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## **Alternative Perspectives on Development Prospects for Rural Areas**

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Steven C. Deller**

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The organization of the symposium in which the papers contained in this volume were presented, was the product of many people's efforts. Dan Otto, however, focused the group's attention and was responsible for the majority of the work involved in organizing the final symposium and this proceedings. Special thanks must be expressed to the National Extension Committee of the AAEA for supporting the symposium proposal and to the Farm Foundation, the Western Rural Development Center, Southern Rural Development Center, and the Northern Central Rural Development Center for financial assistance. This proceedings was possible from a grant from the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development. Finally, thanks to Kim Junkins for many hours of manuscript preparation.

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## **ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR RURAL AREAS**

**Daniel M.Otto**  
**Iowa State University**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The papers contained in this volume are the outcome of a symposium organized as part of the 1990 annual American Agricultural Economics Association(AAEA) meetings in Vancouver B.C. The papers presented during this four hour symposium were intended to provide agricultural economists with an alternative perspective on rural development prospects. Agricultural and extension economists in the Land Grant and USDA system have a long history of involvement with economic adjustment processes and economic development strategies for rural areas. Social scientists from outside the Land Grant-USDA system also have given these rural development issues extensive consideration, but have had little opportunity for interaction with AAEA members. A major objective of this symposium session was to provide a forum for several prominent researchers from outside disciplines to share their perspectives and discuss rural development strategies with symposium participants. Each speaker was asked to discuss their analysis and provide thoughts on the prospects for rural areas based on their theoretical perspective or conceptual framework.

The set of paper begins with an examination of the extent of the divergence of economic performance in rural areas. The first paper, "Rural Development in a Global Economy" by Amy Glasmeier, University of Texas, helps set the context for the session by discussing the post WWII developments affecting rural development efforts and the difficulties of understanding these changes

through the traditional urban and regional models. A broader understanding of industries, corporations, and international events are argued to be important for informing research and policy on non-metropolitan development.

The second paper, "Growth Center Theory Revisited" by Niles Hansen, University of Texas, critically examines key issues in growth center theory in terms of their relevance to current rural economic development concerns in the United States. A case study from peripheral Jutland in Denmark is used as an example of a center of innovative development based on state of the art flexible production system in a rural setting. Implications for industrial and regional development policies of a central government are drawn from this case study.

The third paper by William Coffey from the University of Quebec, Montreal, "Comprehensive Bases for Locally Induced Development," presents a framework for the analysis and use of a local development approach by rural areas. The economic and policy context for local development efforts is discussed with consideration given to several factors influencing local development approaches. These factors include; choosing a unit to be responsible for implementing, determining the structure of response, deciding the type of local development initiative, determining appropriate governmental financial assistance, and including evaluation efforts. Implications for local economic development policies are also discussed.

The final paper, "Alternative Perspectives on the Spatial Dimensions of Rural Development," by Susan Christopherson, Cornell University, reviews recent regional development research on the flexibly specialized firm and industrial district, new patterns of work, and the restructuring of the service industry for implications to non-metropolitan economic development strategies. Three

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**prominent spatial trends in the economy; increased agglomeration in urban areas, restructuring of service industries, and state policies (including deregulation) have relevance for rural economic development efforts and are discussed as severely limiting development options for non-metropolitan communities.**

**The format of the symposium included an allotment of time for a discussion of papers following each presentation. An effort was made to capture the essence of this discussion and is included in a section following each paper.**