this challenge is to wait longer, another one is to resort to informal coordination, to reinterpret the old rules, selectively enforce them, and work with shifting alliances (with industry players, the province, school boards, university experts, NGOs, and consultants) to get rid of the remaining legacies one-by-one.

*Sometimes, this may mean a literal change in policy, plan, or law.
In other cases, this may entail adding a new rule or invoking another one,
making the old one useless, without directly revoking it. While there are
situations where it is wiser not to focus on rules at all, but rather
to change conditions of their application. This too can render an
old rule harmless.*

*One can avoid protecting a heritage building, but make the surroundings
attractive enough to creative incentives for protection. Or, it is possible to
avoid directly protecting an area as nature, but look at water conservation
rules to achieve the same effect. One can force the construction of new
walking trails, but it is also possible to give incentives to clean up back
alleys, which can be used the same way. When these tactics are used
to neutralize problematic legacies, one can speak of informal strategies
to clean the slate, open up space for new stories, opportunities, and
institutions which can support associated strategies. Toughest challenges
are usually concentration of land ownership in a few hands, and old
loyalties, which can be very hard to overcome. Very detailed local
knowledge is required to manage such situation by means of informality.
New leadership has to maintain a balance between old and new stories,
old and new factions, while de facto favouring the new ones.* ●━━━━

3. Taxes and deregulation

Much of the American literature on community development is in fact
about taxes — about tax incentives to bring in companies to downtowns,
abandoned industrial lands ('brownfields'), and poor communities,
or about special taxes to pay for the pursuit of common goods, for asset
preservation and creation, and for capacity development. "Downtown
development" in many cases leans heavily on the tools of tax abatements
and tax incentives.

Lowering local taxes sometimes works, but can trigger a downward spiral
of local revenues and increased competition between communities for
corporate favours, with questionable overall outcomes for the community
in the long run. In such cases, actors are not necessarily transparent with
each other, and the effect of lower taxation on the future behaviour of
companies is hard to predict. Increasing taxes, across the board or for
specific projects or topics, for the long run or for a limited time (to build
something, to get out of a slump) can also work, yet an often quoted
risk is that increasing government revenue encourages waste, that the
new money disappears in the pile. Both tax increase and tax decrease

strategies are popular. In literatures with different ideological orientation, preferences will differ. In writings with a social-democratic orientation, tax increases for the public good tend to be favored, while more conservative, or neoliberal work expects more from lowering taxes ('you can't tax your way out of a problem').

• *In Revelstoke, BC, the redevelopment strategies in the 1980s relied partly on raising taxes in the short run, with the idea they could be lowered later. In Calgary, the dominant discourse in governance has been to lower various taxes where the city has a say, and to lobby with the province to lower other taxes, with the understanding that this is the road to economic development. As often happens, narratives are embedded in ideologies, on the good community, the good citizen, her rights and duties and privileges, and on the way forward. In Calgary, this is evidenced through the impact of capitalist ideologies on local governance planning, visioning, and coordination to lower taxes for the sake of wealth creation.* •

Both tax strategies (increase and decrease) are focused on taxation as the essential tool of local communities to master their fate. This seems very reductionist after our previous stories on a diversity of coordination tools, various sorts of formal and informal institutions. It is possible that lack of revenues is an obstacle, or lack of companies, stores, residents, and this has to be taken seriously. It is entirely possible that self-analysis reveals such situation, and that tax-related instruments will constitute the core of the development strategy. What one often sees however, is that financial constraints are immediately translated as tax problems, and that a serious analysis of local governance is omitted.

• *Often, smaller towns that we visited in the Canadian West noticed that many of their ambitions, some of them already in plans, were beyond their financial means. Sometimes, there was a strong conviction that no vision or strategy made sense, since there was simply "no money", understood in these communities to be the same as "no tax base". Strategizing as such was seen as futile, as one assumed that strategizing and planning implied more spending and thus more taxes. While in fact more spending does not have to come directly from higher taxes, and while strategizing can lead to a new combination of sources of income and posts of expenditure. The underlying problem of their perspective, in our view, is that development strategy was understood as simply continuing on the existing path, and then adding some nice (and expensive) things. Carefully analyzing the current path, and looking at other places, can reveal that other paths with other outcomes are possible.*

*Once this is acknowledged, it becomes possible to strategize more
creatively, to rethink other aspects of development, forms of collective
action, coordination. Other options become visible, such as phasing of
investment, re-distributing revenues. It becomes possible then to redress
the balance between public and private space and gains. Seeking and
demonstrating alternatives, creative funding and investment strategies
employed in other places, can sometimes break open this problematic
situation of non- reflection on the governance path and of equating
strategizing and spending, and spending and taxes.* ●

The idea that taxes are the main instrument for implementing a
development strategy comes out of narratives which have to be analyzed
and assessed. In Western Canada, the "tax story" is often heard and
accepted, despite the fact that other development tools, policies,
and plans are readily available in many communities. Tax stories are
often coupled with stories about residential and commercial growth as
necessarily good, and in other cases are tied to a local governance that
lacks reflexivity or insight into what the community wants to do with
revenue, or even how it is currently spent. In more conservative circles,
taxes can become a priori negative, and lowering them in general and
for specific actors is necessarily good.

Image: Stéphane Lavoie. Terrace, BC

*In Terrace, BC, municipal income shortfalls are a common source of concern.
Increased economic growth and activity outside of the town's boundaries mean that
Terrace does not receive badly-needed industrial tax revenues. Yet, many of the costs
of growth associated with the outlying industrial expansion — associated with the
added population, related businesses, and other developments — are experienced
in Terrace. Many new activities and people depend on its municipal services. Today,
residential taxes, which proportionally yield less revenue, make up most of the
town's income, and as a result, fund many of the essential services in Terrace that
"keep it alive". Yet, "with residential taxes, there is a ceiling". As some explain, if*

taxes are levied too high, "it's political dynamite", and residents push back (or move away). In response, a large industrial park is slated to be built on newly-purchased municipal lands near the airport, approximately ten kilometres south of the town site. The development project comes as the Terrace municipal council looks to generate additional jobs and expand the industrial tax base. Many residents are optimistic at the prospect of renewed localized industry, as they lament the slowed productivity and closures of the town's sawmills, which had historically represented a significant portion of the town's earnings. The community has always benefited from its ability to leverage its airport — a gift of the allies in WWII with an eye on gaining access to the Pacific tradeways and on preparing for the future Cold War. The airport has an amazing history, and understanding that this resource has been key to Terrace's development as a service centre, as a retail hub, as a travel destination, and now maybe in relation to the industrial activity, is key to any development strategy. Rather than focusing solely on creating revenues and doing something near the airport to fill a tax gap, one can imagine considering both the airport and the tax situation in the context of a broader strategy. Airports can be expanded, and can attract activities more directly adding value to the airport. All of this requires land, which is now claimed by industry.

We would argue that tax strategies can work, but mostly when considered against the background of a repertoire of instruments for strategy, and when a narrative can be instilled in governance that taxes are *neither inherently good nor bad*, rather, that the actual public benefits of public money have to be assessed, and the negative effects of certain types and levels of taxes have to be sensitively monitored as well. It is key to remember that taxes play an important role in providing the public goods of society — the streets, the sidewalks, lighting, parks, and so on. In many cases, these are the elements that make communities desirable locations for residents and visitors.

Taxes, without framing by an overall vision for the community, cannot solve all problems. Without an understanding of alternative incentives or the power of actual coordination of governance decision-making, taxes become unreliable replacements for an actual strategy. This holds true for both the tax increase and tax decrease versions of the "tax story". With the tax increase version, which simplistically equates more taxes with improved public resources, and more public resources as the best development tool, we would say that more revenue in the same governance configuration will likely not make much difference in an unstable resource community. Throwing more money at problems, without reflecting on the problem definitions, on the presumed solutions and forms of organizing, is very risky indeed. With the tax decrease approach, which equates lower taxes with economic growth, simply lowering taxes, without re-assessing the governance configuration and looking for root causes of issues or considering alternatives, is similarly risky.

● As the Terrace, BC example indicated, the question of common goods and community benefits is inherently tied to the definition and delineation of the community. Maybe all the potentially profitable activities are located just outside the boundary of a town, in sparsely populated rural areas under a different local government. Maybe they are located there because of lower taxes, possible because the rural government doesn't have to deliver many services and is profiting from the bigger town. In such case, there is a good argument to redraw boundaries. For smaller towns, this can be an uphill battle, especially when the external rural municipality has political backing higher up. For larger cities, annexation can work, although as a governance instrument, annexation is blunt and potentially destabilizing in the community. ●

Related to the conservative, or lower taxes, version of the tax story, but broader, is the neoliberal ideology of deregulation. It suggests that all regulation, meaning all formal institutions, stands in the way of development, and places in a slump can use deregulation to kick start community prosperity. In the history of the Canadian West, this narrative and this strategy suggestion could often be heard, and was often linked to a nostalgic mythology of the frontier, an idea that past prosperity was possible because of low regulation, and that getting rid of later layering of rules would bring back that prosperity.

Image: Stéphane Lavoie. Old Atlas Coal Mine. Drumheller, AB

Drumheller, Alberta experienced an economic peak in the 1940s, having exported nearly sixty million tons of coal since the early 1910s, over the duration of its "coal years". During this period, companies, the major actors within the town, were resistant to the establishment of schools, community entities, etc., because of the perceived lack of return on investment. They "failed to see the point" in investing in facilities; there was an awareness of the impending "busts" and depleting leases.

It was also mentioned that this lack of investment may also be attributable to the "problem" of unionization. Companies were generally against ideas of establishment or permanence, "they simply wanted to profit and move on". Companies also notably rejected the formalization of towns because it would strengthen the sense of "community" in the town — residents and workers, they feared, would demand more services, higher corporate taxes, better rights, all eating into profits and corporate flexibility.

Freedom features prominently in these stories of lower taxes and deregulation of the economy, the freedom of strong entrepreneurial individuals who transformed the wilderness into vibrant communities. Bringing back those individuals, now under the yoke of collective goals, for instance, would solve our problems. Similar to the previous paragraphs, we argue here that indeed, in some cases, after analysis, it might become apparent that the existing regulatory burden is a legacy of a different past, that incentives for private initiative are insufficient, and that deregulation this is the key to unlock development. Again, we would argue that this cannot be concluded before analysis, and that ideology should never replace analysis.

Interestingly, the proponents of deregulation rely on a radical version of self-organization to make things work: if there are needs and possibilities, people will organize themselves, use opportunities, do it frugally, with minimal paperwork. However, complex societal structures do tend to quickly assert themselves in new frontiers, and the complex patterns of rules and roles, of evolving governance, which we described, also show up there. The need for structure is felt, to connect to the rest of society, and to turn resources into prosperous communities. Complete self-organization, and the idea of the state as a hostile outsider parasitic on that ideal, are therefore mythologies. However, we know that mythologies, especially those connected to ideology, can be powerful driving forces of action, and are therefore not to be dismissed.

● *In the mythology of Alberta, frontier figures like Peter Pond and Anthony Henday are still revered as rugged community builders. If they would live now, they would more likely be labeled as a murderer (Pond) and a smuggler (Henday). In the history of Fort MacMurray, Alberta, the myth of the self-organizing frontier is strong. It is easy to forget -and this speaks to the blinding power of the frontier myths- what actually happened in the early days and easy to forget that provincial and federal governments, as well as the expertise of the University of Alberta, played an outsized role in its development. Fort MacMurray has been a focus of national (and international) attention and networks since the late 19th century. These things are rarely mentioned now.* ●

The mythology of self-organization can also inspire a seemingly very different strategy: radical participation. Indeed, much of the literature on development and environmental governance, and recently on planning, has stressed the importance of inclusive public participation. We know already that participation without representation can undermine checks and balances, and makes it difficult for complex patterns of rules and roles to form, patterns sustaining our societies. Lack of participation can indeed be a serious problem, yet it cannot be a starting assumption of the analysis. Full reliance on participation will revert society to a smaller scale and lower level of complexity, and it will render useless many tools for collective action that can help mitigate boom and bust: plans, policies, and laws functioning on the basis of a mix of expertise and a set of specialized roles.

4. Capacity development/ asset development

Similar to the previous ideas of a good development strategy, this perspective is more procedural than substantive, starts from some governance tools that are recommended, rather than from a substantive vision, an idea of content. Just as the previous mode of strategizing said taxes should be higher/lower for the best possible development, without saying much about the use of those taxes, this approach emphasizes capacity building, or asset development. If capacity/ assets are built, then the community can prosper.

Capacity and asset can mean many things, and the general perception usually is that a community knows what its assets are and then develops those. Capacity can refer to human resources or an area of expertise broadly defined, to institutional capacity, or to training of locals in new roles, possibly enabling the community to jump to another level of development.

Assets, we know, are only assets when they are part of a certain context or a certain story. The same is true for capacity. In the abstract, capacity does not exist. We encounter over and over again the idea, in many perspectives on development, that one tool, public participation for example, can fix everything, even if the tool itself or its impact on the community is not clearly defined. All this does not have to be problematic for communities trying to manage the cycles of growth and contraction. It does mean, however, that it becomes more important for a community to critically assess these perspectives, the literature, the consultants, the 'good example' governments, and see what can be learned, to see

through the rhetoric of the panacea. And, we know, this can be done with greater ease when a community's understanding of itself, its path, its environment, is sharpened.

In old British Columbia fishing towns, some still envision their future first and foremost in fishing. Yet even then, it's not immediately clear within the community what the main available assets are. Some would say fish, in bulk. Others would say no, maybe it's fish but not what we used to catch and processed in a different way. They might argue for smaller catches, focusing on quality and on more different species. Some might emphasize preparation in local restaurants, this last step making the fish into the actual asset. Some people would also mention fish caught not by fishermen but by tourists, the asset being then the fish for the (profitable) tourist, or the tourist herself, with the fish as tourist bait. One fish caught by a tourist can generate way more revenue for the town than one fish caught by a resident. One can see right away that in these small differences in interpretation of assets, many other differences become visible. If restaurants and tourist fishermen are important, then the whole environmental quality of the place becomes more important. In that case, it is the sea and the fishing town that become main assets, rather than the fish, and commercial fishermen in the traditional mold are not necessarily key players anymore. This can understandably cause friction, and such slight redefinition of assets can still cause turmoil, can upset the balance of power, and can cause a local blindness for viable development strategies.

Under the general concept of "asset development", one also finds strategies which have no interest in diversification, but rather to find stabilization and prosperity in the further development of the existing dominant resource. More of the same. In this version of the perspective, speed is of the essence, and slowing down of resource exploitation is the main enemy of development. If the asset is the resource itself, rather than related elements such as environment or infrastructure, then processing, product development, and a generally better educated community are not part of asset development.

● Determining what assets are most important to your community, and your community's vision for the future, has a major impact on development planning. If trees are the main assets, one can ship them overseas quickly and investing in logging and transport infrastructure would look like they have the greatest benefit to the community. If the asset is wood, then processing locally may seem more logical, and energy can be devoted to find new and more profitable ways of processing. If the forest ecosystem as a whole is the asset, preservation of that asset, enhancing its resilience, will look like a logical strategy.

The questions of identification with place and of long-term perspectives return: Are local actors involved in decision-making? Do decision-makers identify with the place? If, so, with a long-term perspective? with a long-term vision for the place? If the answer to all these questions is no, that no local decision-makers have a long-term investment in a community, then one can argue that others have to envision and advance the public interest and long-term goals, probably higher levels of government, or, in absence of that, activist NGOs. ●

A very different version of the perspective of asset and capacity building is strategic investment in infrastructure — material and intellectual, roads and schools. The idea is that this broad investment in infrastructure opens up more avenues later, allows for diversification to take place more naturally, maybe as the result of additional substantive strategizing, maybe not. Infrastructure investment often requires lobbying with other parties, and infrastructure costs money to maintain. In addition, adding infrastructure without aligning with a broader vision and implementation strategy has the potential to attract unwanted development and activity.

In general, we would say that many versions of capacity and asset development are worth exploring, yet tend to be much more meaningful and powerful when choices are made after self-analysis. Then, one can match assets and capacities to the self-understanding of the community, and the "development" part can be sensitive to its unique contexts, dependencies and narratives.

5. Localism and branding

"The idea that Fort McMurray is still developing and changing is fine. But, the truth is that Fort McMurray is a city… a relatively large city in fact and a city that has a stable population. Yes, our population has increased very rapidly and yes we are trying to catch up in terms of infrastructure needs, but I wish that I could change the slogan of Fort McMurray and rebrand it: Fort McMurray: All Grown Up."

Fort McMurray resident, 2015.

Localism and branding, as some of the other development approaches, relies on community self-organization, on tight-knit communities with a strong identity and the value of recognizing and creating value locally. It does remain open to input from consultants, academics and other external advisers.

Development in terms of localism and branding in a more stable form is seen as taking a step back from world markets of commodities, and learning which local products or features have a value, for locals themselves and for others. Outsiders can visit the community, as tourists or to buy local products, or they can stay at home and buy the local products, tapping into that local identity from a distance.

Asset mapping is crucial here, and even more than in other strategies, one has to ensure that the mapping discussion is a highly reflexive undertaking, undertaken in full awareness that mapping, recognizing, and creating assets are all part of the same process. Asset mapping, as part of path mapping and strategy building, will have to address hard decisions, such as: Do we have enough and interesting enough assets to allow for a localism which is not medieval or tribal? Do we have a good enough match between assets and narratives to make them into products attractive to other people as well? If not, do we accept a low income localism, with problematic access to many services, including health services, because of lacking resources?

In some northern British Columbia towns, local government speaks of development, revenues, and attracting business, but many locals are only moderately interested, as they came to the community for the lifestyle, not shopping malls and prosperity in the form of income statistics. Such quiet and modest localism is an often overlooked development option. It can still be combined with a form of place branding, yet only

when the producers and consumers of the local products (and landscape) are not affecting the lifestyle of the locals themselves.

In Terrace, BC, the perennial question is: How do you balance local fishing access and rights to the river against the tourist industry and German, American, and Albertan visitors? The situation is made more difficult by the fact that remote fishing lodges have only tangential relationships with the community.

If it is currently hard to sell the place identity and associated products, do we see this situation as improvable, as one that can be fixed? How hard do we have to work to create new assets and convince others that they are indeed assets, and valuable products?

The quality of context mapping plays a role here. Good context mapping helps to see which form of localism is possible. Localism can never realistically mean that a community is entirely self-sufficient and disconnected; there are always linkages between different scales, there are always flows in and out of a community. Understanding the relationship between community and context, between spatial scales, allows us to see how far localism can go in a particular case, and which form can be more profitable, as we understand then how the local is useful and valued at the higher levels, and, in the other direction, how the local is dependent on the larger context. Context mapping, therefore, is rather useful in figuring out which local products can actually be sold somewhere else. This extends to the place experience itself: maybe people are valuing Amish furniture, but they're not eager to live in an Amish community.

Pure localism, entirely leaning on local self- organization, becomes harder in a more complex society, and it becomes harder when expectations increase or when local

resources and quality of life decrease. Living on salmon was already hard for the First Nations in British Columbia centuries ago, and when they developed towns and complex social structures, interdependence with other tribes and later european traders increased. On the British Columbia coast, population densities were high when colonizers arrived, and game had already been scarce for a long time, limiting availability of food for those living off the land. Pure localism here did not work. On the part of the settlers, many male frontier communities worked briefly, then the easy pickings were depleted, more people arrived, governance structures (enabling collective action) had to be organized, families had higher expectations for quality of life, and localism dissolved in a web of regional and national relations.

Even with strong context mapping, it is not easy to figure out what might be seen as valuable outside the community. It is very well possible that a negative image of the community translates into a negative image of its products and services, or the other way around. Or, the image of the place can be so bleak that no products or services are associated with it; they became invisible. Alas, it also happens that things are valued highly within the community, often esteemed as unique, while the rest of the world shows little interest. To get out of this very classic conundrum, place branding emerged as an additional strategy.

For place branding, not only do products have to be branded, they must be tightly linked to place identity narratives, offering distinguishing features that could add value and increase competitiveness. Places, communities, and regions more broadly, can also be branded — think of the Okanagan wine region — and in fact many already have a brand, without having been intentionally strategized. Strategizing can, however, help, and an overarching goal is that place brands and product brands reinforce one another. One can work on both, so the perception of both place and product outside the community, can improve. If people like a product, and the place is embedded in its product identity, they tend to value the place; if they like the place, and already associate it with a certain type of experience or product, then products from that place can capitalize on this associative chain.

Narratives connect product and place brand. Place branding strategies aim at reinforcing place narratives and the connection between product and place. When place branding attempts go wrong, it often has to do with lack of embedding in local governance. If place branding is the domain of a few consultants advising a few government officials or businesspeople, the community is not aware of the place branding efforts. The stories promoted through place branding are likely to diverge from the stories most people see as essential for their community, and few people will be motivated to coordinate their actions according to a community images invented by a consultant. Place branding works best when part

of governance, and when there is a natural connection between the 'upgraded' narrative of the place branding strategy, and existing narratives and values.

Place branding therefore has to be quite sensitive to existing narratives and their position in governance, or, in other words, to power/knowledge configurations in governance. New narratives have to fit old ones, build on them cautiously, by referring to other features of place, history, or culture, which are not explicitly celebrated yet, but recognizable in the community and not entirely dissonant with images outside consumers and visitors might have. For prosperous communities, negative or weak images of a community can be changed through large-scale advertising, but viability over the long run is much higher when place brand, product brand, and place identity are consistent and branding is more a matter of linking, promoting, and developing than of inventing an identity from scratch.

• British Columbia salmon and Alberta beef are strong brands. In the case of salmon, there is a stronger association with the physical place and environmental surroundings, with streams and attractive landscapes. Landscape and product brand can easily reinforce one another. and do so with little advertising. For Alberta beef, the cattle can be anywhere, and current production methods do not make it easy to attract tourists or create a strong place brand. If a community wants to extend the brand to bring in outsiders, what might work is to take a branding detour, from beef to cuisine, from cuisine to place, and use advertising to reinforce these links, drawing tourists to the more attractive parts of prairies and foothills, rather than beef farms and meatworks. This can then form an umbrella toward which certain locales can orient themselves when strategizing — perhaps smaller towns boasting typical prairie landscapes, with an interest in agriculture, food, tourism, and ranch-culture. •

A branding strategy can also be a planning and design strategy. If a community chooses to embark on place branding as a core of their development strategy, we would recommend a combination with some form of spatial planning and design, focusing on preserving heritage, enhancing spatial quality, and connecting assets and infrastructure to make it easier to experience the qualities of the place.

Place branding can sell the products of the place, but also the place itself. Beyond tourism, this can include attracting residents of certain categories, who might appreciate a living environment with character and identity. Spatial planning can ensure that branding strategies are

firmly embedded in governance, and can be a central place to coordinate various initiatives on planning and branding, to work on synergies and safeguard the quality environment which embodies value and stability.

Continuing the Alberta beef example, one can imagine that landscape studies help identify which areas can benefit most from such a regional branding strategy. Landscape studies can further identify which combination of land uses is possible in a given region, which degree of intensive agricultural or other development leaves room for a "prairie experience", for appreciating real connections between agriculture, good food, and traditional landscapes. These questions are a matter of design and planning, of separating and designing uses for space and, to a large extent, of preserving and enhancing networks of landscape assets which allow people to access one type of experience — for example, a recreational nature preserve, without disturbing very different activities to happen nearby — for example, a logging site or tree farm. This is not cheating or deception, rather, it is a creative way of balancing land uses, of balancing preservation and development. Place branding can assist preservation by adding value to what is preserved, and planning can help both branding and preservation.

6. Environment/ sustainability/ resilience

Some locally professed strategies for managing boom/bust focus directly on sustainability and resilience.

Often, the foundations for these approaches are in academic expertise in environmental studies. Part of the literature on adaptive governance is also strongly linked to this rather technical literature. From the

same roots comes the concept of socio-ecological systems, which emphasizes sustainability in terms of linked and co-constituting systems. Sustainability is sought in better linkages between social and ecological systems, not only studied in terms of one system, of ecology or economy, nature or culture. Sustainability planning and resilience policies are often seen as strategy options able to reduce the experience and impacts of ups and downs. Although resilience thinking does not require impending climate change disasters, climate change, always affecting social and ecological systems, has brought prominence to this form of thinking. Already unsustainable land use and resource exploitation looks all the more questionable if one throws climate change in the mix. Climate change served to highlight already existing problems, and it brought a possible way of looking at the problems to the fore, i.e. sustainability and resilience thinking.

Sustainability thinking came up in the 1970's, when it became clear to people beyond the circles of environmental activists that earth's resources are limited and that we we were not making wise use of them. Since the 1987 Brundtland report, sustainability became a common concept in national and international policy talk, and in academia across disciplines. Critiques came fast, and revolved around the idea that things never stay the same. There was also the comment that sustainability was too big a concept, and at the same time too focused on resource use, to guide policy making. One early answer was to speak of social, ecological and economic sustainability, or, in more recent speech: people, profit, planet. General sustainability is then seen as the sum of social, ecological and economic sustainability, and it is understood that no sustainability policy can work without addressing all aspects. If saving trees is sustainable in an ecological sense, to stabilize a certain forest ecosystem, and people are hungry, and governments corrupt, around the forest, then trees will not be saved in reality, and even if this would happen, there are serious moral questions, questions regarding the value of well-being in the community itself. In addition, one can say that a stable and well-governed community is in the long run a prerequisite for any form of wise or sustainable use one can image.

The idea of socio-ecological systems came in handy, because it showed how inextricably bound the different aspects of sustainability are. It highlighted how nature makes culture and culture nature. If one thinks in terms of socio-ecological systems, one can grasp that our use of resources will come back to haunt us, will trigger effects in the social system later on. It opens the door also to concept of management of socio- ecological systems towards sustainability, a form of management that has to acknowledge its limits. We cannot take too much risk with the environment, as we don't know for sure how and when the environment will strike back, but we know it will.

Such acknowledgment of the limits of knowing and steering, led to the popularity of another concept: resilience. Resilience does not assume a steady state, or one perfect equilibrium for the socio-ecological system. A resilient system is one that can bounce back after disaster, be it a natural, economic or social disaster. It does not necessarily mean going back to an original state, but to another acceptable equilibrium between social and ecological systems. To foster resilience, the proponents say, we need to organize our governance systems for adaptive governance. Adaptive governance can mean that the governance system has to be ready to come up with adaptation strategies after this or that disaster (say, floods or drought), and it can mean that the governance system itself has to be adaptive, change configurations easily when the social or ecological environment demands this. In that last version, the transformation rules of the governance system become crucial, as adaptive capacity *and* stability of the governance system can only be combined if there is:

- High observational capacity and reflexivity in governance,
- Varied expertise present
- Flexible inclusion/ exclusion of new actors and expertise
- A wide range of institutions to address a wide variety of situations
- A continuous deliberation on what can change, what stays the same
- A continuous revision of institutions, and of transformation rules,
  rules to change the rules

Truly adaptive governance for resilience then seems to require communities who are very engaged in such demanding enterprise. It seems to involve also big government, per definition, and at the same time a big government, with lots of experts and policies, plans and laws, which can adjust itself easily. We cannot say exactly what that would look like, since nobody knows. We can say that there are inherent tensions here, as bigger and more complex bureaucracies have the tendency to keep all their parts in place, while the parts are all competing for a more central place. If a new adaptation entails the shrinking of the water ministry, or the local planning department, these people will fight it hard. If an environmental law has to be changed overnight, an army of lawyers and politicians will look very carefully if this is possible at all, compatible with other laws, with procedural law. Changing procedures to change laws can easily undermine democracy. And this holds true for other aspects of pure adaptive governance. It is easy to give a small group of experts the power to define when an adaptation is needed, and how to do that.

Yet, most often, what we read under the heading 'adaptive governance', or 'resilience planning', has a formulaic character, the character of a simple recipe, which is expected to bring resilience. It does not seem

to notice the serious tensions between adaptation and stability, and between resilience and democracy. The analysis of the ecological side of a given system tends to be stronger than the understanding of the community as a system, and how it relates to its environment. The knowledge base of sustainability/ resilience thinking is very selective (environmental sciences), and if local knowledge is added, it tends to be in a frame designed by environmental experts. Academics talking about socio- ecological systems very often talk about ecological systems plus ecologists in a position of power. In some cases, local knowledge can be idealized and fetishized as perfectly compatible with sustainability goals: the Tikuna in the Amazon forest used palms sustainably and their knowledge of palms and the forest should therefore inform new policies. Local knowledge is then presented by external experts as an unacknowledged source of sustainability thinking, and simply revealing it, giving it a place at the governance table will increase sustainability. Local people are expected to be naturally inclined to do the right thing for their local environment. We know this is not always the case, as we know that in governance, some combination of local and expert knowledges is needed. Bringing in local knowledge to solve the problems of a too simple formula for resilience planning, will not work. All this, however, does not mean that resilience, adaptation, socio- ecological systems are useless concepts. It just means one cannot use them to generate simple answers.

What is sustainability? How do we know if a community is sustainable? A steady state does not exist in a community, as internal and external environments are always changing, as are the residents and their desires. A negative answer is easily given: if the place disappears, it is not sustainable. Lille, Alberta was not sustainable. Another "unsustainable" ghost town in Alberta, Wayne, is close to Drumheller, surrounded by scenic and protected badlands. These assets enabled a modest revival of the

ghost town. Some simple but important questions loom large here: Is it a tragedy that ghost towns exist? Should they have been sustainable, all of them? In some cases, it's possible that, to quote the Italian writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa ("The leopard"): "all has to change, if we want to remain the same". As in the BC coastal fishing towns discussed earlier in this section: if we want to become a sustainable fishing town, then all has to change, namely fish, fishermen livelihoods, and fishing style. Sustainability, for us, is not always an overriding value at the smallest scale, and, positively, sustainability thinking becomes an orientation on the long term in governance, a systematic exploration of the long term effects of governance, in a new long term perspective, the type of strategy we argue for.

Sustainability and resilience do not necessarily need to be the backbone of a governance structure. Instead, they can serve as important reference points against which decisions are tested. Just as happiness might not be something that is pursued for its own sake, but rather something that comes along when giving meaning to one's life and activities, sustainability and resilience can be seen as outcomes of good governance, where other substantial and procedural goals are tested and checked for long term implications. In problematic places where environmental issues are a significant obstacle to development and quality of life, concepts of sustainability can, for a while, give structure to collective action and governance, can form the foundation for early phases of a development strategy. This, we think, is similar to radical participation, in that a certain mode of governance might not work in the long run, but might be a necessary phase to get out of a slump and jumpstart a transition.

● *Sustainability perspectives can dominate in a "cleaning up" phase of development. Cleaning up costs money, and usually, this is not found locally, nor do the companies responsible for pollution or environmental damage typically pay — they're long gone. In the Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, the provincial government (after local lobby) paid for the cleanup of the slack heaps, the coal dust, ruinous structures, and unstable sites left behind by mining activities. This was not directly labeled as a sustainability strategy in the 1980s, but it was in fact the long-term policy focus in several villages in the region, among them Coleman. Many locals did not recognize it as such, at the time or even now, but this action and focus opened up the door to other futures, such as environmental tourism, for the community and for the region.* ●

The diversity of materials on sustainability planning available can serve as inspiration. As with other approaches, many versions of sustainable community development and planning exist, quite different from each other. To make a critical selection possible, and if there are resources available, different consultants or NGOs can be brought in. One can also,

as with other approaches, consider self-study, look for local expertise, and use experts working for higher-level government to inform your approach to sustainability planning. The assumptions, narratives, and ideologies of the advisers deserve close scrutiny.

7. Downtown development/ heritage

An old and charming downtown can be a place to do many things. In path analysis, it can show up as an asset, as a carrier of community identity, and in strategy making, it can emerge as a potential driver of reinvention of the community, new and rooted at the same time. Underused downtowns across North America offer space and the possibility of proximity to many activities. The offer hope for mixed-use development (e.g. residential, retail, hospitality), for a quality living environment attracting people and work, and for a more stable community. A physical downtown of a certain age, with some attractive architecture with available space for green and beautification, can serve many purposes.

Some versions of community development focus therefore on revitalizing the downtown as the core of a general revitalization. The downtown is the heart — once it starts pumping again, other problems will be solved. Given the concentration problem in boom/bust communities, a vibrant downtown can be a way to work naturally towards diversification, or to keep more options open for future development.

A vibrant downtown can be useful in capturing more value from the existing resource, by offering space for more services, catering to resource extraction nearby but also further away. Offering a living environment for people in the industry, so they do not have to live in camps or in very small places where they can't do much, can similarly allow a town to profit more from resource extraction in the region. Just creating an attractive downtown can thus contribute to the stabilization of the community, even if there is no other strategy yet, no defined goal to diversify for example. A revived downtown can enable a local transformation of the supporting industry, which, over time, can change the main resource industry, or add other economic activities independent from it - downtowns in this view foster capacity building.

Downtown development has many faces, some revolving around design standards and restoration incentives, others around tax incentives to attract businesses. Often forgotten in the Canadian West (as in much of North America) are incentives to promote mixed-use development by relaxing local bureaucratic regulations. Empty buildings are often

not only empty because of lacking demand, but also because of regulatory impediments for re-use, for adaptation. This makes mixed-use development difficult. Another common mistake is to pre-define the type of demand and activities, and then not seeing other forms of demand and other redevelopment options: there's no new lawyers moving in, so it's a failure; meanwhile, students and young couples would love to live here but can't. Conversely, very lax regulation on building and development on the fringes of town could divert resources in that direction, away from the downtown core. Stricter planning on the fringe, in combination with development incentives and flexibility, speed, and advice from leadership in downtown projects, can bring a downtown back to life.

Some Alberta and British Columbia towns want it all: a vibrant downtown core for shopping and leisure, while at the same time fully supporting big box store development on the fringes. Nostalgia to recapture the old downtown can increase the regulatory burden on new development, since new builds or renovations have to be like in the old days. Conversely, any new development on the fringe is considered "economic development" and can therefore not be opposed, planned, or regulated. None of these developments are necessarily right or wrong, and combinations of heritage and new development are possible, but only when there is a comprehensive strategy: What do we want for the whole community? Both core and fringe development sites will have to be considered with flexibility, and in a coordinated manner.

The concentration problem of boom and bust communities so often mentioned in this guide is an issue here, when local administrations cannot imagine alternative versions of downtown, and when one or two wealthy and connected players sit on much of the real estate downtown, maybe waiting for the next boom for years and years. Engaging those

parties in discussions might create room for alternative strategies, might reframe their narratives, even ever so slightly. Once positive results of another approach become visible, this could reinforce the process of narrative change.

● The image of certain uses of the building, of certain users, can hinder downtown redevelopment. If a community college is seen as a nuisance, and student renters as problems, then it is not very likely that a local council will capitalize on the opportunity to use student housing as part of downtown revitalization. Even if the negative images are not very strong, they can still impede action because, beyond public opinion, current zoning, housing standards, and rental regulation would also likely stand in the way. Similarly, if property rights are seen as absolute, and owners are in the council, then those owners are unlikely to introduce a property owner's tax for improving ruinous downtown buildings, which could otherwise be an effective means of unfreezing a stall in downtown revitalization. ●

Each and every case will be different — the assets in the downtown, the extent to which the whole downtown is an asset, the potential for this or that type of mixed-use, and the kind and level of pressure which can be exerted on planning for the outskirts and on owners locally — all these factors will impact a downtown development or revitalization strategy. The quality of self-analysis and context analysis will determine the quality of strategy-making. Crucially in this case: the analysis will determine the quality of the decision to do something with the downtown, or even use it to kickstart a reinvention of the community. Copying a downtown development policy from a book or a neighboring town will not work. Listening to stories of success and failure cannot be too reverential; critique and self-critique are in place. In some cases, self-analysis may reveal that a downtown revival is not the best option for your community; there might be very few interesting places or buildings there, a workforce which is vehemently opposed to living in such place, a retail sector which has been allowed to grow for a long time along a highway, or a service sector (potential residents of downtown), which has been lured away by a neighbouring town.

Playing the card of downtown development in a big way requires a very careful analysis, as so much is staked on this one card. If this is a community's decision, then we would recommend creating and maintaining a diversity of institutions to pursue partial strategies to further this goal.

As we know, strategies cannot be copied, and alas this extends to the idea of downtown revitalization in North America: if population in a rural Alberta area has been declining, tourism didn't find its way there, and one town took earlier initiative in downtown revitalization, it's possible that their neighbours would struggle significantly to do the same. If the first mover was able to attract a few new businesses, a new school, cultural centre, and destination restaurant, their path dependence will be stronger, and potentially exacerbating the problems for the other communities, by drawing development and opportunity away. As always, what is defined as a problem, or an asset, depends on the perspective taken: perhaps the neighbouring towns could be content with a smaller size, happy to gain access to higher quality services a few miles away, and instead focus on a transition to a more residential character.

Institutions and key decisions can include:

- design guidelines, but also perhaps
- tax abatement incentives,
- proposed punishment for unused decrepit buildings,
- provisions for social housing,
- a recruitment strategy and
- place branding strategy,
- infrastructural needs,
- identification of sites of key importance, and
- reflection on issues such as more flexible procedures and regulations,
- the ideal combination of space uses, and
- potential initial investment in pilot projects.

Social policy can assist: childcare and school subsidies help with homelessness, increase the workforce, attract young families. Supporting a small downtown clinic can reduce travels and travails for residents. Helping ngo's to find a presence can trigger a magnifying effect, whereby the ngo's provide services, advocate for improving local democracy and community development, and contribute by their mere presence to the diversity and attractiveness of the place. Collaboration with other governmental actors, and other players can play a part: retirement homes, schools, courts, a national parks office, a radio station, a cinema. Encouraging those to settle and stay adds to the vibrancy of a downtown, because of their activities, the continuous and diverse use of the space, and the professionals which might become residents.. Too often, many options are overlooked and too many land uses routinely placed outside downtowns -in suburbs, neighbourhoods, or rural settings. Empty spaces elsewhere are seen as easier to develop, and downtowns as a lot of hassle, because of the density of regulations and the complexity of development as re- development. Local governments can help developers and others to overcome these objections, by clearly showing the advantages of a downtown location and by simplifying a move downtown. Preservation of attractive buildings and places, and clean up of ruinous, dangerous and polluted areas can be transitional and encouraging strategies, as well as preventing rampant development and sprawl on the fringe.

8. Innovation/ transition

This way of thinking of community development, focusing on innovation and novelty, sees new knowledge and new technologies as a driver of change. Innovation can mean many things, but a common thread in much of this literature is that scientific innovation brings technical innovation, which brings economic innovation and prosperity for the community. As usual, we would say that sometimes this is the case, but not necessarily.

Much scientific work is not immediately or visibly useful, or not directly linked to technical work, and economic innovation and success is often disconnected from academic or technical advances. Walmart, for example, did not become the biggest retailer because of more expertise, but because of savvy cost-cutting, ruthless competition, tough negotiating with producers, and a very helpful American home base. Yet, this critique cannot blind us to the benefits and value of innovation strategies. If path and context mapping, including careful

analysis of narratives, assets, expertise, and location, indicate that there is indeed a possibility either to attract high tech businesses, consultants, or academic organizations, or to foster entrepreneurship in knowledge-intensive sectors, why not take this approach?

● *Singapore was more or less considered a "busted place", with declining manufacturing as early as the 1960s. Yet they had the location, resources, population, and an authoritarian and enlightened regime to see very early the benefits of a reinvention based on innovation and the "knowledge economy". As an early mover, they had an additional advantage over later competitors. The case of Singapore is an often quoted example of transition management, a more ambitious and steering-intensive version of innovation-driven strategy.* ●

Transition management aims to identify gaps in existing knowledge and assets, and identify existing potential for scientific and economic gain. It tries to spot where economic potential is hindered by a few lacking pieces of the knowledge puzzle, and where existing expertise could lead to new products, requiring some assistance. New institutions can foster the traffic in two directions, between knowledge and products, recognizing gaps and potential in industry and knowledge, and using the resources and institutions of governments to intensify the relationship between the two fields. Transition management aims to link and magnify innovations in a systematic way, enabling transitions of economy and society. Loet Leydesdorff's triple helix model is very influential in these circles, an understanding of innovation and prosperity emerging out of an intensified and structured interplay between companies, government, and academic or knowledge-producing organizations.

● *Fort McMurray, Alberta and the oil sands nearby were at first the object of strategic development attempts by a network of mostly governmental actors across Canada. Since the 1970s, private actors became more and more dominant. Yet, one recurring theme is the belief in private- public cooperation in knowledge production for resource extraction. The University of Alberta has played a crucial role in Alberta's energy sector since the 1920s, and is still fostering innovation for the regional economy. Profitable exploitation of the oil sands is the direct result of coordinated technical innovation and financial and institutional support.*

However, as controversy increased over oil sands exploitation, the University of Alberta became more entangled in the production of competing knowledges, serving several actors and purposes: new

knowledge supports industry by identifying strategies for more efficient extraction and processing and tackling its (imposed) task of cleaning up the environment, while simultaneously supporting activists in finding arguments against the industry. The example illustrates right away that "socio technical transitions" (in the words of Leydesdorff) are bound to be contested. Who says where a community or society has to go? And how could the knowledge supporting one view of transition not be contested? A push towards one form of economic development will invite close scrutiny of those who are open to other forms of economic development, and to forms of community development where economic growth might not be the main concern. New, opposing knowledge will develop around this resistance and reinforce it. ●━━━━━━

In some cases, the companies co-deciding transition policy at regional or national levels are big and few, and then the conversation between politics, academia and business is in fact a corporate monologue. This undermines checks and balances, fair market competition, actual knowledge innovation, and citizen participation in governance. Such innovation approach dominated by the corporate few was tried in the Netherlands, in the years after 2000, when, for a while, all university funding was tied to industry partners, assuming that this would support innovation. After a while, the practice was abandoned because of public outcry, because of the issues identified above. It also became clear that a business park or "innovation campus" did not automatically deliver public goods: the innovation campus rarely triggered or magnified innovation by bringing corporate and academic players together, and if so, that innovation mostly led to private gain. The parks brought in little taxes, as competing municipalities routinely offered big tax incentives to the parks and their residents. Similarly, the innovation consultants promising boom conditions based on their innovative work were selling the same story of unique conditions to all municipalities, hindering their capacity for effective self-analysis. Many of the much lauded "innovation campuses" are empty now, and and the towns that invested in their promises have lost out.

Such doom stories should not stop communities from thinking critically about selectively borrowing from innovation strategies. A few things to keep in mind when considering your own innovation strategy:

• One big company can never be "the private sector" on its own, whatever the company's rhetoric is. Helping a gorilla can kill a dozen monkey's.
• Innovation strategies ought to be (as Leydesdorff acknowledges) a matter of multi-level governance, so context analysis can help identify whether there can be support on other scales.

- Communities can make the innovation approach more flexible and context-sensitive by thinking in terms of academic, technical, economic, and social innovation, and of the relationships between them.
- Some expertise will not attract many new companies, but can be useful in other ways, such as contributing to innovation and future development.
- Prioritizing some expertise can attract new companies, but of a different sort than you may initially consider. The French city of Aix-en-Provence is famous for its concentration of lawyers and doctors, partly coincidence, partly as the result of policy decisions.

Sometimes social innovation, new ways of organizing, can improve quality of life and make social services accessible, which then can attract different activities. Internet infrastructure, networking spots, "third spaces" to work outside home and office will be assets nowadays to open up new possibilities for businesses and distance workers. The possibility for a lifestyle beyond work, in combination with infrastructure, can also attract innovators. For example, the small community of tech business workers in Smithers, BC. This, however requires careful asset mapping, branding, and likely a comprehensive strategy: which lifestyle could fit in the community and be attractive for attractive outsiders? Which places, qualities, activities, networks, and infrastructures are associated with that lifestyle?

● Anything new can be sold as innovation, as the future. A new technique to drill oil is innovation, a new accounting scheme at the oil company, a new way to keep more cattle on the grassy foothills of the Rockies, a bigger and more efficient slaughterhouse for the cattle. The agricultural college at Olds. Alberta has been very successful in attracting business to its campus and to the town by presenting itself as a driver of local innovation, producing new knowledge more attuned to local economic needs and encouraging local economic actors to become more knowledge-intensive. Such an entrepreneurial role for higher education is applauded in the innovation and transition literature. At the same time, one cannot forget to analyze why this particularly strategy worked in this particular town, which networks in southern Alberta, which corporate, financial, and political connections enabled the success story. Such critical analysis is not designed to unveil an inconvenient truth or to discourage innovation — it's a step in understanding what can serve as inspiration in your own place, what not. ●

As with all community development action, forethought in adopting an innovation strategy is essential for success, and dependence on one actor should be viewed with caution. Attracting one big tech company could effectively stop all sorts of innovation in a community, outside the factory walls. Its presence is no guarantee whatsoever for enhancing the quality of governance or the importance of innovation in development. As often, such dependence on one player makes other actors stop thinking critically, and fosters concentration problems. This is even true for an organization focused on the creation and transfer of knowledge, like a college or university, or a research institute. Creating an innovation park only makes sense under very specific conditions, which cannot be easily manufactured. Bringing companies and research organizations close to each other does not always generate the creativity and open innovation needed to benefit the community as a whole.

Improving the quality of self-analysis and the understanding of different sorts of innovation, however, is always possible. Carefully mapping out the innovative actors present in the community or potentially attracted to it, actors active in different aspects of innovation, is a worthwhile task, not a waste of time, just as the analysis of existing links between those actors, and a reflection on how to intensify and render more productive those linkages will support an informed community strategy. We can speak of an *innovation network* and a *governance network*, which can be mapped and deliberately made to overlap more, to connect more, so that reflection on and fostering of innovation can become more deeply embedded in governance and conscious strategizing within the community.

9. Growing, centering, free margin

Several classic strategies of dealing with boom and bust cycles share the understanding that more people generate more resources, do more things, and once a community expands past a certain size, it cannot be hit as hard by downturns. *Growing*, in other words, is the best protection against a downturn.

We tend to disagree. All communities have to decide for themselves what they see as a desirable size, but it is easy to point to places across the world where rapid growth, planned and unplanned, did not lead to improved quality of life or prosperity. Setting targets for growth is not the same as actual development goals. Soviet planning produced large cities in harsh places, cities that are now unsustainable, and their deterioration is a catastrophe of epic proportions. Size itself does not embody diversity

or resilience. More people can stretch the carrying capacity of the environment and infrastructure, and the presence of more people does not always mean the presence of more and different perspectives, of enhanced long-term thinking or adaptive capacity.

• *Growth has been, and continues to be, the primary concern driving development, planning, and governance amongst the communities of Alberta. While provincial legislation has opened up to include a wider number of aims in recent iterations, including for instance environmental stewardship and agricultural land maintenance, directives for municipal development planning continue to privilege growth above other concerns. Indeed, development planning and growth planning are synonymous within the strategic discourse of many municipalities. Moreover, since the early twentieth century, development as achieved in the landscape, that is, physical development, has followed highly stable paths which have supported land speculation, outward expansion, and suburban population growth. Development has likewise been synonymous with sprawl. Historians of prairie communities refer to these development pathways as characterized by a specific culture of prairie boosterism, a culture of bold and rather shameless promotion and self- promotion. Even now, one can find traces of the institutionalization of this boosterism, in provincial policies that reward municipalities for numerical growth or punishing them when not growing.* •

A related but different strategy we call *centering*, the ambition to claim a central place in the region or nation in some regard. A community can aim to be a service centre for mining in the region, for eco-tourism in a large area, or as a medical or educational hub, or else anticipate and prepare a central position in future development up north.

• *In Western Canada, Prince George, BC is an example in which a combination of natural location, luck, and strategy over several generations rendered the city a stable hub for many activities. This approach cannot work for everybody, as a centre is per definition an exception, and not everybody can be an exception. As with other potential strategies, centering can become visible as a possible approach over time, and ongoing self-analysis can tell us where emerging patterns and partial strategies can cohere into a more comprehensive self-understanding and self-organization as a defined centre. Increasing intellectual capital and learning capacity will increase the potential for a centering strategy; attracting governmental actors could have a similar effect, and contribute to the stabilizing of cycles locally by their mere presence.* •

As mentioned earlier, as of the early 2000s, due to its central location within the northwest region of Canada, at a geographic crossing where four valleys meet, the economy of Terrace, BC has revolved largely around its growing service sector. The town was historically built around forestry, which collapsed in the late 1990s, and was very prone to boom and bust market cycles. When the forest industry collapsed, Terrace "decided" to become a shopping and residential-focused "bedroom community" and service centre, allowing it to diversify and stabilize. Business offices and big box stores are moving to Terrace for its central placement. Many in Terrace now identify their town as a "business-oriented community". Some members even look forward to growing to something larger, becoming a "northern centre", realizing that there are opportunities to benefit and grow. Those who embrace the change believe Terrace should further capitalize on potential future opportunities, should build a convention centre, better commercial facilities, and so on. Others, however, have seen this transition as a necessary process, as the only way to survive and to remain "relevant".

A different but related strategy we can call the *free margin approach*, where a community relies on the presence of a bigger one nearby, or of large-scale economic activities nearby, and offers more freedom, lower taxes, and less regulation for residents and visitors alike.

● *In between a large city and a national park, rougher tourism can be attracted, as well as residents who are comfortable with a remote small town location because they do not like planning as such, or as it happens in the city. Such new residents do not necessarily like to share the road with pedestrians and bikes, do not feel like paying taxes for parks since they don't use them, and do not mind that neighbouring homes have no lawns or might be falling apart. Such things can be positively appreciated, as signs of freedom, and of a frontier lifestyle.* ●

It is easy to frown upon this strategy, but it is a common one. For boom/ bust communities wary of plans and strategies, in formerly natural or rural environments, this can look like an attractive option, requiring few political battles, little introspection, and minimal resources and expertise. Often, it is associated with identity narratives of both the town itself and the neighbouring city: cultivating the margin can come out of an old local self-image as free-spirited country dwellers, and the strategy can be invented by a disenfranchised group from the city, who moved out and finally see their chance to live free or die. This approach is not present in much of the traditional and mainstream literature on community planning and governance, but can nevertheless not be ignored.

In the presence of a neighbouring larger centre, people of different ideologies can move into a smaller community. The ideology of the newcomers can be similar or dissimilar to that of the 'old stock'. The new ideology can transform the existing one, take over the place, or be absorbed by older narratives. If newcomers with new stories take over, they will change governance, understand assets differently, and start building on them differently. People can move out of the city for many reasons, and they move into the smaller town for a variety of reasons. They might all rely on the services of the city still, but the different stories they tell about their newfound rural hometown can set these communities on entirely different tracks. Sometimes, the newcomers inspire a free margin strategy, in other cases they might work closely with sitting residents to preserve local assets and cultivate a cooperation, rather than individual freedom.

● *In a small British Columbia town, not too far from an urban centre, and in an area already attractive to tourists and European nature-seeking immigrants, a useless downtown core can start to look charming, a crazy farmer can become a quaint provider of local products, a stand of worthless trees can become a decorative backdrop for a new neighbourhood. Half-abandoned farmland or sites with depleted natural resources, overgrown again, can become perceived as "nature" and "scenery".* ●

With any expansion, new actors in governance promote new narratives which interpret the material and social environment differently, and provide a new basis for strategizing. The reliance on a neighbouring city in a free margin strategy changes over time: the city can become more and more distant, with changing transportation, and with the arrival of the internet. In Smithers, BC, the existing community took control over the transformation of their downtown core (See the previous chapter for more info on Smithers, with its Swiss-inspired downtown revitalization).

In this situation, locals defined assets themselves and strategized the best development paths for their community from there. In many other places, however, it is the newcomers who take charge of the redefinition, leading to tensions with "old stock" residents. In such situations, outsiders and newcomers project other values and see other assets than the existing community, then settle down and start to take over governance and define strategy. The newcomers are no less residents than the others — they have the same rights. Rather than presenting one as oppressing the other, one can say that these are different transformation paths, each with their own tensions and opportunities , their own patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

10. Tourism and lifestyle, based on heritage, nature, art, adventure...

In places with considerable natural or cultural assets, not too far from cities or from a major road or railroad, a tourism-based strategy can work. In the Canadian West, there are many examples of this, since boom/bust places are often in scenic areas, did not always destroy their environment, and the two most popular and considered options for stabilization are attracting a few *different* big projects or players (the most common version of diversification), or else improving the tourism sector. Tourism-based communities we visited in our research often saw themselves as very diversified, even if this was not really the case. In such pseudo- diversified towns, the idea of diversification was not part of a stabilizing strategy. The reasons to think of oneself as diversified can be partly strategic, partly emotional. We encountered a community where the diversification idea clearly came from a place branding attempt (cool to be a logging town with ski trails), while also being tied to sensitivities in the identity narrative (we don't want to see ourselves as a tourist place).

● *Tourism as a strategy to stabilize boom/bust cycles is not a silver bullet.Tourism by itself won't necessarily be able to buffer boom/bust patterns. In Fort McMurray, Alberta, for example, the tourism industry competes with the all mighty oil industry. Despite the scenic surroundings of the city and the many outdoor attractions possible, it is difficult for outdoor lovers to believe that it is possible to plan a getaway close to the world's largest oil sands development. For local entrepreneurs, it is difficult to invest in a tourism company when, if they invest in oil they can make in one year as much money as they could in ten years of*

*taking tourists on hikes and canoe trips. The nearby Athabasca Dunes
are hard to explore, because of lacking infrastructure, and some of the
quaint fishing lodges that could attract tourists only provide lodging to
oil workers - it's more profitable to rent to them. Finding an appropriate
role for tourism in Fort Mac is possible, but requires a long term strategy,
including strategic support by government and a vision of the region
as a major tourism asset waiting to be unlocked.* ●

Image: Adam Roy. Heritage Park Museum. Terrace, BC

*When competing with a booming or formerly booming resource industry, tourism is
often seen as second-best, as supplementary, as a "soft" industry, or as a way of
"surviving" rather than "thriving". Tourism, many believe, will not grow if it is
not a main priority: Why should a community pour considerable resources into
tourism when, say, sawmills "pay the bills" through higher corporate taxations?
Many people who live in Grande Prairie, Alberta don't consider tourism an
industry, despite the diversity it adds to the community's economic profile.
Grand Prairie serves as an important shopping, sports, and corporate visitation
destination for people across the Northwest Territories and northern British
Columbia, as well as for highway traffic going up to Alaska. Identity politics,
however, make it harder for residents to see tourism as a viable option for planned
growth, when many still only consider "real jobs" as those in the (formerly)
dominant resource industry of the region, even if those jobs are far from stable.*

Tourism comes with very classic problems: it can bring its own downfall, can destroy itself easily, if too successful. Too many people in a quaint or natural place make it less quaint or natural. Tourism is highly subject to trends and fashion. It relies on visitors, requiring significant space and activity to be devoted to visitors, not to residents and their tastes and values. It is based on a set of assets and factors not always controlled by a community. If the quality of the landscape in the wider area declines, tourism can suffer. If there's not enough snow, same problem. If there are too many animals or not enough animals or the wrong animals, it can be a problem. If it's too dry, too wet, too cold, or too warm, demand could fade. Even neighbouring development could potentially impact your demand. For instance, a nearby town that attracts foraging chefs featuring in culinary magazines could draw an new kind of tourist and tourist culture that frowns upon your formerly successful dining scene dominated by schnitzel and spatzle, connected to your previous Alpine place branding strategy.

Tourism can still contribute, we argue, to stabilization of boom/bust cycles, under a few conditions:

• there is either a high quality version of an important tourism product (say skiing), or internal diversification, different sorts of tourism and tourists coming to town,
• tourism doesn't prey on the assets enabling tourism, including other forms of tourism (e.g. mountain biking eroding trails and landscapes for hikers and hunters),
• tourism doesn't undermine the assets allowing for non-tourist activities in town, and
• tourism income is used to reinforce assets that support development beyond tourism, and that looks beyond the short-term.

Tourism needs regulation and embedding in broader strategy, in other words, to prevent lack of diversification or tourism-dominated development driving away current residents and other sorts of businesses.

Under these conditions, a booming tourism industry can improve the quality of life in the community, which can open doors to new forms of diversification, and other mechanisms of stabilization. The scale of tourism is not always important, and sustainable salmon fisheries, for example, even at a very small scale, can contribute to the quality of life, the tourism package, and the place brand of a community. Sometimes, angling tourism can be the core of local economic activity, but it is more likely to be a complementary industry which nevertheless can alter the image of a place, bring in different sorts of visitors and

In Prince Rupert, BC, a tourism development effort around sport fishing, and whale and bear watching has been undertaken. A redevelopment in the Cow Bay area has been put in place in support of this initiative. It was always well understood in the community that tourism would not replace the jobs lost with the closure of the lumber mill, the previous primary employer in the town. A tourism strategy, however, could contribute to the local economy and perhaps more importantly, could improve the overall aesthetic and character of the community, making it more attractive and enjoyable for residents and other businesses. It is hoped that the improved quality of life tied to the tourism industry will help draw employees of the port to live full-time in the town.

residents, hence open doors to new types of development, compatible with the changed image. Under these conditions, tourism cannot only be attracted by an existing lifestyle in the community, it can also contribute to its development, allowing for investment in assets which can attract new residents appreciating the same lifestyle.

A discussion of tourism-centred development strategies cannot omit a brief discussion of art. Tourism and lifestyle as development orientation can lean on heritage, nature, scenery, but in many cases, art pops up very quickly. More respectfully and correctly: art can contribute to the rich experience of the place, by presenting and interpreting it differently, by rendering a particular quality of place, people, lifestyle transcendent. Art can make fishing a zen activity, can change a hike into a poetic reflection on nature and life, can be an alternative to economic activities suddenly experienced as trivial. Art is special. Art is, for many people, what cannot be categorized otherwise. It changes people's perspective of the landscape, of each other, and of themselves.

Art can attract a form of tourism, and art can be a part of the strategizing process in a community, where community theatre or temporary public art, for example, can break open the mould of existing narratives, pushes people to shift perspective, and can be integral to loosening identity narratives, which is essential for reinventing a community.

• For the rocky mountain community of Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, the road from coal to tourism has been littered with false promises and abandoned developments. While the municipality has increasingly (if somewhat hesitantly) embraced tourism as its economic lifeline, legacies of coal mining have found new life with the prospect of a renaissance in coal mining activities. It is within this precarious and uncertain moment between legacies of the past and possible tourism futures that the community leaders we spoke with in our research identified the possibility of a unique place identity. Rather than aspiring to be an idyllic resort destination like the town of Banff, Alberta, community members saw the Crowsnest Pass as offering a different kind of natural landscape — one that caters to extreme mountain sporting events like the treacherous "Sinister-7" running race. The Crowsnest Pass also attracts mountain bikers, fly-fishers, ATV enthusiasts, and others in search of more rugged outdoor adventures. While this less regulated "mountain playground" version of the natural landscape is contested by some residents, it illustrates an important point: the idea of "natural" is fluid and can be adapted to fit particular contexts. By embracing more rugged outdoor activities, the Crownest Pass offers its own brand of "the natural" — one that attracts a particular type of adventure tourism, and may open up unexpected opportunities for future growth (while probably not precluding a coal renaissance). •

CASE STORY: FORT McMURRAY AND REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO (RMWB)

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) is located in the north eastern corner of Alberta, and incorporates a geographic area of over 63,000 kilometres, making it one of the largest municipalities in North America. For reference, the geographic region is more than twice the size of Belgium and nearly as large as Scotland. The urban service centre of Fort McMurray is approximately 435 kilometres north of Edmonton, the provincial capital and nearest major city. Two major highways provide access to the RMWB and over the past decade the provincial government has significantly invested in providing improvements in local road infrastructure, such as the recent twinning of highway 63, set to be completed in 2016. This investment was required to expand the oil sands operations, and improve the safety of the highway, which had a reputation as being unsafe due to high traffic volumes and the transport of large equipment. The region encompasses ten rural communities and an urban service centre in the heart of the Boreal Forest, surrounded by wetlands and two major river systems, the Athabasca and the Clearwater.

As of the last official census report in 2012 the population of the region was 116,407 and includes the urban service area of Fort McMurray (72,944), the rural service area (4,192), and worker camp accommodations (30,271). The camp accommodations house what is referred to as the "shadow population" and according to the RMWB 2012 census report are "temporary residents in the Municipality who are employed, or will be employed, by industrial or commercial establishments in the Municipality for a minimum of 30 days." Existing and pending camp accommodations have the potential to house over 80,000 workers. The significance of this is that such a large "shadow population" can impact the planning and provision of appropriate urban and rural services in this region. The annual average population growth rate over the last 10 years has been 7.24 percent compared to the Alberta provincial and Canadian national 10 year averages of 2.10 percent and 1.10 percent respectively. Demographically, the RMWB is one of the youngest in Canada with an average age of 32 years, compared to the Canadian average of 41 years, and an average 57 percent male population. The draw of employment opportunities has attracted people from all over the world and is reflected by an ethnically diverse population.

The region is the epicentre of the oil and gas development in Canada and home of the largest industrial site on the planet. Large deposits of bitumen spurred the investment and development of the Athabasca Oil Sands, which includes areas directly south of the RMWB and stretching in to the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan. The majority of the region is considered Crown land and administered by the province. There are many considerations in administering this region to balance development of existing and future demands made by the province, municipality, and industry. Due to the large industrial sector (36.7 percent resource based and 27.4 percent construction) the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has fewer small businesses than the Alberta average, resulting in limited opportunity to diversify the local economy and supply residents with a variety of expected urban services. The average household income in the region (2012) was $189,458, more than double the Canadian average of $75,000, and the average price of a home listed at $751,232, versus the $398 000 Canadian average.

Over the past few decades the RMWB has garnered much media attention. Beyond media reports of environmental degradation, there has been a concentrated focus on increased crime, drug abuse, gambling, and violence against women that provided anecdotal stories of biased images that the region is currently trying to reverse. In 2011, Maclean's magazine listed Fort McMurray as the eighth most dangerous city in Canada. However, a recent report on crime in the RMWB from 2003-2012 indicates that with the exception of cocaine trafficking and impaired driving, the region has relatively low crime rates in all other categories compared to provincial and national averages. The discrepancy between media representation and reality is a result of inaccurate population estimates for the region due to the large shadow population. Despite these anecdotal stories, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo does face real challenges involving planning and developing appropriate hard (physical) and soft (services) infrastructure to meet the changing dynamics in their population. The municipality is struggling to combat these negative images and counter it with a more balanced portrayal of the lived reality for the permanent population that call this region home.

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Part VI:

Analyzing and strategizing revisited

Strategy emerges out of analysis, but always with a rupture, a decision. Let us bring together some of the key ideas from the previous chapters and consider the relation between analysis and strategy.

The analysis we have argued for is self-directed context and path mapping, self-analytical methods which can comprise many others and which are embedded within governance, within the processes of judging and deciding in a community. Self-analysis is a means of self-examination and can potentially lead to a confrontation with unpleasant or hidden truths, a rewriting of the narratives underpinning the community. For that reason alone, in practice, analysis and strategizing will merge into and influence one another: a new interpretation of self opens up new avenues to the future. Techniques employed and findings uncovered during analysis will flow into your development strategy. Similarly, strategic options will be tested and rejected through ongoing analysis, evolving insight in an evolving community.

Reinvention is not easy. It consists of more than simply coming up with new plans based on a collective vision. It requires intensive and active self-analysis, and sometimes self-sacrifice. That which is beneficial for a community isn't necessarily beneficial for those in power. And it is not always what citizens feel as desirable in the moment. Common in boom/bust communities, both total reinvention and remaining completely the same are fantasies, which have to be exposed because they lead to unrealistic and painful strategies.

Self-analysis of the proposed sort, has to expose what is unrealistic in expectations, as well as, positively, what can be built upon. We highlight a few concepts which turned out to be important for linking analysis and strategy in a productive manner: knowledge and learning, reflexivity, leadership and good governance. All these contribute to what we can call adaptive governance.

1. Knowledge

When talking about boom/bust communities in the Canadian West, knowledge used to inspire strategy has to include several categories:

• Knowledge of the issues

This refers to either knowledge of the cycles of boom and bust themselves, or of the particular effects of the cycles that prove most problematic. This we call initial problem knowledge, linked to initial ideas of assets and solutions. What is the community's initial understanding of the reasons and relevant effects of boom and bust?

• Self-knowledge

Path and context analysis gives insights into the elements, drivers, and transformation mechanisms in governance, its unique mode of reproduction, its unique balance of rigidity and flexibility. These insights enable us often to *redefine problems and possible solutions*. Assets may look different. Potential governance tools, and how they may help the community, may look different. Narratives defining the community, the good community, good tools of governance, will offer further direction for strategic content and procedure.

• Knowledge of learning capacity and coordination capacity in the community

This is an aspect of the self-knowledge mentioned above, a set of insights that should come out of path analysis.

• Knowledge of the community context

Community contexts will include dependencies on other scales, other actors, resources, institutions, narratives. If we look more broadly, and especially later in the process of self-analysis, we can also learn from the experiences of other communities dealing with similar issues.

• Knowledge of the expertise landscape

Mapping the landscape of expert knowledge, assessing theories and concepts of community development, planning, and policy can inspire local strategy. However, incorporating expert voices into local strategy should follow wider reflections on the community context. Caution is needed as early reliance on one or two external experts may hinder self-analysis, and meaningful selection of locally beneficial sources of knowledge. In Part V we provided an overview of some influential approaches to development (expert perspectives) which can inform local strategizing, which can be a source of content for it.

2. Reflexivity

Learning from the past, from other places, or from other ideas is easier and more productive when observational capacity and reflexivity have been upgraded beforehand. Such efforts will increase the chances of constructing and enacting *long-term perspectives*, the ability to build and use any effective strategy and to make the right choices.

The actual process of strategy-building will have to be an iterative process, learning from steps in the analysis, and from experiences in governance, in the community and the world at large. The strategy, lest we forget, is a *story*, giving meaning and direction to other stories, building on and changing identity narratives. It is also a *tool of coordination*, giving meaning and function to other tools and other institutions.
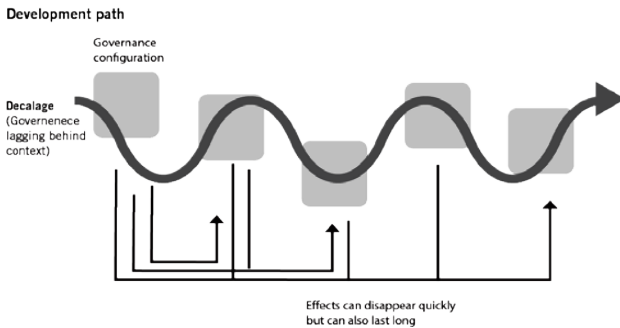
Strategizing as an iterative process is iterative because it is part of evolving governance, and because it has the character of *continuous mutual adaptation of problem — tool — solution — goal — identity*. Community identity is always changing, and in our case of Canadian boom/bust, there is always the looming issue of reinvention, deliberate change beyond natural evolution. But any change will have to be grounded in existing patterns of identity and other narratives, in existing actor/ institution patterns. A desired shift in identity narrative can become more likely when new institutions are already set in place, when new knowledge and narratives are emphasized in governance and branding, when success stories can be presented and are compatible with the intended course.

An aspired for reinvention will require new problem definitions, tools, and solutions. Any feasible reinvention will be limited and shaped by path analysis, and new stages in strategizing will change initial stories and goal states accordingly. A strategy as a story persuasive in the community, persuasive enough to make its associated institutions work and coordinate, will lose that character when in the community people adhere to very different identity stories, ideas of assets, problems, solutions, and tools. Path analysis, reflexivity, and observational capacity therefore work together to *enable strategizing*, to improve the matching of new ideas and tools in governance with the stories and tools that are already there, in governance and in the larger community. That matching is possible, as evolving strategy, and when we look at it in detail, it is the complex and ongoing adaptation we have just mentioned of problems, tools, solutions, goals, and identities.

It's important for the community at large to remain comfortable with, and persuaded by, any strategy that affects their lives, and livelihoods. Ensuring widespread approval will require, on some level, adapting the

language and tools used to describe and implement the long-term strategy to reflect the current values of the community. When possible, the change process and its results have to look natural, like a good fit for the community, to support a smoother transition. However, in some cases, a strong impression of change, of improvement as difference, has to be made. There are arguments for emphasizing difference or even shock, particularly when people are unhappy with many aspects of their community.

Changing, to a certain extent, always involves pretending not to change, and strategizing for leadership, again, requires pretending not to strategize. Insisting on absolute transparency here does not help — with complete transparency, it becomes impossible for governance to do its business, to provide and maintain stories which can help the community guide itself. Revealing that those stories are always partly fictitious would reduce their productivity, their positive effects.

Development path

Governance configuration

Decalage
(Governenece lagging behind context)

Effects can disappear quickly but can also last long

Figure 14. Governance responds to a boom or bust later, and sometimes much later. We call this lagging behind decalage. The response can be conscious, an attempt to manage the effects, and it can be an unseen influence. An economic boom forty years ago can still affect city governance, by the players it empowered then, by the urban landscape created mostly then, by the erasure of older and alternative community stories then.

Depending on the community and on the outcomes of their path and context analysis, a strategy may have to emphasize either continuity or change to fit community expectations and values. Later, when in a transformation process, a strategy will need to focus more on rigidity and staying the course, or else on flexibility in strategy and adaptation, again depending on the expectations and values of the people invested in the strategy. The emphasis will have to be unique to each case. Also the presentation of this emphasis, the rhetoric used inside and outside the community regarding the strategy and its success will have to be tailored to suit the context and desired outcomes. Perhaps leadership sees a greater necessity for change than many citizens, or sees more value in forms of continuity. Leadership, as a group of actors influential in governance, has to make choices of how to present their actions and the community direction when building and implementing their strategy. Not making these choices is not having a strategy.

When leadership sees a difference between their assessment and that of many citizens, they can try to persuade and then push, or act and explain later, or not push at all. Each option involves risk. Going back for each decision to the community, taking an approach of more radical participation, is very risky too, as then the potential benefits of leadership, that is the potential for strong strategy in a representative democracy, disappear. In other words: leadership is highly useful for strategy, and any democratic leadership has to manage risk, as well as the tension between visioning and the majority mood of the day.

This complex matching effort between what is and what could be, in strategizing, is likely to be contested in the community. It is unlikely, in a democratic setting, that any ambitious strategy, and certainly one calling for a community reinvention, will remain uncontroversial. Too much is at stake, too many identities and interests are touched. This adds to the complexity and to the need for ongoing revision. Iteration, adaptation, and revision do not mean that there is no long-term perspective. No, even if a ship is rebuilt at sea, this is better for the crew than no ship at all. Long-term perspectives, even as they shift and adapt to meet changing community needs and expectations, coordinate narrative and action in a community, provide frames of reference there, and the presence of coordination increases resilience, chances of reinvention, and survival.

Strategy is not possible without tactics, and tactics lack direction without an overarching strategy. Long-term thinking and short-term adaptation require each other, and the same is true for abstract and concrete ideas. A community is always abstract and concrete at the same time, something active in both the long and short run — functioning in the short run involves stories about the long term. Abstract reflections and overarching goals become very practical for informing the daily business of governance, when assessing real options for developing and implementing strategy. Similarly, small decisions can reinforce or weaken the long-term perspective, the strategy; all the more reason to adopt an adaptive perspective and cultivate observation and reflexivity.

3. Leadership

For both the short and the long term, tactics and strategy, good leadership is inspired by thorough analysis of path, goal, and inter-dependence, and knows that adaptation is also about picking battles, about knowing which conflict is worthwhile, and knowing what elements are best to change when, what and who are best to leave alone. Path and context mapping assist the leadership with these decisions, and if it has been a

community undertaking, the assessment of change and conflict is easier. The mapping exercise is beneficial for leadership to observe windows of opportunity, to know when a goal, element of a plan or project can be pulled from the shelf and pushed through.

How to do this will depend on the ability of the leadership to connect strategy and tactics, to know which tools to embed in other tools, to make short-term responses useful for achieving long-term goals. That ability can be enhanced by the analyses covered at length in this guide, but it cannot rely on analysis alone. Local leadership needs good local knowledge beyond path and context mapping, and has to be served by the qualities any manager of public organizations needs. Public good and collective good can never be left out of focus or, or set too far in the background. Continue to ask the important questions: Why are we doing this again? Who is benefiting? How does this small thing fit into something larger? Is the larger goal actually good for our town?

Tools in long-term strategies for a community can be diverse. A variety of instruments, narratives, and tactics can be used across different policy domains. No community is uniform, and a fractured approach, applying different methods and tools, can be useful under some conditions. If we see institutions, including the formal institutions of policies, plans and laws as the main tools for communities to pursue long term strategies, and we see a strategy as a unifying narrative frame which can tell us which tools to use when, we have to add that in reality, the strategy will never be able to completely coordinate all other stories, and all other tools embedded in local governance. That is not always a problem, and very different tools, sometimes reflecting different development approaches, can relate to each other in ways that minimize the dissonance, that allow them to coexist within a community without disrupting each other, and without undermining a general strategy. The use of partly contradictory tools and approaches can reflect legacies from the past, fissures in the community, but also the proven value of a tool in a certain domain of policy, as well as the appropriateness for quick use in tactical moves. There are a few traditional ways of relating and incorporating partly contradictory governance tools and approaches.

• Nesting

Approaches can contain others at a more concrete level. For example, a city of neo-liberal inspiration can have a weak planning system, imposing few rules on land owners, but still be very attached to its heritage. That city might highly value architecture from a certain glory period, which is strictly protected and easily garners grants. Projects are often sites of experimentation, loosely fitting the general governance frame.

• Buffering

In some cases, governance tools and approaches may contradict each other, but can be *buffered* and only apply to certain domains of decision-making. A local government-owned telephone company, for example, can be kept public and local, but, as a buffering tactic, made more autonomous. It can operate de facto as a private company, offering similar incentives, salaries, accounting systems, without being actually private, while maintaining a final community say. Different ways of thinking can enter the orbit of governance, without disturbing the social- democratic orientation of the town (the reason why they kept the service public).

• Framing

Different methods can *frame* each other, where a perspective on one topic shapes the interpretation and functioning of another topic, or when one institution, say a plan, spawns other plans in the same spirit. A social-democratic story on local education can inspire an educational framing of local environmental or conservation policy: nature is there to educate and education can protect nature.

• Mixing

Approaches can be *mixed*. A local place branding strategy focusing on high tech can still present the place as attractive because of its heritage and quality of life.

• Specialization

Approaches can be *specialized*, that is, limited and only applied to one area of decision-making. A social engineering perspective can be largely absent from local governance, but dominate in the specialized domain of traffic engineering, or of public works. The specialized nature makes the embedding perspective less visible, and reduces tensions with other perspectives in governance.

These terms can be helpful, but are in essence only descriptions of various activities any leadership will have to do, aspects of the invention required in governance, to match up tactics and strategy, to keep moving in a direction framed by a long-term perspective.

4. Governance

Good governance for boom and bust is adaptive governance. It requires knowing the local landscape, the forces that made it, and what threatens it. It requires the kind of insight that comes with an intimate knowledge of the governance path. Good governance is about figuring out what kind of improvement is possible, working with the same forces that once produced the current conditions, in material terms and in terms of governance configurations.

Outsiders telling locals about their landscapes cannot ignore what the locals have to say, what they know, or what they want. Locals can pick things up from outsiders, experts and non-experts alike. The learning can be about the landscape itself, its formative powers and processes, but just as well about what it can be, and how to get there from its current state. If outside experts refrain from telling a community what to do, refrain from giving a substantive orientation to the strategy, they sometimes offer a more procedural recipe, under the term 'good governance'. What you need as a community is simply following my format for local organization and decision-making. Still a recipe. "Good governance" as a set of process conditions copied from somewhere else, institutional forms or practices, will not work. One might argue that following a good governance recipe when devising and implementing a community strategy is better than copying the whole strategy, the content and form, that turning the attention to governance, to process, to decision-making is helpful. In this line of reasoning, it is better to copy a recipe for good participatory community development, than copying the neighboring town when it tries to become the Canadian Disneyland. This may be true, but if the process, the steps towards good participatory governance defined by one expert, is then copied, previous problems of rigidity in governance, or insensitivity to context will likely just return in another form. Working with the existing landscape of governance and working with the material landscape, drawing on knowledge and familiarity with those landscapes, offers new modes of learning which can offer new futures, tailored to suit that unique community.

In the next section, Part VII, we come back once again to the theme of learning for sustainable governance, but in two directions. We will consider: What can the Canadian West learn from its own history? and What can the rest of the world learn from the Canadian Western experience? We tell again the story of the importance of stories, and of learning capacity, rather than the learning of isolated and theoretical concepts.

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Part VII:

Learning in and from the Canadian West

A few things became clear, we believe, from our analysis of Western Canadian experiences with boom and bust. We think that first and foremost, clarification of what happened here and how people responded to violent ups and downs is helpful for both locals and for the rest of the world. Some of what happened in Western Canada is already over-studied, yet often the perspectives are specialized or overlap in their analyses, so there is plenty to add, plenty of ideas which can be useful for other western Canadian communities struggling with similar issues.

We also believe these learnings have relevance beyond Alberta and British Columbia, and even beyond the Canadian context. What the rest of the world can learn from the Canadian West, and apply to resource-contingent governance and planning, has everything to do with the characteristics of this region:

- a short history of resource exploitation, from which so much can be observed and reconstructed;
- a diversity of resources in the geographic region;
- an influx of capital and people magnifying the scope of exploitation;
- a large number of short-lived towns and communities dependent on single resources;
- a strong tradition of localism, enshrined in provincial and federal legislation, creating more diverse institutional experiments; and certainly,
- a wide variety of experiences and approaches to risk assessment, of place and community attachments, and last but not least, of strategies to deal with boom and bust cycles.

Governance

What can the rest of the world learn? What can the Canadian West learn? We structure this last chapter as a summary of key learnings, short theses and maxims that have emerged from our research on the Western Canadian boom/bust experience, and from experiences and research elsewhere. Some points derive more from Canada, from our cases and observations, others are more directly discussed in secondary literature or based on our own experiences and research in other parts of the world, where issues of boom and bust are similarly close to the surface. The result is an easy-to-digest analysis of governance and planning strategies for boom/bust communities which can hopefully inspire communities in Canada and beyond. It's important to remember when perusing this section that while in most cases, learning, adaptation, and reinvention are all possible, effective long-term planning is also restricted by the unique conditions and contexts of the community, which have to be understood well.

• Recipes don't work > don't copy recipes

Managing boom and bust cannot be a matter of simply following a recipe, and certainly not of copying a recipe from somewhere else. This is because management of boom and bust will have to be encountered in and achieved through governance, and governance itself — the process of collective decision-making in the community in and beyond government — is unique in each and every town, and is the result of a unique set of co-evolutions. The different elements of governance (actors, formal and informal institutions, diverse knowledges, stories and power relations) changed together in a unique governance path, and together shaped the response to new elements. Throwing in a recipe for good governance from a different place with a different set of conditions and contexts cannot have the same effects.

• Beware of problem and success definitions > rethink issues, tools, and solutions

What counts as success in a certain place, time or group is always an interpretation of success. Transplanting a certain result of or formula for community strategy into a new context because it was a success elsewhere, is rarely a good idea. Think of the initial problem knowledge discussed before: how a community defines problems, tools, and solutions emerges directly from their governance path, and these assumptions have to be questioned and reframed, before alternative strategies become visible.

• Define knowledge broadly > include local & expert knowledge > grasp embedding stories

Actors and institutions, formal and informal, power and knowledge — each of these elements shape and influence each other in what we have called governance paths. "Knowledge" is not limited to expert knowledge, but also encompasses local knowledge and traditional knowledge. All sorts of knowledge in governance are structured by narratives, some appearing directly in the form of narratives. In the end, all knowledge consists of stories supported by other stories and upholding others, producing new ones which make sense only in the frame of more stories. Layers upon layers of stories influence the behaviour, self- understanding and morals of a community, the analyses and decisions of leadership, and how residents envision a prosperous or successful community.

• Stories and coordination tools evolve together

In governance, identity narratives are important big stories that play out all the time and make the integration of other stories possible. Identity narratives include stories about place and community (this is a fishing or logging community, a prosperous community, etc.), as well as broad ideologies on what the "good community" is, what "good governance" is, and in essence, different versions of what "good democracy" is.

In the governance path, many other stories emerged from these foundational narratives, and from the daily practice of community governance, from how a community lives together, finds tools to coordinate governance, remembers what worked and what did not work in the past, looks forward to the future in ways restricted and formed by ideology, and perceives good and bad tools, forces, situations, and environments.

• Knowledge and power intertwined > community analysis causes friction

Knowledge never creates meaning in isolation, it only makes sense as part of discursive configurations, of networks of stories, all of which are enmeshed and entwined with power in intricate ways. Those who tell, create, teach, and institutionalize stories, those who embed stories in governance and planning have power. Those who challenge and change these stories, those who learn and reframe, also have power, and have the potential to reduce or remove old power structures. That's why in-depth community analysis, learning from self, is never just learning, never just about new knowledge, but always involves challenging identities and power relations.

• Self-analysis reveals learning options > inclusion, exclusion, transformation

Community self-analysis shows how other knowledge and tools, derived from other places and ideas, can enter the fray of local governance. This process can provide communities with an idea of how a particular expertise may likely play out if included in their community, elucidate why it was excluded in the first place, or highlight which actors, institutions, knowledge, and power relations have to be understood and faced, and which dependencies have to be managed or transformed, to successfully draw on new strategies or expertise.

• Starting points in communities shape the path

The Canadian West shows the importance of *starting points*, of the actor/institution and power/knowledge patterns present at the start of a community, and at the start of community planning. This includes the forms of decision-making instilled in governance processes, and the values and identities associated with and deeply engrained in a place.

• In boom/bust communities, concentration problems increase rigidity

More often than not, we have observed a *concentration problem* in boom and bust communities. Out of a common starting point, in which limited perspectives and areas of expertise clustered to draw on a single or limited resource, often grows a governance path where dependencies were reinforced, often in feedback loops. A limited set of actors, a narrow perspective, and few institutions come to dominate decision-making. Even when the mine is gone, or most of the forest is gone, the same patterns of thinking and decision-making can dominate because of lingering stories, memories, actors, and institutional forms. This creates rigidity in governance, making change of any kind, such as attracting a new industry or redefining the town's brand, a real challenge. Even in multi-level federalist systems such as Canada, one cannot count on checks and balances and alternative coordination options to mitigate the effects of concentration, because in environments with concentration problems, the unified stories are too strong, and unused institutions lose their power. Alternative stories for that community's present situation and future opportunities are not "real" because they don't align with the dominant view; they look unreal because the past, the industry, the story are all too strong.

• Concentration problems make self-analysis more urgent, and more difficult

In places affected by concentration problems, self-analysis becomes even more difficult and valuable. The same is true for the construction of long-term perspectives, which can serve as frames of reference for navigating the future. Both become more important and more difficult to execute. Current tools and stories are not suited yet for self-analysis and long-term perspectives, and the shocks of ups and downs just tend to reinforce the reliance on simple stories. Self-analysis also becomes even more political in such an environment, more contested and, in most cases, more useful, as it opens up the possibility for a new self-understanding and new learning capacity in a previously limited community.

• Self-analysis: path & context > observational capacity and reflexivity > learning

Self-analysis is all the more political and all the more difficult amidst concentration problems. Good governance, governance for adaptation, means always learning, in governance, and in the community at large. Social learning, learning through group interaction, is something which a government cannot organize or control, but something which is taking place inside and outside governance all the time. If we focus on learning capacity in governance, and then on stimulating wider social learning, we need to know what kinds of social learning take place in the community already, when and where. It is entirely possible that social learning takes places in unexpected places and it is possible that it is part of the problem, not only the solution. Increasing reflexivity and observational capacity can help to figure out current learning, and the influence of governance on learning, in order to increase learning capacity.

• Learning and strategy are possible > result of decision, not a required role or response

We see in communities facing crisis that some crucial questions come back all the time: What must be done? Nothing *has* to be done. A community can choose to act, and it can choose to act in whatever way it desires. This is a decision, not a logical outcome of an analysis, not a logical outcome of some piece of information revealed through analysis. And it is not the outcome of a set of higher-level institutions, defining the role and "functions" of local governments and communities. Reducing the role of a local government to "service delivery", rather than true governance, already points at one grounding ideology (neo-liberalism) and even so, it's not clear in that ideology what those services are and how they should be be delivered. A community decision, or set of decisions embodied in strategy, might be and might not be to the liking of its own government, higher level governments, or academics and consultant. It might be wise and not so wise. Counter-forces exist, as no community stands on its own, and is always part of some multi-level governance system.

• Strategy requires steering > self- steering of a narrative community

Besides what we already discussed, and besides the moral and ideological problems with submission to external expert forces, there is another crucial reason why directly adopting recipes for strategy from outside

experts or examples is not good: such solutions would not work because meaningful change has to be the result of self-steering, and this becomes possible only when there is a better self-understanding.

Another recurring observation from our research is that "the community" never fully exists; it is always a productive fiction, which exists because some people act on an image of the community. These images are never fully agreed upon, they change, and they can be both an asset and a problem.

• "Community" as productive fiction > leadership knows stories & self- steering

The community cannot function without leadership, as the group as a whole cannot represent itself as a whole and specialized knowledge, skills, and strong judgment are always necessary. Leadership, and sometimes experts assisting leadership, in boom/bust communities have to play a special role, not only presenting images of self, future, and environment, but also in interpreting images and stories in the community, and translating it to strategy internally and externally. Stories are not translated into strategy by themselves, and strategy, including new institutions, cannot independently lead its own implementation. Leadership needs skills in handling the self-image of the community and grasping the nuts and bolts of always unique forms of self-steering.

• Strategy as stories and institutions > making/implementing via leaders

In boom/bust places, very often, what the community believes, thinks, wants, the dominant stories and institutions linked to them, are a big part of what might be preventing progress or change, and giving more space to these existing governance configurations could mean increasing the chance of disaster.

A task of leadership is then to challenge the community to rethink itself, to critically assess the path it is on. A key part of leadership's role is to present questions, but also alternative fragments of new stories, alternative interpretations of self and environment, and to elicit from the community existing but silent alternative stories. For a new strategy to stand a chance, leadership has to pave the way by provoking the start of new stories and institutions. These can support the development of a strategy, while the strategizing itself, as community effort, can further develop, coordinate and integrate stories and institutions.

Strategy for boom/bust as reinvention > leadership must step outside > risk position to challenge the rest

Rethinking of a boom/bust community is the seed of reinvention, a much needed reinvention, and is likely to be a rather painful process where leadership has to show courage, therapeutic ability, and a combination of short- and long-term thinking, comprising both strategy and tactics. To lead, sometimes, means to not follow, to remove oneself from existing knowledge/power structures. Leadership, then, can also include a degree of self-sacrifice, a willingness to give up precious political capital for instance, to see through an important plan or initiative in the interest of a community's long-term prosperity.

When seeking to unlock the potential of the community to reshape itself and redefine its future, it's important for leaders to recognize that this change cannot be undertaken entirely from within the dominant stories and actors of the community. A leader needs to step outside. Leadership has to show leadership by taking some distance from these stories, which is always difficult because they had to refer to these dominant stories and values to get elected. Reinvention is only possible by pushing, and pushing cannot be expected from within the group as a whole or from the parties most benefiting from or attached to the existing governance configurations.

Leadership for boom/bust communities in a time of transition is therefore likely to be in continuous tension with the existing identity and power relations. There is bound to be tension with local mainstream understandings of boom and bust. Their interpretation of assets, risks, and potential will likely be different from the majority opinion.

Leadership for boom and bust has to take on a position between insider and outsider. Oscillating between insider and outsider perspectives helps with provoking and managing resistance, as well as with managing the local desire to bring in new ideas.

Leadership for boom/bust is an insider/outsider role > cannot always operate openly

When managing and figuring out how to diminish path dependencies and interdependencies, and reinforce the goal dependencies of new visions, the community *cannot be left entirely to its own devices*.

If a community is facing a "bust", there clearly was and is a problem, and what is locally available clearly did not solve it, while blunt orders from above or from outside intellectuals do not work either. Leadership

from within the community, combined with the experiences of other places, or else a keen eye on other scales of events, can trigger new modes of self-organization by bringing in the necessary outsider perspectives. Outside actors, in particular provincial actors in the Canadian case, can maintain unnecessarily high levels of uncertainty and vulnerability. Local leadership has to distinguish itself from outsiders, yet be more open than is necessarily locally acceptable, in order to learn from those outsiders. Which means that being entirely open about the insider/outsider role is not productive. The perception of being an insider has to be maintained, while being able to think like an outsider; leadership for reinvention comes with this inherent tension.

• Transitional leadership might be necessary > breaking dependencies and managing risk

While introducing new long-term perspectives is a goal we highly recommend, it appears that in many cases, this foundational work is often the responsibility of a leadership that is *transitional*. Often, a temporary leadership must rock the boat without worrying about personal political favour, then fade to the background and allow for a new interplay between actors as they build and coordinate themselves around the new long-term perspective.

Alternatively, in some communities, there may exist a leadership that is itself very stable over a long time, a de facto local elite, with individuals changing roles but staying within the circle. This kind of leadership structure can work to enact change when the elite/governmental actors in quest are trusted to such an extent that they are allowed to push continuously in a direction the rest are not sure about, particularly during years when the value of the strategy is not so clear, the results not visible yet. Continuous self-reflection, directed by these leaders, should help the community decide when change is needed.

Leadership engaging in self-analysis and path and context analysis, described in detail in this guide, can use the process of analysis to structure their transitional leadership. A period of bust and change is often a time during which governance can become highly unstable, yet it cannot be allowed to collapse. A transitional leadership which is structured, can reduce volatility, and a structuring based on community self- analysis, can take pressure of such leadership. For transitional leadership, a truly communal self-analysis makes the burden of working through the trauma more of a community endeavour, in an arena which can be managed more easily. It relieves leadership from initiating most of the confrontational work. Self-reflection and self-analysis, when accepted

by the community, can shift the burden of transition away
from leadership, making the community undertake a process where
it has to confront itself and take ownership over the current situation.
Still, leadership is needed, and transitional leadership cannot always
be open about its transitional nature.

• Transitional leadership and/or transitional governance can support long-term goals

In some cases, the outcome of self-analysis can be that the best possible
strategy and governance configuration cannot be reached immediately,
that the burdens of the past make a certain strategy unlikely in the short
run, but that assets and potential assets make it achievable in the long
run with the construction of new platforms for governance and interaction.
In those cases, we can speak of *transitional governance*, a form of
governance which builds the existing platform from which future actors
can launch new strategies later.

Transitional governance can, but does not necessarily have to, take place
under transitional leadership. Governance during a time of change will
likely focus on building observational and institutional capacity,
on building reflexivity and increasing narrative diversity.

Transitional governance may also be useful when a long-term vision
cannot be grasped or enacted within the current social environment,
but the will is there to make a change. Capacity building, in the sense
of the last paragraph, then leads to a platform from which new avenues
can be explored and chosen.

• Leadership and community strategy-making > first decide: fight or follow

Throughout the process of redefinition and visioning, both leadership
and the rest of the community must exercise continuous assessment
and judgment — these strengths cannot be replaced by anything. Rules,
recipes, expertise, communication, process design, institutional design,
none of those can replace judgment.

One elementary distinction all actors will have to make in managing
dependencies and building strategy is the distinction between fighting
and following, opposing certain elements, circumstances, or perspectives,
or going with the flow. External conditions can be opposed or accepted, as
well as used and rendered productive when possible. Internal conditions
can be opposed or accepted. Dominant narratives can be accepted or
challenged.

Challenging a set of circumstances or dominant narrative can take the form of a frontal attack or a subtle modification. The more entrenched are the problematic identities, narratives, actors, or institutions, the harder a direct opposition will be, and the choice will shift to indirect attack and modification/negotiation, or simply acceptance.

• Strategy & tactics require each other > in strategy: approaches can coexist

Strategies are internally complex. They pursue different things with different approaches and tools. Strategies for the long run rely on a diversity of tools which are not always tightly linked to the main strategic narrative, and they lean on tactics, short term responses, which might also be loosely linked to the main story. As discussed previously in this guide, all strategy relies on tactics for implementation, and tactics are much more productive and targeted when part of greater strategy. Approaches can coexist in different ways and to different degrees.

A comprehensive vision for the community can never be underpinned by one sole encompassing narrative or ideology. No one vision can understand and coordinate everything. Ideological, idealized right-wing and left-wing distinctions are best forgotten when strategizing, and whatever works and fits the governance path can and should be considered. Not all approaches can coexist, but strategies for combining and framing complementary, or even potentially contradictory, approaches can be discerned in path analysis and strategizing. Only the community itself can decide how cohesive its strategy has to be, how problematic it is to combine elements of different ideologies and narratives, and the different forms of regulation and visioning associated with them. False oppositions and rigid distinctions (e.g. green has to be left wing) are best discarded when considering what can work together within community governance.

• There are varying degrees of comprehensiveness possible > beware of ideological totalities

Resilience will mean something different for each community. Governance for resilience in communities plagued by violent ups and downs, in the Canadian West and elsewhere, must be based on self-analysis, in addition to external analysis. A strategy for resilience can be more or less comprehensive, ambitious, coordinated, far-reaching, cohesive. The idea of resilience itself can differ widely, linked to the self-understanding of the community. We would say that very comprehensive strategies might be possible, but do have to keep a

distance from totalizing stories, or ideological totalities. An ambitious long term strategy might work, but it remains risky to link it to an ideology which claims to explain everything in the world.

A major example of this: there is no correct choice between transience and permanence, whatever the big ideologies might suggest. If a community wants to stay alive, blossom, and prosper in a more diversified and less vulnerable way, it can. Each community and its residents have a choice, and the methods described in this guide can give them a few more tools to reach their goals. If a community wants to stay on the same track that led them to a bust, that is a choice. If it sees itself as transient or resource-dependent, so be it.

• Multi-level governance requires tinkering > local choice remains possible

Some aspects of existing multi-level governance, in Western Canada and elsewhere, are questionable. In many cases, the existing structures have increased the vulnerabilities of local communities to boom and bust, reduced their autonomy and tools to address the cycles. In our view, this created different classes of citizenship, with some communities having much more say about their fate than others.

When faced with limited autonomy, increasing a community's internal capacity for self-governance and strategy development involves lobbying at several scales to shift relationships between levels of government, to redefine the roles of local government. More powers and resources endowed from above, undoubtedly increases the local capacity for strategy. Such strategy to enable local strategy can be paralleled by local government efforts, within current provincial frames, to slowly accumulate resources, tools, and powers, slowly increasing their autonomy, their capacity to see, learn, strategize, and implement.

Governance for mitigating boom and bust is difficult: there are often severe limitations on local autonomy, requiring strategizing at different scales and speeds. The process of reinvention can be traumatic for a community. Even so, even under difficult conditions, there can be a way forward. We hope to have convinced the reader that meaningful action is possible under almost all conditions, and is best inspired by a communal rethinking of assets and identities. Part of this effort can be the acceptance of transitional leadership or governance. Communities must understand, however, that a strategy — even a strategy that emerges from the arduous steps of self-analysis, leadership change, transitional governance, and long-term strategy-building — is only worthwhile when

it is adaptive, when transformation mechanisms in governance are safeguarded, and most of all, when the story of the community and its future remains persuasive in the community itself.

Reinvention may seem daunting. However, the positive feedback mechanisms we explored in Parts IV and V can make this process easier: autonomy can be built, assets can be built and reinforced, strategizing makes future strategy-development easier, and coordination brings forth coordination. Ultimately, communities used to planning and implementing long-term perspectives are more prone to a realistic assessment of their own assets and opportunities, more inclined to see them for what they are: stories that can help make other stories a reality.

Postscript

Control/ steering/ power

Many of the negatives we discussed in this book have to do with a lack of control by a local community, control over its future, control over its current governance even. Globalization, new forms of capitalism entailing little care for the community where a company is based, weak forms of government inscribed in Canadian federal and Provincial legislation, lack of regional governance and regional redistribution and buffering mechanisms. All these limit the power of local communities to reinvent themselves.

In some cases, in some places, these forces and limitations will make it nearly impossible for a community to put itself on a more sustainable track. Yet most communities, we believe, can find or come up with, through a thorough self-analysis and reflexive strategizing, a new vision for themselves. Even if the results of self-analysis are daunting, there are many ways to face them. Likewise, there are always some options to discuss: e.g. merging, moving, taking a calculated risk; or bold lobbying for new resources, infrastructure, for new forms of re-distribution, for assistance in a clean-up operation.

Such dramatic cases are rare, and for most communities, we believe the combination of self-analysis and community strategy is a way to find the limits and possibilities of control. Path and context analysis can help to delineate what the degree of autonomy of the community is, where it has more control, where it has less. Through this same analysis, we can figure out where the possibilities for changing the limits of control might be, how, when and where the autonomy and the powers of the local community can be enhanced.

As we know, in the self-study, and in the strategizing as a community, the discovery of assets and options for development happens together with the discovery of limits and obstacles. The identification of current features also happens simultaneously with seeing options for the future. Ideas about the past and the present, and positive and negative ideas all come up at the same time, and have to be compared and discussed in the community: we see forestry as an important future, but also a history of plagues and pollution, and mills moving out, and eco-tourism, but investment needed for that, and no money, even if the neighbours and the province are rich, etc.

It is all to easy and too common to get, as a community, tangled in such reasoning, and to assume nothing is possible, that the resources and powers and assets and infrastructures and laws and people and businesses and knowledge etc etc are not here, so we have no control over our future and better give up. We strongly believe that it mostly looks that way because the self-analysis did not go far enough, did not

pay enough attention to path and context, to the stories and assumptions underpinning our despair. The previous chapters, but also other literature referred to here, can help to structure the process, to manage the chaos a bit longer, so the process can be carried further, and more options for the future can be seen, including more sites of community control. Changing stories can lead to new tools and new assets, building on new assets; creating new actors can help to increase autonomy, working on new revenue streams, a better environment, on learning and political literacy. We came across many strategies in this book, where a new understanding of self led to a new strategy, working with the tools available and selectively trying to add and use a few more tools. Rather than seeing a limit of control, and then stop the strategizing, it seems better to study these limits in all possible scenarios.

This again tells us that it's good to envision alternative futures, where we look at different degrees of control, therefore different qualities of infrastructure and degrees of asset development, revenue generation, policy integration and planning. It is good to know, as with all strategizing, which scenario's could unfold under different conditions, and a key condition is how much control a community has over its assets, tools, revenues, organizations, expertise. Some wonderful worlds would be possible with maximum moneycoming from maximum taxation powers or strong persuasive powers over higher government. It is still important to consider what this money could do, and the increased level of control, but just as important to look at the limits of control: which boundaries of our current autonomy can we likely change? What are the pro's and cons of each boundary change? When working on a strategy, increasing reflexivity is also getting a better and better picture of these boundaries, and ways to alter them. And this happens in a conversation about assets, asset development, planning, coordination, about the requirements of a particular strategy, and what is available. When a community is used to a process of self-analysis and strategizing, when it is already more reflexive, it will see more easily and quickly whether a certain strategy makes sense or not, whether it can happen within reachable degrees of autonomy or not.

Reinvention of a community will come with a new form of and degree of autonomy and control. Those things are not to be found on one dimension, simply more or less. A community can have more control in this domain, less in that, or more in this sense, less in that. A reinvention, result of a community strategy, is a new specialization, a new set of activities, fitting a new narrative, and coming with new coordinative tools, new institutions, and a new perspective on their use. In other words, reinvention is always rewriting of the forms of control and autonomy a community has and aspires to.

A few things mentioned before we would like to bring back. Our study of AB and BC communities, and our theoretical stories, can be useful to break the grip of despair over limited control, we think.

First of all, a community is more than a local government. Governance includes a variety of players, governmental and non-governmental. The powers of a community are to be found in its individual actors (e.g. a big company), and in its coordinative possibilities in governance. If a town governmnet has no money, others locally, or via their networks might have it. If there really is no money, it might not be necessary, as people might contribute time, knowledge, things, voluntarily— land can be donated, buildings, land use rights. New actors and new sorts of actors can be created to enhance the autonomy and degree of control of government and of the community (through governance). New organizations can be erected which can reinforce collective identities, their stories, their idea of the future. Or to access more resources, or to control something the government or one other actor cannot control by itself.

Governance is about coordination by means of institutions: policies, plans, laws. Those can be changed to a certain degree, meaning that new tools of governance, and hence new degrees of control can be created. And the limits over the creation of those tools can also be stretched. If we include informal institutions in the tools of governance, the pallet of ways to enable strategies, and to stretch up autonomy, in order to pursue yet unknown strategies, is enlarged even more. Strategies do not have to be all on paper, or on paper at all. A variety of actors and institutions can contribute to a vision, made more possible than a government by itself, and more than when using only formal institutions. Networks spanning beyond the community, and between players in the community, informal coalitions, parallel stories about assets and identities, all can help to mobilize resources and increase autonomy of the community. If we say we are a forestry community, get a grant from a forestry organization or ministry, and combine this with other resources towards a strategy that de facto stretches up the identity and economic activities, then we are using informal institutions towards reinvention. If we find ways to rally a strong local coalition around a smaller issue, and use this to bring in an investment which opens the door to a broader spectrum of futures, we find the same power of informality to make the control problem more manageable.

If we on the other hand believe too much in the force of formal institutions, and try to push very hard for comprehensive planning as very ambitious visioning leaning on all sorts of formal institutions, then we tend to make our vision too rigid, and not fully embedded in the

community. Even if a community has more control over its future, in the form of stronger institutions, more resources, more infrastructures, and an existing vision to refer to. This might still not work.Even in such seemingly perfect situation, very formal and very comprehensive planning can undermine local control in the future. All formal institutions change over time simply by use and interaction with other institutions and actors. New formal institutions have to be implemented before their meaning becomes clear. Both change and implementation entail contact with informal institutions, with other traditions and forms of coordination in the community. The steering power of plans and formality can easily be overestimated.

Control, in other words, looks different after the sort of self-analysis and strategizing presented in this guide. It is better to think of community control than just government control, better to think of the tools of governance than of government, and preferable to consider a combination of formal and informal institutions. Control is multi-dimensional and will change with every step of reinvention. Control over the control mechanisms also becomes more understandable in and through the process of self-analysis. Control over the future should not be easily reduced to a discussion over visible assets, resources, infrastructures and legislative hurdles. Control comes in many forms and shades, and alters together with the stories told about self and environment. It comes with a good understanding of the steering power of government and governance as such, of the limits of steering, and of knowing the future. A better understanding of existing instruments can enhance control, a better understanding of the conditions of creation of new instruments, a new narrative which brings new ideas on combining actors and institutions.

As there are no miracle solutions for managing boom and bust, there are no single prescriptions for enhancing control in a community. It happens in many ways, and those ways become visible in self- analysis and have to be navigated by local leadership. We know by now that management is never a matter of simply following rules, or indeed a vision coming out of community strategizing. We can say that any community strategy has to include a component on control: an argument why this vision is possible with existing tools and others which can be created (and which can fill in other gaps in resources etc). Control is linked closely to the degree of autonomy of the governance system in the community: to what extent can this collection of actors freely decide on its future? Autonomy is a matter of control and vice versa: if actors have the freedom to decide, they can think more freely about their tools for decision-making. Autonomy and control, increase when reflexivity increases, when a community knows better who it is and how it works.

Autonomy comes thus with control and control comes with an awareness of the tools of self-definition. Power is present in the whole process of governance and is at work in many places and guises around these issues. A community can have control as in powers to bring in money, but it might not have power to make an internal coalition which can articulate a vision, or the power to implement such vision, to overcome bureaucratic resistance, legislative inertia, expert positions, or it can lack the power to see itself differently, to rethink its own assumptions.

As always, power and knowledge are entwined and control over one's future is control over knowledge. Getting a better grip on which types of knowledge play a role in local governance, and in the linkages with other players, brings us a step closer to managing the power/ knowledge knots which can be in the way of reinvention, of understanding ourselves and our possibilities differently, of seeing assets in a new light, and ways to build on them towards greater autonomy and prosperity. Knowledge, we know, comes in many forms, in expert discourses, local stories, in ideas about identity, ideologies, and the degree of autonomy a community has is defined by the mixing and mingling of these different sorts of knowledge in governance. Path and context mapping includes the analysis of that mixing and mingling. Out of it comes the set of tools to understand and reshape ourselves. Control, in other words, comes with self-reflection, the analysis of the elements and forces that made a community into something with certain powers.

Control and autonomy are goals in and by themselves, but then not entirely. They are, because a high degree of control and autonomy allows for many different futures to be envisioned and implemented, but such situation is also tricky. Greater local autonomy can open the door for greater local abuse of power and corruption, of isolationism, for undermining of checks and balances locally and in the nation state. It can create blindness for public interests at larger scales and disconnects from knowledge, institutions and resources which could open alternative futures. In the western Canadian context, all those negatives existed and exist, yet the bigger issue here seems lack of autonomy, since global economic forces have been unleashed on small and young communities which lack the tools to deal with them. The federal government granted provinces the powers to define and redefine local governments at will. Often, that meant keeping them small and relatively powerless. The 1867 constitution listing as provincial powers the management of saloons, brothels, and oh yes, local governments. Western mythologies of extreme localism were tinged by ideals of rugged individualism, and de facto made the local communities weaker vis a vis the province. In this landscape of power, it is reasonable to say that managing boom and bust in local governance will require work on increasing autonomy.

The western Canadian context, with its limited powers and resources for local governments, shows the validity of informal strategies. This includes the creation of new actors to increase control: community forestry organizations, local NGOs, economic development corporations, cooperative mill ownership, heritage funds, community foundations, downtown revitalization associations, tourism associations. Including and creating specialized development- oriented actors in governance will extend its reach and intensity.

Control in such expanded governance can decrease in the sense that the ensemble can become more unwieldy, less inclined to follow rigid visions by government of actors and institutions; it is likely to increase, in the sense that the set of actors as a whole can get more done, can lobby in all directions, can think in more directions, can accumulate resources in a way that a government or a business or an NGO alone could not do.

What remains unsaid here and in much of the literature, is that this is always a risk, that it requires creating disunity to promote a different unity in the long term. Coordination based on a shared vision and self-understanding, even if rudimentary, is necessary, and becomes more difficult by creating new entities and doing more things. Yes, true, but this is only another way of of saying that one needs a community to reinvent a community and its degree of control and autonomy.. In reality, the community is not always there, and the problems in strategizing for revitalization are the problems of an absent community. In such cases, self-analysis for community reinvention can expose an impossible future, but, more likely, a process of community formation in and through the self-analysis induced by the shocks of boom and bust.

Glossary

Actors: participants in governance, formally or informally. Actor can refer to individuals, groups or organizations. Actors are ascriptions, the result of observation, and sometimes of formal recognition as actors. Actors can enter governance, be created by governance, and actors transform when they become actors in governance. Also in self-analysis, never take the presence or absence of actors for granted.

Adaptive capacity: the capacity of a community to adapt to changing circumstances, internally and externally. The word often comes up in relation to climate change, where that capacity will be tested intensely, but in the frame of boom & bust cycles, the capacity has already revealed itself. Optimizing adaptation to one thing can undermine adaptation to something else, so enhancing adaptive capacity as such is working on everything at the same time. Each community, then, has its own form of adaptive capacity (not merely its own place on a scale), and will have to make its own choices, on which to target. A community strategy can target something, a set of goals, and keep other things open, as contribution to adaptive capacity, but this still requires choices, narrowing down, to be meaningful. A place can aim at sustainable forestry, preserve other assets to leave other options open, yet still has to make a choice in what to preserve, implying some idea of other options. In addition, there is the version of adaptive capacity associated with the goal itself, i.e., the idea to make forestry itself more adaptive, hence sustainable.

Assets: an element or quality in a community that is of value. Assets are recognized in and by the community as an asset and value is attributed. Something becomes an asset in a certain perspective in a certain practical situation and discursive configuration. A large labor pool can be an asset when it can conjure up activities; it can be a highly destabilizing factor when there are no jobs. An asset can be recognized by outsiders, and this can have consequences for the community itself: new people can come, to look for the new gold, existing residents can start to attribute a value to the new asset. If locals and newcomers have very different interpretations of the asset, this can be good and bad, since conflict could be avoided, but, negatively, locals can

be quickly marginalized. Large discrepancies in valuation of the asset between insiders and outsiders likely lead to conflict, unless local self- governance is strong.

Boom and Bust: cycles of radical ups and downs in the local economy, with repercussions for all aspects of the community. A complete but creates a ghost town. The exact intensity of ups and downs is less relevant for the definition as the similarity of effects. They produce to what we called boom/bust communities, where much in governance is marked by the history of ups and downs: social forgetting, concentration problems, lack of long term perspectives, minimal policy integration, absent asset preservation and building. Social networks and identities are not necessarily weak: an identification with roles in one industry can persist even when the industry is gone.

Buffering: the separation of potentially incompatible or conflicting institutions to minimize their effect on each other. Buffering can extend to policy domains (governed in different manners according to different principles). Buffering can allow for the coexistence of quite different narratives and approaches in a community strategy, but not all approaches can coexist. Good governance is also the assessment of the level of unity needed in strategy, and conversely the variation which can coexist in a buffered form. Buffering can take place between policy domains and organizations at the same level, and between levels, in multi- level governance.

Camp model settlement: a temporary settlement as a boom/bust community, quite common in resource industries . Alternatives to the camp model are expansion of existing communities, dispersed settlement, and new planned towns (as the 'instant towns' in BC)

Capacity: resources needed in the community to move forward common goals. Capacity building usually refers to human resources where the building is teaching, educating, organizing so they can be more active and effective in community governance, in administration, as entrepreneurs or in other roles deemed useful for development. Capacity building can be a powerful element of a community strategy, and helpful

towards later iterations of strategy- making. In democracies, the local effects however cannot be taken for granted: people can learn, develop, and move on.

Common goal: goals for a community. Shared goals which can potentially structure policies, plans, development visions. Common goals can be rooted in common goods, shared values and shared necessities. Common goods cannot be simply assumed to exist and certainly not by one actor or an elite faction in governance. Common goals cannot be derived from common goods in a simple manner; this requires deliberation (in an agreed-upon balance between participation and representation) and it can require a variety of expertise eg. when it comes to planning, branding and design, livelihoods assemblage, entrepreneurship. A common good is always a more general value, tied to narratives and ideologies, while common goals have to be closer to implementable policy, and come after a series of choices and interpretations.

Community: A group and a territory. An open concept which can veil very different realities per governance path. Governance can create the impression of community as some sort of social identity and unity, and it can result and represent such unity. Not every town is a community, no community is entirely stable and unchanging, and internal diversity and division always exists, even if the dominant narrative in governance does not mention this. Good governance entails observing and dealing with this diversity, and guiding self-transformation in the community, and, when possible, building of community out of incongruous elements.

Concentration problem: a common issue in boom/bust communities, a concentration of power and knowledge in few hands, which makes governance rigid, strategy narrow, adaptive capacity low. Concentration problems are often associated with rigid identity narratives and corporate control, although the issue can remain after industry leaves. Concentration problems are self- reinforcing: different people, alternative discourses, diverging futures tend to leave, while similar people, stories, resources, infrastructures are attracted. Good governance amidst concentration problems is first of all breaking

open power/knowledge, exposing actual risk of limited futures, and cultivating difference, while strengthening the capacity to maintain diverse power/knowledge in the future. The risk this involves can make leadership transitional leadership, as resistance can be fierce.

Conflict: is natural in governance, and all the more so in boom/bust communities, where risks are high and the difference between winners and losers extreme. Conflict cannot be banished but has to be managed; pretending there is no conflict, is avoiding to see actual difference in narrative and in power, and hence remaining blind to actual power relations. If one does not see the existing diversity in stories and positions, then future conflict is more likely, and more likely to be serious, while acknowledging diverse views is productive in harnessing more cognitive resources in dealing with future challenges. Conflict can be productive and destructive. Destructive conflict undermines institutions, and the capacity to make strategy, while productive conflict can engender creative and create real, as opposed to professed, consensus and coalition.

Corruption: the undermining of institutions for private or group gain. Not all informal institutions can be called corrupt. Corruption can ensue more easily when formal and informal institutions do not fit or more properly said when the formal/informal institutional configuration does not perform well, shows internal inconsistencies, allowing or easy deviation from agreed upon collective goals.

Democracy: is essentially about rules to change the rules, about transformation functions. Democracy exists in different versions and some of these versions do not recognize each other as democracies. There is no recipe for democracy but a form of functional differentiation, where law and economy can follow their path, without politics steering, can safeguard the flexibility of democratic governance, can maintain transformation rules and diversity of voices. Different versions of democracy are associated with different ideologies, and different historical paths. One community can show traces of different versions of democracy, and can remix those versions later on.

Dependencies: rigidity in the evolution of the governance path. We can distinguish path dependence, interdependence and goal dependence. Dependence does not imply determinism, there are always options open, there is always a measure of contingency and freedom.

Development: the evolution of governance in the community, and, in a narrower sense, the evolution towards shared goals. Development can take place with or without development policy, plans or visions. Different disciplines, different political ideologies embrace or produce different recipes for development, including different roles for government and forms of governance in the development process. Modernist development ideologies assume there is one correct goal, one path, one recipe. In our view, each community has its own options for and versions of development. Development is not necessarily growth, not necessarily maximizing average income or tax base, and neither is it restricted to territorial expansion or maximizing the existing form of resource extraction. What it is and can be, becomes clear in a process of path and context mapping, later community strategizing.

Elite: a relatively small group which accumulated wealth or power. Wealth can generate power and vice versa. Privileged access to power is possible through participation or presentation, through formal and informal institutions. No formal institution, no new law, policy and plan can ignore or get rid of elite rule in and by itself. Elite rule in western democracies always leans on both formal and informal institutions, and it is not incompatible with all versions of democracy. Positives are the greater likelihood of stability in governance and for the gradual formation and implementation of long term perspectives. Negatives include the real possibility of serious damage to checks and balances, and aggravating the concentration problem. The problem with elite rule is the risk coming with the nature of the local/regional elite and the lack of control over its change: good elites can turn bad, but by then they're beyond democractic control. Elite rule and be buffered from more participatory or generally democratic policy domains. Elite rule in opacity can foster corruption

Environmental / Material path dependency: in resource communities in remote regions with extreme climates, an important category of path dependencies are of a material or environmental nature: the soil, the cold, the ice, the texture or chemical qualities of the resource, or its extraction site, the nature or construction requirements of the infrastructure needed for extraction, all these materialities together can push governance in one direction, can restrict the thinking of and acting on alternatives.

Evolution: A process of change in a system whereby both external forces and internal mechanisms create the path and both structures and elements of the system change over time. Governance is evolutionary, since both actors and institutions co- evolve, and since one cannot understand current governance without understanding its history, the history of internal and external relations. A history of external pressure, e.g. by a provincial government, has internal effects, while e.g. long standing struggles between elite factions lead to a pattern of inclusion/exclusion of actors and knowledge.

Expertise: knowledge considered of special value, suspected to give more direct access to the reality relevant for the pursuit of collective goals. Expertise can be embodied by the participants in governance, but in western nation states more often takes the shape of analyses by administration, academics and external consultants. Expertise can take very diverging shapes, and this diversity is often denied by the individual expert narratives; all experts are The expert. Expertise in some governance system dominates early stages of policy formation, while in other places, it is stronger in policy implementation. Highly participatory governance can give less space or more space to expertise; it does reduce the likelihood that one sort of expertise dominates governance (except when all actors subscribe strongly to one identity narrative).

Formal/ informal institutions: exist in each community. Also in Canadian context, policies, plans and laws alone do not guide the governance of a community. Formal institutions are the ones that are supposed to guide a certain interaction, while informal institutions are all the alternatives existing in

the community. Formal and informal cannot exist without each other, and continuous change in informality changes the effects of formality, the interpretation, the formation of new formality. Informal and informal institutions have to be assessed together, as one thing which has positive and negative effects; only looking at one side and then evaluating does not give much insight. A new strategy for a community cannot be restricted to formal institutions, and in its analysis it has to look at formal and informal.

Framing: is a process in which one development approach is interpreted by another one, or setting the tone for the interpretation of the other one. Policies and plans frame each other too, at a lower level of abstraction. Cooperatives in a neo- liberal environment, heritage planning in a system driven by developers, all have to deal with the power of framing.

Goal dependency: The influence of plans and policies embedding collective goals on the present, on the co-evolution of actors and institutions, power and knowledge. Visions, scenario's and plans are rarely fully implemented, but often have an impact on governance and on the realities governance affects. In each community, the impacts of visions for the future on the present is different; in some, it is close to zero, in others, the response could be to do the opposite. Some communities have little experience or trust in plans, others prefer this domain of law over another, to articulate a vision of the desired future. Self- analysis is helpful in discerning goal dependencies, before adopting a new formal institution as strategy and simply assuming it will have certain effects.

Good governance: is defined differently in different paths and models of governance. A few shared characteristics we would normatively present: the formal/Informal configuration delivers the goods, works towards common goods, transformation options remain open, corruption is minimized, transparency and opacity reflected upon. In boom/bust communities, good governance is governance aiming at buffering the effects of boom and bust, minimizing the damage of bust, optimizing the effects of boom, stabilizing institutions and developing assets

and capacity in boom, maintaining long term perspectives, increasing reflexivity, especially to avoid concentration problems, enhance resilience, take wise decision on diversity in strategy, and on re-distribution of benefits and resources towards the goals embedded in the strategy. Yet, good governance can also be to increase clarity in decision- making and then take the risk of being a short term community of limited nature and ambition.

Governance paths: the specific evolution of governance in a community. Governance paths have to be carefully reconstructed to be understood in their identity and their implications for possible futures. Strategies cannot be copied from other places; other places can serve as inspiration, after self-analysis, after deepening understanding of our own governance path. A governance path implies a unique effect of new policies, plans, laws adopted; in each community, the same policy will work out differently.

Governance: the taking of collectively binding decisions in a community by a diversity of actors, inside and outside government, with formal roles and without formal roles. Governance relies on formal and informal institutions, on formal and informal roles. Governance has always been there, is not something new. Each community has its own set of actors and institutions involved, and its own path; the degree of transparency will be different per case, the emphasis on formality or informality, and the belief in the possibility to improve, to develop, in and by governance. Some forms of governance do not embrace the idea that planning makes sense, that strategizing for collective action is meaningful, while others operate on shared stories about utopian futures. Everything in between can be observed as well.

Identity: that what makes something into what it is. For people, identities are narratives, stories they tell about themselves and which others tell about them. Identities can be tied to rolls. Identity can also be attributed to places, times, groups and then we speak of spatial identity, social identity and image of history. These three shape each other in the history of the community and in governance paths. Governance can thoroughly reshape social and spatial identities, while shifting identities in wider circles will have

governance effects at some point. Broader narratives and discourses affects the formation and transformation of identities. Power/knowledge in governance evolves in a way shaped by identities: changing stories about other things correlate with changing stories about self, and these self- stories provide new lenses to look at everything. That, in turn, affects ideas about the good future, and ways to get there.

Ideology: stories embedding other stories. Ideologies offer explanations of bigger issues, create images of what is the good life, the good community, the desirable identity, preferable role of government. Ideologies can be directly present in government, or not; they can be tied to parties, or not. Ideologies can have a strong representation in academia, either positively or in the form of critique, and they can be ignored by academia. Expert knowledge is not free of ideology, and self- analysis of a community includes thinking about the links between community narratives and ideologies, and on the other hand the forms of expert knowledge with a role in governance. In boom/bust communities, ideologies of purely autonomous rugged individuals coming together in the woods to get rich quick, tend to offer little answers to sustainability questions, and tend to veil what's really happening. Ideologies diametrically opposed to long term perspectives and collective action render buffering of boom and bust difficult.

Implementation: what comes after policy making, what is needed to create real world effects of policies and plans. A process of continuous re-interpretation, of divergence and convergence, of adaptation to new power/ knowledge configurations in new discursive environments, to new objects and subjects and to new institutions. In boom/bust communities, implementation of long term policies, of larger strategies is extra difficult, because of the effects of ups and downs. Boom/bust engenders pressures on both strategy making and implementation; this makes it all the more important to reflect on specific obstacles for implementation when working on self- analysis and strategizing: what do we assume in our strategizing regarding implementation possibilities? Not caring about implementation is more harmful than just producing more paper;

it undermines the capacity for the community to come together next time and take collectively binding decisions.

Innovation: something new and important. In innovation discourses often reduced to technical innovation which is supposed to lead to economic success. Innovation is an ascription afterward, is highly unpredictable in nature and effects, is not very susceptible to management. Innovation however can be the focus of ongoing conversations in governance, where can be debated what is new, which innovation might be useful, how innovations could be coordinated to produce synergies. Governance, in other words, has to be a place and time to analyze the stories and ideologies of innovation, compare them to local realities, rather than taking expert stories for granted. Innovation is not always possible, not always good for the community, and innovation as observed from a rigid existing local story can render governance more rigid, rather than moving to a new track. Innovation in fisheries can mean increasing catch and damaging ecosystems more thoroughly, innovation in industrial production can mean shifting to a new form of unobserved pollution, innovation in social organization brings new forms of exclusion.

Institutions: rules of coordination between actors. Institutions can take the form of traditional or implicit or local rules, and the form of laws, policies and plans. Institutions in each case refer and link to others and often contain others. Plans are tools for policy integration and usually include a variety of other institutions, while they require and rely on yet others for their implementation, that is, their path of increasing influence on the community. Community strategies will have to envision the broad range of institutions which can be relied upon to move the community in a desired direction, while the self- analysis can increase awareness of that institutional diversity.

Interdependency: the restriction on action for an actor imposed by the relations with others. Interdependency can create a rigidity in a governance path, caused by the specific set of relations between actors at one point in time. Interdependence can arise from specialization, resource distribution, knowledge distribution, power distribution,

and from other sources. It can be codified in formal rules, in informal rules, and it can organically emerge. Actors need each other, need institutions to act, and institutions rely on other institutions to have an effect and to have meaning first. The more complex a community, the more dense the pattern of interdependence. Interdependence is not a bad thing, yet some forms of interdependence are harmful, say the ones typical for what we called the concentration problem. There, interdependence is hardened in a small set of actors, institutions, knowledge, and closes itself of for reinvention.

Laws: the formal institutions designed to stabilize expectations and guide actions in a more rigid manner than rules, policies and plans. Laws are the slowest evolving institutions and guarantee both stability and adaptation in and by governance. Laws represent therefore more than the other institutions a balancing act between predictability and change; enhancing adaptive capacity, resilience, innovation, purely by means of laws is not recommendable. Community strategies will have to rely on laws for implementation, can lead to local laws, can include plans with the character of local law. The strategy as a whole is better to envision as a combination of formal and informal institutions, tied to a new narrative of self, place and future.

Leadership: the capacity of individuals and groups to move the community in a desirable direction, to help it in self- analysis, strategy making and implementation. Leadership will have to engage with the paradoxes of community, sometimes exposing internal conflicts and contradictions, sometimes silently working on them, sometimes leaving issues for later. Leadership cannot be reduced to representing the will of the community, as that community is not unified and the will of each faction is not without internal contradictions. Leadership can entail provoking and dealing with conflict, it can include suggesting tactics and strategy, helping to find new unifying narratives, suggesting new forms of knowledge and expertise, new institutions as coordinative instruments, and discerning ways to interpret and combine existing sets of institutions and actors to move the community as a whole in a certain direction. Leadership cannot be

entirely transparent, and it cannot take risk away from governance; it can contribute to the quality of risk assessment and management.

Local knowledge: knowledge in governance which is recognized as local and as knowledge (not as background noise or opinions), differentiated from expert knowledge. Local knowledge includes elements of scientific knowledge present and past. The desirable balance between local knowledge and expert knowledge differs per governance path and also narratives and ideologies bring their own idea on which knowledge is important. Local knowledge can enhance adaptive capacity, and can be harnessed to see unique local opportunities for a development strategy, but it cannot be glorified or taken at face value either. It is not unified, not without ideological assumptions, can be internally oppressive, and can be blind to the effects of local actions and traditions. Just as expert knowledge, it deserves continuous reflection and evaluation in governance: yes, we've been doing this, but does it make sense now? Did we degrade our environment? Or: yes, we've been doing this, and it was good, and in fact better than the 'innovation' story consultants have been telling us. Alternatively: yes, we're doing this, and our local knowledge can be transformed and recombined into something that can bring us a more stable future.

Mapping: reconstructing governance paths and governance contexts. Mapping is always selectivity and interpretative: paths are infinitely detailed and context extends without limits in time and space. Path mapping reveals sequences and sites of collective decision- making, actors and institutions. Context mapping focuses on the external contexts most relevant for governance. In western democracies, that brings multi-level governance to the foreground, and in Canada and our boom/bust discussion, the role of Provincial and Federal politics and administration. Beyond this, context mapping can reveal informal networks of businesses, ngo's, state actors at higher levels. Path and context mapping together can help strategy making, can assist leadership and community to make first decisions on fight or flight: which aspects of boom/bust can we modify, what do we accept, what do we accommodate?

Strong dependence on higher level actors and institutions can inspire acquiescence, or fierce searching for local non- dependent alternative activities, or fierce lobbying higher up, or slow modification of the pattern of dependencies.

Metaphor: a representation of something as something else. Metaphors enable perceiving new features of an object, a person or a situation and seeing new connections between these features, a new unity of the object. We can speak of a transformation of the object, a redrawing of the boundaries. Once a metaphor is adopted and spreads in a community it tends to be stretched up. The brain is a computer, the mind is a computer, the body is a computer. With the over application of the metaphor the underlying comparison becomes weaker and weaker and the shift in perspective becomes less meaningful and productive. Metaphors are devices that can link different discursive fields and make the interpretative schemes of one field available and useful for the other one. Metaphors can unify a community narrative, can make a strategy cohere and render it more persuasive. In boom/bust communities, marked by concentration problems, new metaphors can be useful in shifting perspectives, in breaking open worn out patterns of thought and action.

Multi-level governance: implies that several governance paths exist in a larger community. These paths can run parallel, they can entangle, can inspire each other, and they can block each other. Boom/bust communities in Canada are always part of Canada, a federal state, hence subjected to multi- level governance, with different power dynamics, different narratives, different actors and different specializations existing at each level. The specialization does not allow for neat compartmentalization: it is not enough to say that each level is responsible for certain things, as for each policy domain, de facto all levels play some role, positive or negative. Therefore, context mapping is mapping of the reality of multi level governance, not how it exists on paper. This can open up new strategic possibilities, including informal lobby work, and slow increase of local autonomy.

Narrative: a form of discourse that has a particular conceptual structure. This structure can render discursive materials more real and more compelling by introducing temporal, spatial and emotional order. A narrative is a particular assemblage of concepts, subjects, objects and events. It articulates for example particular events and episodes as game changing, identifies heroes and villains, gives central place to certain values, decides on foreground and background, on reality and noise. In boom/bust communities with concentration problems, value laden narratives of identity, of corporate or governmental heroes or villains, often block analysis of the actual situation, and real development options.

Natural resource: an object in the material world recognized, used and valued by a community. The value can derive from the direct use or from symbolic attributions. Use and symbolism affect each other, as they are mediated through images and narratives. Stories about ourselves and our community link to stories about what we do, what we use. In boom/bust communities, natural resources are often the driver of the cycles, that is, a particular way of extracting, using resources, redistributing benefits over time and over larger spaces. The resource itself does not dictate the boom/bust cycles. The resource itself is nothing outside an economic system and an encompassing governance system; the use does not lead to value without a framework of institutions articulated and enforced in governance. For opening up futures in boom/bust communities, expanding narratives on the form of exploitation and redistribution can be useful, but also expanding the definition of resources itself, linking this discussion to broader stories about assets and amenities, linking and preserving them for the future. The construction of any long term perspective in governance can thus assist in opening up the stories about resources and ensuing dependencies.

Nesting: combining of institutions in multi- level governance, where one approach contains another at a lower level. Nesting can be similar and dissimilar. Nesting of dissimilar institutions is possible to a certain extent, because of intentional buffering, and because of partial autonomy of the

different levels of governance. Limits to buffering and to dissimilarity exist, and when ignored, impossible combinations of nested institutions can create conflict, uncertainty, chaos or passivity. The more complex multi- level governance becomes, the more possibilities for nesting, the more possible sites and forms of conflict and of positive co-production of strategy. Dissimilarity arises out of diverging histories between levels, diverging political actors and narratives, and out of neglect in updating institutions at some levels. For boom/bust communities, corporate interests often have more influence at one level than another, leading to gaps and conflict between nested institutions and between levels of governance. Understanding nesting can help communities to think through strategies out of concentration problems.

Participation: direct contribution by actors to governance; direct as opposed to indirect and delegated. Individuals can participate, or they can be represented in a certain role or interests by others, who could be called actors. Making governance more participatory probably increases the number of actors, but not necessarily. The democratic effects of participation should always be considered in relation to representative forms of decision-making. In boom/bust communities, concentration problems require opening up governance, but more radical local participation is not always the way out, the concentration problem itself being the cause, the similarity of all remaining potential actors. Bringing in outsiders can provide rejuvenation, provoking internal discussion, re- engaging with higher level governments or other actors at higher levels, and with industry actors.

Path Dependency: a rigidity in governance paths whereby the next step in governance evolution is restricted by the existing governance configuration and the history leading to that configuration. Path dependencies in other words are legacies, some of them visible in governance, others not. Path and context mapping makes path dependencies more visible in and for governance, and can expand strategic options, while avoiding unrealistic expectations. In boom/bust communities, concentration problems represent strong combinations of

path and interdependence, so the clarity of this analysis is all the more important. For resource dependent towns, material path dependencies entangle and reinforce each other: the nature of the resource itself, the landscape, climate, of infrastructures, put a material configuration in place which cannot easily be altered or repurposed. Cautious land use for extraction, cautious asset preservation beyond extraction, and careful cultivation of internal diversity can limit the scope of material and other path dependencies.

Performativity: the reality effects of policies and plans, partly the result of performance, partly the result of discursive configuration and partly of the functioning of the configurations in governance itself. The effects of a strategy, its performativity, depend on its coordinative capacity, and this hinges on the quality and consistency of its institutions, as well as on the persuasive character of the unifying story. If the story isn't persuasive, people will not follow plans; if the plans are incoherent, the power of the story will be affected, and the strategy will lead nowhere.

Place branding: the representation of a place not merely as a commodity but as a bundle of qualities and activities which can generate new commodities, new activities and values. Planning can reinforce or undermine place branding and place branding can do the same with planning. Place branding outside governance undermines the potential of governance to capitalize on branding, and possibly undermines the democratic character of governance itself. In boom/ bust communities, place branding is not a panacea, but an approach which can be useful to rethink community and place as more than one resource or activity. It can create new links between existing narratives, assets, and a development strategy. A strategy can include a new narrative and a new view of a set of current and future assets, acquiring value because of their co- existence in place and because of the unifying narrative and its attraction.

Policy integration: the combination of several policies into a cohesive whole. Policy coordination is a minimum level of policy integration. Policy integration can take place within the frame of larger topics, larger

organizations, or within a spatial frame. Spatial planning is a strong candidate as a site for policy integration, as many policies affect space, so organization of space can be a way to coordinate various policies. Spatial planning as policy integration can therefore work on several problems at the same time, can create new qualities, can harness synergies of different policies and associated resources. In boom/bust communities, policy integration in strategy-making is highly desirable, as many problems compound each other, resources tend to be scarce, and substantial change might be desirable, therefore requiring the optimal use of coordinative capacity in governance. Concentration problems might entail that there is policy integration, but in a pattern which cannot be changed easily. Positive change in such case requires breaking open the pattern without losing the capacity for policy integration.

Power/knowledge configuration: the unity of power and knowledge in a given governance path. Power shapes knowledge and knowledge shapes power and none can be understood without reference to the other. Governance is possible because of power/knowledge configurations, which make reality understandable and malleable at the same time, and it is the place for configurations to become dense and compete, because of possible impact on the community at large. Power is neither good nor bad it is not necessarily tied to individual or group action desire and intentionality.

Reflexivity: the habit and attitude to reflect on one's actions, thoughts and position and to look for grounding assumptions, underlying discourses, and their effects. In governance, reflexivity can increase flexibility and decrease rigidities in the governance paths. A deeper understanding of past and present shows more and more realistic transformation options. Reflexivity in governance can foster common goods, but it can also making individual or actor strategies more complex and intricate. Just as with transparency, there are limits to reflexivity; actors want to move forward and need relatively simple models of the world to act upon, productive fictions. One can say that phases and places of higher reflexivity can alternative with operating on a base of shared narratives and ongoing

negotiation on daily business. For boom/bust communities, we believe such phase of higher reflexivity has to come soon, and self-analysis and strategy making represent one form of reflexive governance for boom/bust we would recommend.

Resilience: the ability of communities to bounce back after shocks or the ability to maintain/assert the performances of certain vital functions in the face of (more or less dramatic) change. One could think of upholding a form of democracy, of legal certainty, or environmental sustainability. Governance which can adapt and enhance adaptivity in society can be called governance for resilience. Resilience can best be safeguarded by maintaining a variety of perspectives and forms of expertise in governance, and by maintaining the checks and balance. Not necessarily by a specialized form of expertise on resilience or sustainability, which can undermine the institutions enabling adaptation in the long run.

Second order observation: the observation of observation, the observation of the way other organizations and communities make distinctions, use concepts, build their reasoning and other stories. In boom/ bust communities, concentration problems can eradicate second order observation; if different perspectives are absent, reflexivity as second order observation is needed but absent.

Short-term thinking: the absence of long term perspectives in governance. Short term thinking tends to dominate in boom/bust communities, under pressures from both boom and bust. Boom seems to suggest long term perspectives are always positive anyway and reflecting on them is a waste of time and money, while busts suggest that there are no resources to ever implement long term perspectives, while adopting some long term strategy is understood as imposing too much on actors who would like to do anything under dire circumstances of bust. Spatial planning is seen as impossible because no new developments take place in a bust, and because in a boom it would slow down development.

Transitional governance: a governance configuration which results from community strategizing, but is not the final state desired in and by the strategy. Transitional governance can be clearly defined and leading to a clearly defined next step, or it can be a platform from which new avenues can be explored, reflexivity, assets, adaptive capacity, discursive diversity, long term perspectives can be built. For boom/bust communities with serious concentration problems, aiming first at transitional governance can be recommended, rebuilding capacity first.

Transparency/ opacity: the balance between transparency and opacity in governance requires management. Extreme transparency is impossible and has negative effects and the same is true for opacity. Governance is never entirely transparent, neither for the actors in governance nor for the rest of the community, for governance itself. Maximum insight in the formal/in formal institutional configuration is important to avoid corruption and inefficiency. In boom/bust communities, the balance tends to be too much towards opacity, and self-analysis can increase the transparency of the community to itself.

Vision: a unifying narrative for the future of the community, capable of integrating interests and policies. A vision can be a plan or a comprehensive policy; it can be detailed or sketched.

About the authors

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Boom & Bust – Local strategy for big events is the result of a collective effort at the University of Alberta to better understand the dramatic ups and downs which too often characterize western Canadian communities. It offers community leaders, politicians, administrators, academics, students, and all active citizens helpful techniques to analyze the current state of their own community, understand how it got where it is today, and ultimately, identify possible ways forward. We encourage analysis of historical paths and policy contexts to better understand what strategies might work (or not) in a community.

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Our need to understand and adjust to the highs and lows of economic cycles has only been magnified during the time leading up to the publication of this book. Citizens, including leaders in Alberta and northern British Columbia, should welcome this contribution to the literature.

Ted Binnema, Historian,
University of Northern British Columbia

A very approachable read on one of Western Canada's most important ongoing issues: the boom/bust community. The book is to be commended for drawing on some of the latest thinking on community resilience and governance, as it provides highly relevant advise for conducting effective community lead action to address the issue.

Michael Gunder, Associate Professor,
School of Architecture and Planning,
University of Auckland

Boom & Bust: A Guide is a must have for anyone interested in building stronger, more resilient and adaptable communities. The book provides a helpful and accessible framework for understanding how fundamental the stories a community tells about itself are to shaping its future. The lessons here are transferable to any size of community anywhere in the world.

Bill Given, Mayor
City of Grande Prairie, Alberta

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