What of the place in place-based development?

Identity, territory and place: Exploring regional governance of the Gander River, central Newfoundland

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http://www.ganderriver.com/fishing.html
The Gander River

• Guiding, fishing, hunting, logging, dev’t of Nfld. railway (Glenwood)

• “Highway” between Gander Bay and Glenwood

• Angling and commercial outfitting

http://www.fni.nf.ca
The Gander River

- Integrated Non-Status & status Mi’kmaq and non Aboriginal communities
  - Formation of landless band: Qalipu Mi’kmaq First Nation (Sept. 2011)
Research Approach

• Postcolonial and Indigenous methodologies

  – 24 Semi-structured and unstructured interviews:

    – Regional planner (1); DFO (2); Dept. NR (1); Private business sector (3); Municipal/Local Service District councillors (2); Mik'maq Band members (3); FNI-River Guardians (3); Gander Bay and Glenwood Band chiefs (2); Local residents (3); Gander River Mgmt Assoc. Board (3); Gander Chamber of Com. (1);

  – participant observation

  – research diary

  – Review of PB dev’t, resource geographies, place & identity lit.
Place-based Development

- Reaction to more conventional forms of development
- Territorial approach to planning and development
- Associated with ‘bottom-up’ or grass-roots modes of governance
- What place? Whose place?
Questions

• Is your home where you live? (i.e. do you consider the place you are living as home?)

• What is your history with the river?

• In what ways has this environment affected your personal identity, livelihood and/or sense of wellbeing?

• What are the top 3 strengths or unique aspects of the region?

• What are the future opportunities and challenges for you/your organization in the Gander River Watershed?
Understanding place

• Multiple meanings of place as a key component in understanding place politics (incl. natural resources)

• Geography- people’s interactions and experience in the world

• Place vs. space

• Bio-physical element of place- key in territory- people’s lifeway(s)

• Place cannot be limited to spatial locality
...multiple places
...multiple places

• the resource (river and salmon) to be managed and regulated

• One of the area’s biggest assets

• Place for local economic ventures (both “above board” and “underground”) and development

• Source of program funding
...multiple places

- “the run”
- family lived, worked, traveled and played here
  - “Riverman”, river child
- Link to town - GB
- “Irving meetings” and Kitchen chats
- “Where I do what I love”
- Less travelled than before; cleaner than in the past
Region and Identity

• Who bounds the region? For what purpose?

• Who perpetuates regional identity?

• Identity as *All My Relations- Msit Nogma*

• Shared identities around river
Making places become

- Places have complex histories and geographies
- People’s relationships (with people and environment) are diverse
- Revealing place in our place-based research;
- Opening places up and moving PB dev’t beyond a reaction to conventional forms of dev’t and mgmt

Counting fish, Salmon Brook Falls (J. Daniels)
Thank you!

- Marie, Calvin, the Smith’s, the River Guardians in Glenwood, GMFN & GB Band members, GRMA Board members, Howard, Lil and Matt
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- CRRF and NAF