Looking for a C-change:
Factors Contributing to Regional Development

Patrice Braun

Introduction

Countries, regions, institutions, companies and communities everywhere are reinventing their existence in the 'Internet economy', alternatively referred to in the literature as the 'digital economy', the 'learning economy', the 'knowledge economy', and the 'new economy' (Beer & Nohria 2000, Hudson 1999, Lundvall & Johnson 1994, Rayport & Jaworski 2001, Tapscott 1996). The notion that the information age has led to a new, technology-enabled and technology-mediated economy which supports networked activities including intra- and inter-organisational information, knowledge and marketplace exchanges, has received considerable attention. This is not to say that everyone agrees that we have a new economy. American economist Milton Friedman, for example, argues that there is no technology-driven new economy at all, but rather a two-century old economy for which new valuations systems have been developed (Ullmann 2001). Porter (2001) is also of the mind that the new economy is an old economy that has access to new technologies.

Few, however, seem to disagree with the notion that the advent of information and communication technologies (ICT) has brought about a global economy with economic agents now being able to interact in global networks (Castells 2000). Indeed, much of the 'new growth' literature focuses on unprecedented, non-traditional forms of capital growth such as knowledge, relationships and research as the true forces of the new economic paradigm (Bartlett & Ghoshal 2000, Cooke & Morgan 1998, Evans & Wurster 2000). What may, however, be different in this so-called new economy is the "extreme rate of change in certain areas related to the production and use of ICT and the breadth of the impact across regions as well as social groups" (Lundvall & Archibugi 2001:3). This paper addresses new economy change dynamics from a regional development perspective.

Regional Trends

The growing influence of new communication technologies as the critical factor in shaping modernity and the distribution of economic advantage is relevant to regional development in that the diffusion of ICT and the Internet directly impacts on interactions between local and global forces. Giddens (1990) conceives globalisation as the stretching process between local involvement and interaction across distance whereby the "local transformation is as much part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space" (Giddens 1990: 64). Applying his so-called 'glocalisation' framework, Robertson (1995) places spatial issues on an equal footing with temporal ones by examining local and global forces in a concrete locality. In Castells' (2000) notion of a 'regionalized, global economy' government intervention, regional (government) structures and networks play a significant role in the positioning of a region in the global economy (p.102).

In a knowledge-driven economy the tendency towards geographic concentration may be stronger, as the new technology-enabled landscape is said to provide the capacity for firms to cluster virtually, collaborate with former competitors, and potentially achieve "competitive co-evolution, enhanced by digital platform features" (Ordanini & Pol 2001: 282). In Australia the federal government has shown renewed interest in, and support for both regional concentration and virtual industry clustering, although the philosophical debate whether clustering should be government-led or industry-led varies from state to state (Enright 2001).

Recognising that economic growth is accomplished by designing regional-level intervention – that allows actors within regions to shape their own development prospects and stimulate interfirm learning – regional policy initiatives also include the decentralisation of power through multi-level governance; and the building of epistemic communities based on embedded competencies and social structures (Henderson & Morgan 2001, Maskell & Malmberg 1999). As a result, regional development theory has undergone a paradigm shift from an exogenous intervention focus to an endogenous, relational network one (DOTARS 2003, Storper 1997).

In the transition to a learning-based economy, the 'new regionalism' (MacKinnon, Cumbers, & Chapman 2002) focuses on social and institutional learning as the prime driving forces behind regional economic growth. Regions are being turned into so-called learning regions, in which socially a variety of regional agents and institutions are intended to form networks and take part in interactive learning cycles (Amin 1999, Cooke & Morgan 1998). By formulating networks and entering into interactive learning processes, it is believed that regions, like firms, can reduce uncertainty, foster innovative milieux, and augment creative capacity for firms by way of information and knowledge diffusion throughout the local network (Florida 1995, Henderson 2000, Morgan 1997, Storper 1997).

The success of learning regions is, however, conditional on regional network and governance conditions. Network cohesion, common culture, commitment and trust among network stakeholders have been identified in the literature as key features to facilitate collaboration for mutual understanding and benefit (Håkansson & Snehota 1995, Putnam 2000). When these characteristics are present, collaborative and associative forms of governance can enhance the economic competitiveness of regions, and collaboration between firms, governance bodies and learning institutions can play an enabling role in regional and local capacity building (Leibovitz 2003). It has also been argued that those [nations] that are adept at matching institutional innovation with the emerging techno-economic paradigm are likely to forge ahead; those that suffer from institutional 'drag' or inertia may fall behind (Freeman 1994). Focusing on the dynamic nature of the new economy, Maskell and Malmberg (1999) similarly point out that the capacity to learn and adapt to change defines the success of a region.

Despite the popularity of this regional development agenda with academics and international policy makers (APEC 2001, OECD 1999), there are limitations to consider vis-à-vis the dependency on learning for regional innovation (MacKinnon et al. 2002) and imposed regional development initiatives versus on-the-ground implementation of such strategies. Measuring the often-intangible outcomes of collaboration and learning for regional development purposes (e.g., the innovative behaviour of companies and regions), for example, is still in its infancy with little practical evidence available as to its merit (Maskell 1997). Besides, evaluation models associated with new regional policies continue to be based on traditional quantitative statistical and econometric analysis methods (Diez 2002). To add complexity to the learning region debate, the concept of what constitutes a region can be indistinct. In addition, although regional learning is presumably anchored in endogenous capacities – that is, the social and institutional relationships within a region – we cannot disregard innovation and knowledge creation via exogenous influences such as extra- regional and global Internet networks (MacKinnon et al. 2002).

Driving the Regional Agenda

The following themes within the new economy literature appear to be key drivers in regional development: network connectivity and clustering; collaborative learning; cooperative relationships through the coordination of complementarities; and community (capacity) building. But who is really driving the Australian regional development policy agenda? While there is rhetoric aplenty, there is little empirical evidence on the successful combination and implementation of each or all of these key factors. Nor is there evidence of regional stakeholders' own awareness of or interest in embracing new economy drivers; or what actual change processes characterise regional development in today's economy.

On close examination the Australian regional development mosaic appears to consist of central government on the one hand, with regional development policies remaining top down, broadly focused and disengaged; and local actors on the other, with parochialism driving local rather than regional development.

This paper reviews an action research project which investigated the nature of the change process for a regional small business network moving from the old to the new economy through the adoption of ICT and e-commerce for global marketing and transaction purposes. The aim of the project was to gain a better understanding of the economic development potential of regional business networks in the current techno-economic climate. The recurring set of themes identified above as key drivers in regional development — e.g., connectivity, clustering, communication, (social) collaboration, community, (marketplace) cooperation and change; referred to in the study as the C-factors or, combined, as the 7C framework — were adopted to aid the analysis of the perceived barriers, drivers and pathways for regional development and change in the current economic climate.

The Project

Tourism network formation in the form of cooperative destination marketing has been in place in Victoria since 1993 as part of its strategic tourism strategy to develop integrated marketing campaigns throughout the state. The 1993 strategic plan was also pivotal in establishing so-called Product Regions based on product strengths rather than geographic or administrative boundaries (Tourism Victoria, 1993). Tourism Victoria, the state's peak tourism body, encourages cooperative tourism marketing at the regional level through regional governance bodies known as Campaign Committees. Made up of representatives from local industry and local government, these Campaign Committees are voluntary organisations responsible for the marketing of Product Regions and maintaining communications with industry stakeholders in their region. The research ensued out of a web portal consultancy with one such Campaign Committee, the Grampians Campaign Committee, responsible for marketing the Grampians Product Region of Western Victoria. The geographically vast Grampians Product Region embraces some 900 small and micro tourism businesses, seven major townships, numerous villages and seven local government shires (Ritchie 2001).

The consultancy brief was to design a web portal model that would give the region a prominent and competitive web presence and support new economy marketing and transaction needs for Grampians region tourism operators. In exploring the nexus between new technology adoption and change, an action research methodology was suggested to and endorsed by the Grampians Campaign Committee.

Action research (AR) is an intervention process that is collaborative in nature, as it aims to work *with* stakeholders rather then *on* them (Reason & Bradbury 2001). Technological clustering being a key consideration for the network, AR was particularly appropriate as it acknowledges the need for collaborative approaches to tackle both the complex conditions of today and the speed of change (Chisholm, 1998). Typically, the interventions performed by action researchers are increasingly complex in nature and can no longer be addressed on a singular unit level. Regional development is a good example of a multi-faceted arena of intervention and action researchers engaged in regional development intervention tend to cope with the meta-problems by looking at people or groups of organisations within a particular inter-organisational network or domain. These domains, which comprise the actors that are linked through a common issue or interest, are "…cognitive as well as organisational structures and have boundaries, direction and identities" (Finsrud, 1999, p.244).

Different AR frameworks were explored for possible use in this regional development project, resulting in the adoption of a clinical inquiry methodology. Drawing on the organisational development work of Schein (1987), clinical inquiry positions itself conceptually and operationally between traditional research and action research as it involves the gathering of data created by and for the client seeking help. Thus the emphasis of clinical inquiry is on working around the agenda and the level of involvement of the client. Clinical inquiry is well suited to ICT-related change as it enables inquiry into the integration of the technical, economic, organisational, human and cultural aspects of the intervention (McDonagh & Coghlan 2001).

The project was divided into three phases and encompassed a reconnaissance phase, a strategic planning phase, and a web portal design review phase. The proposed intervention actions were:

- To meet with the consultant/researcher for a one-on-one reconnaissance conversation and record sub-regional stakeholder ICT concerns and needs prior to the design phase of the web portal;
- To participate in a one-day search conference to formulate a collective web portal vision for the region;
- To take part in follow-up communications to finalise the portal model.

Interaction occurred between mid 2001 and early 2002 with a group of twenty network actors, who were either part of the Grampians Campaign Committee or had a direct industry or governance interest in the Grampians Product Region. The action research outcomes were placed within the 7C framework for analysis. Study results pertaining to the C-factors are highlighted below.

Study Results

The essential challenge in the study was to engage actors in the intervention process, which turned out to be a difficult task given the structure of the Product Region. The spatial make-up of the Grampians Product Region proved to be a core determinant of network cohesion or rather, the lack thereof. The focus of the Product Region revolved around a single icon, the Grampians mountain range at Halls Gap, its strategically located access point, leaving stakeholders in the outer parts of the Product Region feeling alienated and ill-represented. Actors repeatedly voiced concerns about the network boundaries being incompatible with the marketing focus and perpetuating sub-regional polarisation. The latter is significant in that it reflects the fact that the Grampians Product Region is not a region based on place or common location, but rather an artificially created region based on a broadly focused regional development policy.

Actors only met monthly for Grampians Region Committee meetings and then dispersed again. Since actors met infrequently and rarely socialized, there was weak social capital, lack of intimacy, little trust and no relational durability. The latter was reinforced by the region's political structure, in terms of status and position in the tourism network. In determining a domain typology, it became apparent that a handful of actors, who made up what may be referred to as an 'old boy' network, controlled the workings of the Grampians Campaign Committee and the Product Region's decision-making processes. As one actor put it, "a lot of issues have already been decided outside the [monthly] meeting". This situation was compounded by actors' volunteer status on the Campaign Committee, which translated into lack of accountability and commitment to the Product Region. Despite agreeing to the process, the majority of actors did not act as if the intervention was relevant to them. Besides, with the existing power structure dominating the decision-making processes in the Product Region and dictating the social, business, governance and learning performance of the domain, most actors were disinclined to spend their already precious time engaging in the intervention.

In observing myriad disconnected networks within the network, it became evident that the cultural norm in the Product Region was one of divergence and competition. Strongly collaborative network structures tended to be parochial within sub-regional destinations, such as Halls Gap, based on an embedded local policy to keep visitors within the local destination. While tourism operators were willing to refer visitors to either a competitor or complementary service and be competitive-inclusive within their own destination, they were competitive-exclusive vis-à-vis the rest of the Product Region. As a result, aggregation of regional complementarities – such as taking advantage of virtual clustering via the web portal to, for example, offer cross-regional food and wine or accommodation and transport packages – or any other potential value added that might have been established along the regional value chain remained unrecognised and hence untapped. With actors behaving in atomistic fashion, a unified regional network structure was inevitably absent and there was no discernible collective network voice or shared Product Region culture. Given the lack of motivation to collaborate, actors failed to recognise and exploit the potential for regional economic development through cooperation and collective learning.

While email had become the standard communication method for internal Committee business, it had not become the common standard for communication with stakeholders across the network. Anecdotal evidence further indicates that many (industry) actors had little interest in joining the web portal to improve their ICT capability and had yet to understand the relevance of e-business to their firm or region. Indeed, few regional network members appeared to be *au fait* with what venturing into advanced ICT (web portal) uptake actually entailed or that such a move could have economic implications for the region. Given the state of connectivity, (virtual) clustering was regarded as an interesting but far-fetched and top down idea. Besides, web portal participation was being offered via a governance body that did not enjoy the trust or support of regional stakeholders. Thus, the web portal, which could have constituted a significant step forward towards augmenting weak regional ties and encouraging virtual and strategic regional community building, lacked stakeholder ownership. Despite rhetoric that the web portal would become the primary network structure for regional communication, after its launch the portal was not used for either horizontal communication between Grampians Campaign Committee actors or vertical dissemination of information along governance tiers. Not surprisingly, ICT alone could not permeate sub-regional cooperation barriers or foster an inclusive regional network culture.

In the course of the intervention it became clear that resistance to change was a central issue in the region, with silo politics and parochialism among the most significant barriers to domain learning and change. Without exogenous pressure on endogenous network relationships, domain actors shaped their own development prospects as they saw fit.

To the outside consultant, it had been unclear what level of interaction, social inclusion or exclusion and engagement to expect from domain actors (see Vobruba 2000). Given the social distance prevalent within the region, the consultant’s prospects for social capital building within the domain proved to be poor from the outset. Not only was the consultancy plagued by weak bonding ties to the focal group, entering a domain steeped in socio-cultural ties where trust was parochial and built on long-term relationships proved detrimental for the creation of actionable outcomes. The consultant was able to engage in *cognitive-based intervention* through reconnaissance conversations with individual actors and continuous questioning and probing, but was afforded little time or occasion to engage actors in *activity-based group* interaction and reflection (see McDonagh & Coghlan 2001).

Actors were somewhat more responsive to the consultant’s bridging social capital in the form of web portal design expertise, but only when it was presented under the banner of work being undertaken by the Product Region’s marketing agency. As a matter of course, portal decisions were classified as project management tasks and subsequently outsourced to the marketing agency, which enjoyed the trust of key Committee members, but was task and dollar oriented rather than learning focused. Nonetheless, in time a good working relationship was established between the consultant and the marketing agency, which proved to be a constructive pathway to introduce potential change.

Perhaps most conspicuous was the finding that policy rhetoric notwithstanding, no one was resourced or responsible for implementing collaborative practices. While the state’s peak tourism body was keen to maximise the potential of regional Victorian tourism through the engagement of regional stakeholders in cooperative marketing ventures, at the same time it was seeking to minimise the cost of implementing its cooperative strategies. In their volunteer status, Grampians Campaign Committee members bore no responsibility to collaborate either with operators, each other, across shires or, for that matter, with the consultant during the action research intervention. Inevitably, change could not be accomplished in a system that markets policy without engagement and communication without meaning.

Discussion

In the course of the project analysis it became clear that resistance to change was a central issue in the region. Despite calls for increased collaboration and networking, regional stakeholders continued to interact within insular sub-regional boundaries. The Grampians network was characterised by weak ties and limited structural bridges between social systems. The introduction of a technology-driven regional web portal, did not of itself lead to increased network functionalities such as cooperation and clustering. Project analysis further suggests that the strength of network ties, the region’s geographical make-up, and the level of shared domain knowledge all hinge on trust; and that those trust relationships, or the lack thereof, underpin the development, advancement or demise of regional networks. Lacking social capital and trust, the regional governance body was ill placed to perform a key role in new economy leadership. Top-down directives disregarded local network conditions and paid mere lip service to regional stakeholder engagement.

Without an understanding of the benefits of the technology and a commitment to its implementation, the region was unable to embrace the economic potential of new technologies. Actors appeared oblivious to the possibility that this might have a long-term impact on the region's global visibility and strategic opportunities. While there were no particular indicators at the time that the region was falling behind in the economic race to create competitive advantage, the question does arise: at what point do regional networks lose the opportunity to capture the strategic market opportunities offered by ICT and the use of a portal facility?

In applying the regional development themes or the 7C framework – connectivity, clustering, communication, (social) collaboration, community, (marketplace) cooperation and change – to this case, it became apparent that each C-factor was an important element on the road to development and change. None of these C-factors could, however, be singled out as being *the* pivotal factor that might have led to change. Instead, the analysis suggests that change was dependent on the interaction of all C-factors, or that the C-factors were interdependent. While all C-factors turned out to be significant, some turned out to be more important than others. For example, some C-factors seemed to perform an enabling role, while others were indeed critical for change to occur.

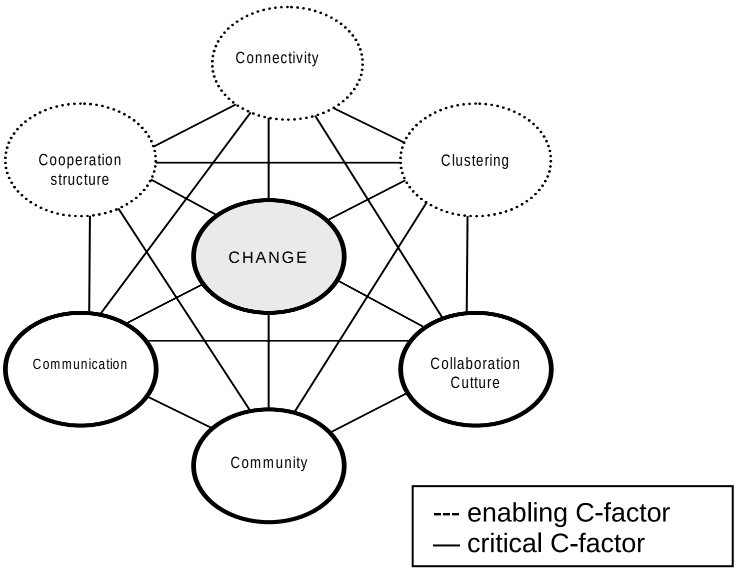

Figure 1
Interdependent C-Factors

Figure 1 illustrates the interdependency of the C-factors and their respective roles. Connectivity, clustering and cooperation (such as cooperative marketing campaigns), represented in dotted circles, can be classified as enabling C-factors. While connectivity does enable e-business and global positioning, it is a technological platform that extends the region's marketing channels, and, as such, cannot be considered a critical factor for change. Similarly, clustering and cooperation can both be classified as enabling constructs, as each facilitates critical mass but neither can be considered critical in the change process. Communication, a collaborative culture and a cohesive community, represented in solid circles, on the other hand, were deemed critical factors that underpinned change.

Towards a C-Change

The C-factors were not initially expected to play a role beyond their use as a framework for analysis. However, during the research it became apparent that change occurs through the interaction of the C-factors. In addition, two new C-factors came to the fore during the analysis, namely the need for commitment (to change) and (domain) convergence. These two new and indeed critical C-factors were added to the 7C-framework, as they were deemed essential for change to take place. Without commitment to change and without social, economic and technological convergence (integration) to bring together the divergent social systems and alter the competitive and atomistic network culture, change cannot occur. By adding commitment and convergence to the original C-factors, as illustrated in Figure 2, it is suggested that the new 9C-model enhances our understanding of the factors that drive and enable regional economic development, and that the framework could serve as a de facto change model for regional network development.

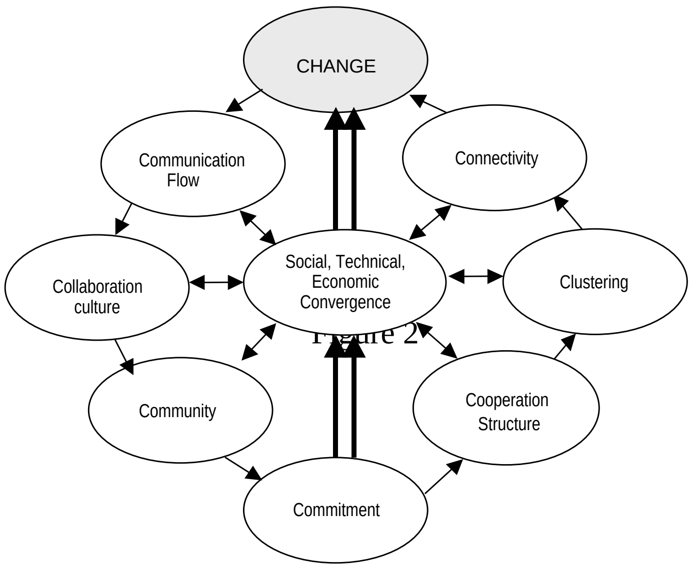

Figure 2
C-Change Model

To achieve the desired change in regions, a shift in both critical and enabling C-factors will need to occur, although the magnitude of change will be influenced by the critical C-factors. Considering the aforementioned critical factors (commitment to change and convergence through communication, collaboration, and community building) in the context of the existing regional development mosaic, how might such a regional development model play out in practice?

First, it is essential to recognise the implementation gap between policy and practice or between central and regional governance. Political rhetoric and top down drivers (including funding) have proven to be unsustainable without accountability, engagement and adequate support structures to build network capacity to learn and change. In perpetuating volunteer structures, regional governance channels cannot be relied upon to play an enabling role in regional and local capacity building (see Leibovitz 2003). Hence a commitment to (or reallocation of) resources and support to take responsibility for and create confidence in new economy change is required.

Secondly, network cohesion, common culture, commitment and trust among network stakeholders are necessary to facilitate collaboration and enhance the economic competitiveness of regions (see Håkansson & Snehota 1995; Putnam 2000). These network conditions require social, economic and technological convergence, interdependent elements which need to be underpinned by meaningful communication across horizontal and vertical network tiers. Social convergence may be accomplished through continuous information flows. As Putnam (2000) and Nonaka and Konno (1998) have argued, social capital is the store of trust, goodwill and cooperation in our communities. Building meaningful relationships beyond the local level between regional industry and governance bodies requires continuity and a commitment of time, possibly the most precious commodity in the new economy (Florida 2002). Adequately resourcing governance tasks to overcome top-down and sub-regional communication barriers and providing regionally representative governance structures will legitimise regional governance bodies, positively influence parochialism and build trust in new economy leadership.

But change is not merely achieved by a top-down commitment to bridge the public-private divide and provide credible leadership. Change also hinges on regional actors' perception of the usefulness of (technological) regional development directives. As Gretzel et al. (2000) have pointed out success in the new economy is more about change in approach than about technology itself. Increased information flows about (technological) regional development processes and the fostering of communication between regional actors builds relational capital and trust, which in turn can enable economic convergence through cross-community exploration of cooperative practices, collective learning and knowledge exchange. Once trust has been established, economic convergence can eliminate a competitive-exclusive culture and move towards a mindset that combines competition and co-operation – along the lines of what Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) refer to as co-opetition – allowing sub-regional communities to uncover their value chains and complement each other in creating the regional market. Economic convergence enables clustering and cooperative e-business structures, while connectivity is enabled by technological convergence.

This study confirms that place matters more than ever and that competitive advantage is not based on seamless transmission of regional information via electronic means, but on local communities maintaining their identities in a global economic climate. To embed local community nuances in regional development initiatives, it may be useful to explore regional development from a spatial differentiation perspective, which has been gaining momentum in Europe since the 1990s (Henderson & Morgan 2001, Storper 1997). However, one size will not fit all. As this study has shown, the geographic dispersion of stakeholders, which is often the case in Australian regions, adds complexity to regional network relationships, and not all regions have the desire to cooperate, the capacity to cluster, or indeed the aspiration to take on the challenge of governance. In the Australian context, spatial policy initiatives would benefit from prior knowledge of regional/local resources, community and industry needs, leadership skills and learning capacity, as there is no point in implementing unsustainable regional models.

Reviewing regional boundaries through community consultation may also help address the tension between competitiveness and cohesion within regional industry networks, help reduce disparities in conditions and opportunities between subregions, and encourage the building of learning communities based on embedded assets, competencies and social structures. With regional development initiatives still spread across different governance bodies and tiers, such regional development initiatives would benefit from informed and integrated policy formulation.

Although regional development policy directives still tend to lack nuance, continuity and reflexivity, it is encouraging to note that local capacity building and reform and restructure of local/regional governance to improve competitiveness are starting to be recognised (National Economics 2002). The Regional Innovation Clusters Initiative set up by the Victorian government in 2004 has a regional industry focus with local governance bodies, while the community sector has taken the lead in introducing action research methodologies to strengthen family functioning and collaboration between community agencies (Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2002). Most other sectors, it appears, have yet to shift from an economic focus towards a learning focus that breaks down the existing policy silos and encompasses horizontal and vertical efficiencies, leadership, flexibility, diversity and engagement across all tiers.

Equally important is a recognition of the need for new evaluation metrics for regional development policies and associated learning practices. These new measures move away from traditional economic impact or monetary cost-benefit analyses towards interactive and participatory regional evaluation processes (Diez 2002). Formative and summative evaluation processes might include demand-side trust, perceived value added and other intangibles such as social capital, absorptive capacity and traded knowledge (Henderson & Morgan 2001).

Conclusion

One aim in this study was to investigate the regional development drivers and change processes for a regional business network moving from the old to the new economy. A goal of the study was to gain a better understanding of the economic development needs of regional business networks in the current techno-economic climate. The study used an action research approach aimed at engaging regional network actors and encouraging proactive participation as part of a broader regional development push for collaboration, learning and change.

An essential challenge proved to be the engagement of regional actors in collaborative processes. This situation was compounded by network actors' volunteer status, which translated into lack of resources, accountability and commitment to change. ICT development alone could not permeate sub-regional cooperation barriers or foster an inclusive network culture.

In examining new economy themes such as connectivity, clustering, collaborative learning, marketplace cooperation and community relationships, it became apparent in this study that neither government (via its representative regional governance body) nor (the tourism) industry was driving the regional development agenda. On the contrary, there appeared little on-the-ground interest in new economy change on the part of regional stakeholders, giving rise to the question: at what point do regions lose the opportunity to capture the strategic market opportunities offered by new technologies?

To enhance our understanding of the factors that drive and enable regional economic development, a de facto regional development model was introduced, in which commitment (to engagement and resources) underpins all other action. In reviewing the regional development factors that make up the rest of the model — connectivity, clustering, communication, collaborative learning, community building, (marketplace) cooperation, conversion and change — it has become apparent that each of the factors reinforce one another; that there are cumulative and reciprocal linkages between the factors, which are all subject to interaction and continuity (continuous renewal through learning, action and reflection) to ensure a fluid learning culture and constant change.

It is suggested that this model be applied in conjunction with action-oriented methodologies to ensure an integrated and inclusive approach, which gives due consideration to relational underpinnings and spatial boundaries. It is further suggested that a new sociology of knowledge is needed for the Australian culture if we are to better understand and engage with the new economy. As this study has shown, top down ideas and theories do not necessarily work on the ground. If change is to take place, commitment to change and convergence is required on the part of both policy makers and regional actors. As McIlduff and Coghlan (2000) have demonstrated, for a system to change, key actors have to be motivated to change and do something about what needs changing. With an increased commitment to collaborative and associative forms of governance and learning, it is possible for Australian regions to embrace regional development and progress their position in the learning economy.

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