

Transitioning Rural Regions to the New Energy and Climate Future: Planning, Governance and Rural Futures in Australia and USA

Tiffany H. Morrison¹, Marcus B. Lane², and Michael Hibbard³

¹University of Queensland, t.morrison@uq.edu.au

²Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, marcus.lane@csiro.au

³University of Oregon, mhibbard@uoregon.edu

Keywords: regional planning, climate adaptation, alternative energy futures, governance, institutions

The capacity of rural regions to address the plethora of issues and problems posed by climate change, alternative energy development, and related phenomena is profoundly affected by contemporary conditions in rural regional planning and governance.

- The region is fading as an organizing concept in development planning (Teitz 2012).
- There has been a good deal of 'faddism' in the development discourse. Concepts such as appropriate technology, basic needs, and, more recently, sustainability and participation may be good ideas but they have fallen short of expectations (Grindle 2012).
- Governance arrangements are characterised by complexity, uncertainty and hybridity (Morrison 2006).

As well, Teitz (2012) points to complementary development planning ideas that are influential at the beginning of the 21st century, the shift from a regional to a sectoral focus, with economic development as the goal, and the emergence of the environment as a key factor in development.

We use a two-pronged approach to shed light on whether and how regional planning can respond. We draw on the literature to explain the waning of rural regional planning and the growing complexity of regional governance. Then we examine six strategic 'critical cases' in alternative energy production (Flyvbjerg 2006), three each from Australia and the U.S. to explore the issues and options for need for a renewed discourse on rural regional rural planning.

References:

Flyvbjerg, B., 2006. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), pp. 219-245.

Grindle, M. 2012. Good governance: the inflation of an idea. In B. Sanyal, L.J. Vale and C.D. Rosan, eds. *Planning ideas that matter*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp 259-282.

Morrison, T.H., 2006. Pursuing rural sustainability at the regional level: key lessons from the literature on institutions, integration, and the environment. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 21(2), pp. 143-152.

Tietz, M.B., 2012. Regional development planning. In B. Sanyal, L.J. Vale and C.D. Rosan (eds), *Planning ideas that matter*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp 127- 152.