



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Revue d'Études en Agriculture et Environnement

<http://www.necplus.eu/RAE>

Additional services for *Revue d'Études en Agriculture et Environnement*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)



Gary Paul Green, *Handbook of Rural Development Handbook of Rural Development*, 2013, edited by Green Gary Paul, Cheltenham, UK, Edward Elgar, 358 p.

Marielle Berriet-Sollicec

Revue d'Études en Agriculture et Environnement / Volume 95 / Issue 04 / December 2014, pp 529 - 534
DOI: 10.4074/S1966960714014088, Published online: 09 February 2015

Link to this article: http://www.necplus.eu/abstract_S1966960714014088

How to cite this article:

Marielle Berriet-Sollicec (2014). *Revue d'Études en Agriculture et Environnement*, 95, pp 529-534 doi:10.4074/S1966960714014088

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)



***Handbook of Rural Development*, 2013, edited by Gary Paul Green, Cheltenham, UK, Edward Elgar, 358 p.**

This book opens with the question “Why should we care about rural development today?” Despite the fact that we are witnessing a trend of growing urbanisation throughout the world, the authors of this book (experienced academics and PhD students) take the opposite stance and set out to highlight the issues at stake and perspectives for rural areas from angles of complementary disciplines and with various themed chapters. From the outset, the authors state their points of view in the form of a defence of rural areas. In his preface, Green presents two strong points of the theory put forward here. First of all, the development of rural areas must be analysed by systematically integrating environmental concerns. Then, although agriculture and the issue of increasing agricultural productivity have structured rural development for a long time, we now need to draw on broader views of the countryside. In other words, *l'agricole ne fait plus le rural* (rural no longer exclusively means agricultural), to borrow an observation made more than fifteen years ago to introduce a statistical presentation of France's countryside (Inra-Insee, 1998).

The book, coordinated by a professor of sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is aimed at a wide readership of students, professors, researchers, rural development workers and public policymakers. It is meant for educational purposes and is divided into three distinct sections. Part I describes the latest developments in rural development concepts and theories. Part II analyses, theme by theme, different components of rural development: migrations, entrepreneurship, tourism, agriculture, microfinance, *etc.* Lastly, Part III presents illustrations in three areas of the developing world: Africa, Asia (China and India) and Latin America.

Part I offers four complementary analyses. The first concerns an approach to rural development that is not limited solely to the economic dimension but also incorporates social and environmental aspects. The second chapter emphasises the need to integrate the impact of globalisation when analysing the evolution of rural areas. One of the strengths of the analysis made here is its combination of three different scales, global, national and local. Provided that interdependences are managed and initiatives are supported on these three levels, the globalisation of trade can be perceived as an opportunity to develop rural areas. From this perspective, the author criticises the World Trade Organisation and the World Bank as being two institutions that have, until now, stifled these initiatives.

Chapter 3 is especially interesting for readers seeking a clarification of the conceptual foundations of rural policies and their progression. The author begins his argument with three observations. Firstly, there is often confusion between rural policies and rural development policies. According

to the author, the former, in a more all-encompassing approach, aim to improve living standards in rural areas, while the latter involve increasing the economic performance of rural areas. Next, rural policies mainly concern the OECD's so-called "developed" countries although the issues involve a far broader spectrum of countries, particularly developing ones. Ultimately, two registers of argumentation are currently required to justify rural policies, namely equity *versus* efficiency. Re-establishing his line of argument in the context of globalisation, however, with regard to rural policies, the author emphasises the importance of national policies. He offers a historical appraisal of the evolution of the foundations and methods of rural policies. Admittedly, one could criticise this somewhat simplistic and black and white approach, with what is almost certainly too much of a head-on confrontation between the "old approach" and the "new approach", or sector *versus* place, which would have been worth expanding with parallel arguments (Irwin *et al.*, 2010) and which needs to be qualified with complementary views of rural policies, for example with European visions (Trouvé *et al.*, 2013). Particularly regrettable is the fact that rural development is only presented here *per se*, and it would have been interesting to analyse further city-countryside relations and the tendency of urban and rural policies to blur or merge (rather than setting them against each other). The presentation is no less interesting for highlighting two different visions, agro-centric rural policies (with the favoured solution being subsidies and the main goal focused on supporting agricultural income) and place-based rural policies that rely on public and private investments to stimulate/activate rural resources as a whole. The keywords for this "place-based policy" are multilevel governance, services, integrated goods supply—the French equivalent of "basket of goods and services" (Mollard and Pecqueur, 2007) and knowledge-based growth. This last point throws light on the central elements of the Barca Report, hoping to build on "smart growth" in Europe mobilising innovation and untapped research results (Barca, 2009).

Lastly, Chapter 4 of this first section on the theory of rural development is devoted to the role of grassroots organisations, especially nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). Basing his work on case studies in the United States, the author stresses the importance of NGO-led initiatives for rural development in various fields (health, education, access to credit, protecting the environment, *etc.*) and the participative nature of these organisations' proposals.

Part II of the book explores eight facets of rural development by highlighting the main problems identified by policymakers and those involved rural development. The first chapter of this section (Chapter 5), written by a former employee of the Canadian forestry service, denounces what the author calls "the myth of resource dependence". In Canada, so-called primary activities (fishing, mining, agriculture, energy and forestry) represent only 5% of jobs and, according to the author, based on Canadian statistics, lead to deforestation with impacts on climate change, landscape degradation that is

disadvantageous for tourism, and social and economic dependence on a model that often runs counter to the choices of local populations. Re-examining the theories of resource dependency, the author then lays the foundations for another model of rural development making use of rural areas' natural resources to benefit local communities' sustainable development. The second item selected in Chapter 6 is migrations. Here the authors analyse the different processes at work in developing and developed countries. While in the former, migratory trends are based on seeking employment and involve rural to urban movement, in developed countries they can be explained by people seeking a better environment and lifestyle, and translate as urban to rural movement. For those interested in migration mechanisms in rural areas, this chapter is particularly interesting for the bibliography it provides on this subject and for the attempt to comprehend the diversity of types of migration through three main rural development *scenarii*, namely rural development in developed countries associated with resettlement, in developing countries associated with remittances, and lastly, in developed and developing countries associated with amenities. This classification is based on field observations in Mexico and the United States.

The following three chapters concentrate on three sectors (agriculture, industry and tourism), which are analysed successively in light of the evolution of the place and role of these three sectors in rural areas, but also with regard to the obstacles encountered when developing them and the opportunities that exist. While taking care to draw attention to the limitations and advantages of each choice of production, the authors stress their desire to conceptualise renewed forms of development by overcoming the obstacles encountered (seasonal jobs, low wages, problems accessing information, the lack of technical assistance, *etc.*): developing short supply chains in connection with urban growth and by integrating profound structural changes in agricultural production, supporting the creative and innovative activities of very small businesses (VSBs) whose activities tend to increase in rural areas, and lastly, promoting tourist activities that count on a public-private process of creating value from local resources.

With North American authors (mainly the United States and Canada), there is no escaping a chapter on "gender". Part II offers a chapter (Chapter 10) on the role of women in rural areas, frequently overlooked in studies despite often being significant in the development of these areas.

Chapter 11 addresses microfinance with the success story of Bangladesh's Grameen Bank. After characterising the nature of and sums involved in these microfinance tools in the main countries concerned, the author analyses the benefits and limitations of these loans to micro-businesses. He calls on researchers to continue their efforts to assess the impacts of microfinance in order to capitalise on the results of these experiments, particularly in terms of impacts on poverty reduction in rural areas.

The “Themes” section ends with a chapter that offers a very informative focus on the impact of biofuel production on rural development. Taking the example of corn production for industrial use in the American Midwest, using a microeconomic analysis, the authors of this article present the relative contribution of the arrival of processing firms to sustainable socioeconomic development. In fact, although of the five firms that set up from 2000 to 2010, four are located in rural areas (and only one in an urban area), these bioethanol production sites are mainly located in the most urbanised rural areas. Within these rural areas, the firms chose to set up in places where incomes are lowest.

Part III of the book, entitled “Regional”, offers four illustrations of rural development in developing countries. These examples aim to show the enormous variability in translating rural problems in the world and the need to consider the future of rural areas from an angle that is not exclusively agricultural, although non-agricultural activities currently involve only a small percentage of the rural population in Africa and Asia. In fact, in some cases, encouraging people to turn to non-agricultural activities can overcome problems of access to land, although the obstacles to development are considerable in places such as sub-Saharan Africa, still one of the poorest places in the world (Chapter 14). It is also important to underline the fact that rural development problems are not the prerogative of OECD countries. Issues such as land grabbing (Chapter 12), urbanisation and urban dependence on food procurement in the Chinese context of population explosion (Chapter 14), or the transformations of social classes in Latin America (Chapter 15) now raise crucial questions that public policymakers and private stakeholders struggle to resolve without fully comprehending the mechanisms at work. These conclusions therefore call out to social scientists to throw more light on these little-understood aspects.

Ultimately, the book defends a broader vision of rural development that combines social, economic and environmental dimensions. The authors also advocate strengthening rural policies that incorporate market processes and combine the involvement of institutions with greater participation from civil society’s actors. Another of its ambitions is to highlight the different scales, from the global to the local, and the authors demonstrate the complementarity of these scales. The book is commendable in that it does not fall into the trap of extolling hyper localism alone. Ultimately, the book shows that rural development issues also concern developing countries, although these countries’ policies remain too focused on sector-based approaches.

While Part I of this book seems to meet the initial objective of presenting the various conceptions of rural development and the keys to understanding the changes that are taking place, Parts II and III (by theme and by region) give the impression, to a certain extent, of a patchwork, presenting a succession of examples without always establishing a particular measure within a more encompassing approach. The examples make use of very interesting fieldwork (especially thesis fieldwork), but the value of the research

would have been better emphasised if they had been re-established within the framework of an analysis. Why was priority given to an article on biofuels? It is doubtlessly a sound decision, but it would have been interesting to support the choice of this example by examining this alternative production with regard to analyses in terms of ecosystem services or public assets, which are absent from the book. Another central issue that is barely mentioned is that of the jointness often at the heart of rural policies. Likewise, why is there a chapter on land grabbing? Again, we understand the importance of land issues in rural development processes and we can assume the arguments that justify such a choice, but the reader might expect more explanations. This expectation is even more disappointing since the book is aimed at social science students (among others) and this educational aim requires supplying elements of analysis that would help the reader to highlight key ideas.

Despite these reservations, this book should be recommended to everyone involved in rural policies today, and they should be invited to read the complementary references at the same time to clarify the grey areas, to re-establish and qualify the points of view presented in the study. Considering the dearth of studies that attempt to bring together rural development approaches, the publication of a book such as this is to be congratulated and people should be strongly encouraged to read it. It is a mine of information with its bibliographical references from North American authors, and contains some valuable insight its examples from the field that clearly illustrate some of the issues involved in rural areas. Because of its deliberately optimistic tone regarding resources to develop the countryside, one finishes reading with renewed enthusiasm about the future of rural areas and the opportunities to be seized in terms of sustainable development.

Marielle BERRIET-SOLLIEC
AgroSupDijon, UMR 1041 CESAER
marielle.berriet-sollic@dijon.inra.fr

Additional References

- Barca F. (2009) *An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy: a place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations*, Report for the European Parliament.
- INRA-INSEE (1998) Les campagnes et leurs villes, *Contours et Caractères*.
- Irwin E. G., Isserman A. M., Kilkenny M., Partridge M. D. (2010) A Century of Research on Rural Development and Regional Issues, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 92(2), 522–533.
- Mollard A. and Pecqueur B. (2007) De l'hypothèse au modèle du panier de biens et de services, *Économie rurale*, 300, 110–114.

OECD (2003) *The Future of Rural Policy: From Sectoral to Place-based Policies in Rural Policies*, Paris, OECD.

Trouve A., Berriet-Soliec M., Lepicier D. (dir) (2013) *Développement rural en Europe*, Peter Lang, coll. Business and Innovation.