

The Multiple Deindustrializations of Canada's Maritime Provinces and the Evaluation of Heritage-Related Urban Regeneration¹

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Abstract

The Maritime provinces of Canada share with many other nations the experience of nineteenth-century industrialization and twentieth-century deindustrialization. For deindustrialized areas, the social and environmental pressures imposed by deindustrialization are frequently held to be open to mitigation through urban regeneration projects that seek to build on existing cultural heritage and ultimately enable communities to thrive in both cultural and economic terms. In the Maritime provinces, however, two factors have greatly complicated the emergence of effective urban regeneration. One is the historical complexity of both industrialization and deindustrialization in the region, while the other is the critical weakness of evaluation criteria for defining success in urban regeneration and thus assessing the effectiveness of regeneration projects. Without advocating the adoption of a 'one-size-fits-all' model, and recognizing the complexity – even intractability – of the 'wicked problems' that attend any regeneration project, this essay will argue that historical and policy-related analysis can be combined to generate a regional approach to urban regeneration and its evaluation, which will take account of the need to maintain existing cultural integrity and to support processes of policy learning and social learning.

Introduction

The Maritime provinces of Canada – New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (PEI) – share with many nations the experience of nineteenth-century industrialization and twentieth-century deindustrialization. For deindustrialized areas, the social and environmental pressures imposed by deindustrialization are frequently held to be open to mitigation through urban regeneration projects that seek to build on existing cultural heritage and ultimately enable communities to thrive in both cultural and economic terms. Yet two factors can greatly complicate the emergence of effective urban regeneration. One is cultural and historical. Urban regeneration that is explicitly connected to cultural heritage depends crucially on an accurate understanding of the historical memory that underpins any heritage sensibility. Industrialization and deindustrialization are complex processes that typically leave mixed and often contested historical memories. Secondly – since urban regeneration projects depend on approval by public authorities and are often funded wholly or partly by public funds – the policy framework is also of central importance. As an element of this framework, the process of evaluation forms a notably important, and often forgotten or underestimated, part. Urban policy, in which, in Canada, municipalities are by their nature accountable to other levels of government, is an area in which evaluation is critical to the making, review and persistence of policy. It is the engine of accountability and the process by which ongoing policy can benefit from iterative change and future urban interventions can be informed. At the same time, however, effective evaluation of urban regeneration projects depends in turn on early intervention and the application of consistent and well-founded criteria. In the absence of effective evaluation, regeneration projects may risk becoming haphazard and ineffective. Equally important is the recognition that the absence of evaluation is obviously a hindrance to an exploration of what does or does not work. The complexity of the historical and cultural factors with which regeneration deals, notably particularly in post-industrial areas, demands a rigorous evaluation of outcomes and outputs in order to inform future policy and promote policy learning, which, particularly in the context of complex cultural and historical urban regeneration initiatives, can lead in turn to ‘reflexive social learning’.²

Both of these factors apply to urban regeneration in the wake of industrialization and deindustrialization in the Maritime provinces. Nineteenth-century industrialization in the Maritimes was

geographically uneven and distributed among cities, smaller towns and even rural areas. Deindustrialization was a lengthy process, originating in the nineteenth century itself with the decline of shipping and ship-building but attaining new dimensions with the undermining of heavy industry from the 1920s onwards and extending into the 1990s and beyond. Along with the decline of industries directly depending on the steam-and-steel economy, severe fluctuations also took place in resource-based industries that depended on export – ranging from fisheries to mining and pulp and paper production. Accordingly, regeneration efforts cross a broad spectrum of circumstances as well as both societal and environmental challenges. Moreover, recognized guidance and evaluation criteria for regeneration programmes are largely absent. The lack of recognized criteria is owed in part, of course, to the status of the three provinces as separate jurisdictions – each responsible for its own urban policy – as well as, more broadly, the nature of Canadian federalism. In a more unitary state – such as the United Kingdom, even though centrifugal trends arising from devolution and possible Scottish independence are arguably on the ascendant there – central policy guidance is more feasible. Yet state guidance tends understandably to concentrate on economic and fiscal outcomes, rather than engaging with the more intricate social, cultural and environmental issues that are central to the development and sustainability of any project. We argue that, in the Maritime provinces, historical and policy-related analysis can be combined to generate a regional approach to urban regeneration and its evaluation that will take account of the need to maintain existing cultural integrity while promoting both policy learning and social learning and embracing the opportunities offered by regeneration initiatives.

Industrial history of the Maritimes

The industrial past of the Maritime provinces is as complex in terms of historical analysis as it has become in cultural memory. The origins of such complexity lie in part in the unusual characteristics of the era of early non-indigenous exploitation of the region's natural resources. Here, resource exploitation pre-dated substantial and geographically extensive settlement by almost three centuries. Thus, any period of colonial history worthy of the name was severely truncated when compared to other areas of eastern North America. European fishers of various nationalities frequented the coastlines from approximately

1500 onwards and the small-scale fur trade that developed soon afterwards was transformed by the late sixteenth century into a pursuit that was profitable independently of the fisheries. Resource harvesting, in collaboration in the case of the fur trade with indigenous peoples, led to attempts at colonial settlement in the early seventeenth century. While these efforts gave rise to securely founded French colonial communities populated by the settlers whose descendants became known as Acadians, the geographical reach of settlement itself – though its social and economic reach was extended by largely waterborne transportation routes – was limited, and was largely confined to a handful of areas bordering the Bay of Fundy. Imperial and other considerations led in the first half of the eighteenth century not only to a small British outpost at Annapolis Royal, but also to larger and strongly defended towns at, respectively, Louisbourg and Halifax. Still, however, these places had only a small geographical footprint and their ability to encroach on indigenous territory was not only fragile and dependent on diplomacy but was also further retrenched by the British expulsion of the Acadians between 1755 and 1762. While the prospect of British expansion was enhanced by treaty-making with indigenous nations in 1760–1 and by the abandonment of French imperial claims in the Treaty of Paris (1763), following the fall of Louisbourg some five years earlier, the reality of large-scale settlement expansion had to await the Loyalist migration after the American Revolutionary War and subsequent waves of immigration from the British Isles. By 1820, the non-indigenous populations of the Maritime colonies totalled a modest figure of some 200,000.³

Also by the early nineteenth century, however, urbanization had begun on a small scale. Halifax remained the largest town at some 11,000 by 1817,⁴ but the Loyalist settlement of Saint John, New Brunswick, had expanded rapidly to more than 10,000 by 1824.⁵ It remained true that society in the Maritime colonies was largely rural. Some smaller towns had emerged on the basis of essentially rural resource harvesting in areas such as fisheries and timber production, while others were market towns for agricultural areas. Military and naval outlays represented a major economic factor in Halifax, and to a lesser degree elsewhere, while other public expenditures figured modestly both there and in smaller government centres such as Charlottetown, Fredericton and Sydney. Capital accumulation stemmed overwhelmingly from merchant activity – based essentially on resource exports and military or naval contracting – and social mobility depended largely on successful (or, in the case of downward mobility, unsuccessful) participation in local,

regional and imperial trade networks. Importation from the West Indies, Great Britain and the United States supplied a large proportion of needs for both foodstuffs and manufactured items.⁶ Thus, domestic goods production was confined primarily to pre-industrial trade and craft settings, and frequently associated directly with transportation and trading needs such as coopering and sail-making. Coal mining was longstanding in Cape Breton Island, but despite elaborate plans canvassed during that colony's autonomous existence from 1784 to 1820, the scale remained stubbornly small.⁷

However, trade itself provided the impetus for a significant expansion of manufacturing activity during the first half of the nineteenth century. The British need for timber during the Napoleonic Wars had created what was, for all practical purposes, a new export trade and the scale of the demand for this commodity from a rapidly industrializing metropolis ensured that the trade would continue postwar. This trade and others required, in turn, investment in transportation. Although the beginnings of an economy rooted in steam power were concurrent, the most cost-effective oceanic freight transportation remained wooden sailing ships. Shipbuilding emerged by the 1820s as the first manufacturing industry – even though it was based on a disparate complex of often tiny yards – that was regional in scope and was shared by towns large and small and even by small coastal or riverine communities.⁸ The availability of timber was ubiquitous, even in the eventually depleting forests of Prince Edward Island, and timber itself provided a high-volume commodity that was eminently exportable. The demand, to be sure, varied according to the vicissitudes of the British economy, and recessions such as that of the late 1840s could wreak havoc among the merchant houses of even such a now-substantial city as Saint John. Nevertheless, the trade was resilient and it was complemented by shorter-range export trades to New England and elsewhere, through which less durable commodities such as fish and agricultural products could be marketed. Larger merchants operated ships as well as building them, as researchers at Memorial University established conclusively during the 1980s, contradicting earlier interpretive understandings that shipbuilding and ship-owning were largely separate.⁹ In that linkage, however, lay the origins of later decline. Steam and steel did not replace wood and wind in any rapid or simple pattern. Wooden shipping remained viable in some contexts well into the twentieth century, notably in the continuing use of fishing schooners. For merchant houses that relied on the timely seizure of emerging investment opportunities, however, there increasingly existed attractive alternatives to building

and operating wooden ships. Investment in the Canadian west – where the indigenous economy had recently been destroyed and replaced by a non-indigenous economy with accelerating rates of growth – was one such alternative, while even within the Maritimes new industries were emerging by the early 1880s. The decline of wooden shipbuilding represented the region's first substantial deindustrialization.

It was a deindustrialization that has often been misunderstood, even by historians who exaggerated its effects. It was gradual, with certain shipbuilding centres – notably Maitland, Nova Scotia, in the 1880s – actually intensifying their shipbuilding operations while others declined. Because some merchants shifted their investment to land-based industry, such as a cotton mill, in the same community where ships had been constructed, local unemployment did not necessarily ensue. Nevertheless, in conjunction with a retrenchment in agriculture at the turn of the twentieth century, stemming from competition not only from western Canada but also (in the era of refrigerated shipping) from Australia and New Zealand, the decline of wooden shipbuilding led to substantial migration away from rural areas and small towns and towards centres of newer industries and out of the region altogether. For some places, shipbuilding could not and would not be replaced and decline became a pressing threat. Sub-regions that experienced lasting dislocation included the coastal area of Nova Scotia from Great Village to Advocate Harbour, while on a larger scale much of Prince Edward Island had to develop a resilience founded on successive efforts to reach outside markets for diverse Island products.¹⁰ There were extensive areas of the Maritimes, however, where the new industries came to prevail. Entry into Canada – New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as founding provinces in 1867, Prince Edward Island as a slightly later entrant in 1873 – brought exposure to the influence of federal policy. The joining of all the provinces by railway construction took a significant step in 1879, when New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were linked to Quebec. Rail ferries would link Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island to the main lines. Also in 1879, the federal government's National Policy took effect, offering tariff incentives on the import of raw materials for processing by Canadian manufacturers. In the Maritimes, partial but rapid industrialization followed. In cities and towns, and even in some rural communities, cotton mills, sugar refineries, steel mills and other plants sprang up. Coal mining increased dramatically in scale on the region's four coalfields – at the time the only known source of coal in Canada. An industrial future seemed to beckon.¹¹

The deindustrialization that followed only 40 or so years later was a phenomenon the causes of which have been exhaustively debated by later historians. For some, the seeds had been sown soon after the very emergence of the new industries, as under-capitalized merchants, who were also inexperienced in manufacturing as opposed to commerce, succumbed to cyclical recessions and lost control of their factories to better-funded competitors from Quebec and Ontario.¹² For other historians, the responsibility rested more heavily on Maritime merchants and financiers themselves, as they continuously sought better returns by exporting their capital rather than reinvesting it at home.¹³ For yet others, shifting federal policies were to blame, as Maritime representatives were increasingly outnumbered in Parliament by central and western Canadians, and the safeguards built in originally to the National Policy were eroded.¹⁴ Most plausibly, a combination of such factors had emerged by the beginning of the 1920s and it quickly proved lethal when combined with international excess capacity in key industries following the First World War. During what was remembered in some parts of the industrialized world as 'the roaring twenties', the Maritime economy suffered from major plant closures and retrenchments, wholesale unemployment and a level of out-migration that reached drastic proportions during the first half of the decade.¹⁵ Desperate rearguard actions by, for example, the United Mine Workers in Cape Breton succeeded in mitigating some wage reductions but could not stem the more general tide of decline. The second major deindustrialization of the Maritimes left its scars in all of the larger cities and many of the smaller towns that had come within a short span of years to rely on heavy manufacturing.

Some of the industries, however, persisted. Coal continued to be mined, although on a reduced scale. Steel continued to be made in centres such as Sydney and Trenton, again in quantities adapted not only to the reductions of the 1920s but also to the international depression that prevailed during the following decade. Some other manufactures, including secondary steel, also survived in places. With the onset of the Second World War and the mobilization of industrial capacity throughout Canada, all of these sources of production were at least temporarily reinvigorated. As E.R. Forbes showed many years ago, however, the federal state exercised close control over war production, and its priorities did not favour any lasting revival of the Maritimes as an industrial node. Not only were shipping repairs shifted to Quebec, with dubious strategic implications, but also Ontario steel manufacturers were plied with subsidies largely denied to the Sydney steel mill.¹⁶ The

result was that Maritime industries, and notably the Sydney plant, had scant opportunity to build genuine renewal on wartime activity.

Although fears that a deep recession might follow the end of the Second World War – just as had taken place after the previous conflict – were far from implausible, there were safeguards for the time being. By the early 1950s, and for 20 or more years thereafter, the Canadian economy grew rapidly. While the Maritimes did not share fully either in the expansion or in the employment it created, and instead began again to lose large numbers of out-migrants to other areas of the country, nevertheless rising levels of demand for manufactured goods created some opportunities for those industries that persisted. Moreover, with overall economic expansion came dramatically increasing federal revenues, and with them increases in transfers to the provinces and also – with effective political representation by Maritime premiers – innovative regional development programmes. Industrial stresses remained and were dramatically illustrated in 1967 when the Sydney steel plant, with some 3,000 employees at the time, was narrowly saved from closure by being put under the control of a provincial crown corporation, while a federal crown corporation was charged with overseeing the expected extinction of coal mining in Cape Breton and mitigating it as far as possible by introducing new employers. Regional development subsidies and other sources of revenue enabled the provinces to act imaginatively with a similar goal. In Nova Scotia, it might be heavy water plants in Cape Breton, high-technology manufacturing in Pictou County, or Michelin tyre factories in selected rural areas. In New Brunswick, it was making luxury automobiles or introducing home-produced nuclear power. Prince Edward Island, in conjunction with Ottawa, developed a complex economic plan that envisaged scaling down agriculture in favour of service trades such as tourism and some light manufacturing. At the same time, secondary steel manufactures were able to hang on in some places, while rising public expenditures in areas such as health and education joined with such other factors as transportation activity in the ports and a move in each province towards systematic marketing of tourism to create at least a pale impression of postwar prosperity.¹⁷

With the slowing of the economy during the 1970s, however, and the entry of governments into deficit financing, the third major deindustrialization of the Maritimes intervened. It was not complete or comprehensive, in that some of the initiatives of earlier years survived and prospered. Michelin factories, despite controversies over the company's labour policies, persisted in, ultimately, three locations

in Nova Scotia. Industrial Marine Products (IMP), which had begun its aerospace operations in Halifax in 1970, expanded to own plants in Amherst and elsewhere. Food processing – whether of seafood in coastal areas or of agriculturally derived products such as French fries – had a strong presence in New Brunswick, and French fry production also became a major employer in Prince Edward Island. New Brunswick, its Official Languages Act passed in 1969, reaped the benefit of offering a bilingual workforce in key areas of the province. Manufacturing industry, therefore, supplemented other sectors such as service and retail industries, and resource and energy production, to maintain areas of economic strength. Nevertheless, the post-1970 era also saw substantial deindustrialization. Many of the new ventures that had begun with high hopes and regional development subsidies, including some that had been seen as mega-projects, proved short-lived. The Bricklin automobile ceased production in New Brunswick amid cost over-runs. The production of Clairtone televisions in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, lasted only a short time, while the two heavy water plants in Cape Breton were scarcely more successful, even though the one in Glace Bay soldiered on until 1985.¹⁸ And so it went. Older industries suffered too. Still in Cape Breton, the Sydney steel plant limped along with increasingly controversial provincial subsidies before it was sold to a private-sector company in 2001 for dismantling, and immediately ceased operations. The last major coal mine closed in the same year, replicating the experience on the other coalfields in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The old heavy industries had now effectively disappeared from the region, as had a significant proportion of the new manufactures that had been intended to replace them.

Industry and historical memory

The deindustrializations of the Maritimes, therefore, were complex in their causes and staggered in their chronology. Their cultural assimilation, and embodiment in public memory, also had significant complexities. The initiatives of the post-war decades, except insofar as they survived, had minimal impact on public memory. They were ephemeral, and perceived to be outside the boundaries of rational economic planning. The major exception, the Bricklin automobile project in New Brunswick, has generated a considerable literature as an example of the quixotic temperament not only of Malcolm Bricklin but also of the premier of the day, Richard Hatfield.¹⁹ Thus, the Bricklin

has come to stand as a symbol of impractically romantic values and of their supposed place in the political culture of the era – notwithstanding that Hatfield's position in favour of bilingualism made him one of the principal architects of modern New Brunswick in a thoroughly practical sense – and certainly not as an appropriate foundation for urban renewal of any kind.

The older heavy industries, notably coal and steel, have generated historical memories that are more robust in at least two major respects. The role of trade unions – and especially of District 26 of the United Mine Workers of America and its most influential leader of the early decades of the twentieth century, James Bryson McLachlan – has persisted in memory in many places. Treatments of McLachlan's life have ranged from a major scholarly biography²⁰ to a popular ballad,²¹ and a prominent face of his monument in Glace Bay expounds in McLachlan's own words his commitment to 'telling children the truth about the history of the world' – the history, that is, of working people as opposed to that 'of Kings, or Lords or Cabinets'.²² Also commemorated by a monument, in nearby New Waterford, is William Davis, a striking miner who was shot and killed by company police in 1925. Labour memorials, more generally, populate the map of all the provinces.²³ Not all commemorate workers in urban settings, or in manufacturing or mining industries, but collectively they represent a powerful element of public memory focused in part on the legacy of the heavy industries that dated from the second half of the nineteenth century. The second persistent form of popular memory of such industries is environmental. Again, Cape Breton provides a prime example, though not the only one. Waste products of the coke ovens that produced fuel for the Sydney steel mill formed a toxic lake in the heart of the city known as the tar ponds. 'Welcome to the Gates of Hell,' proclaimed a hand-lettered but durable sign that long highlighted the environmental dangers associated with the site.²⁴ That by 2013, after procrastination and many false starts, the site had been reclaimed and turned over to 'green' industries is one indication of the power of environmental challenges to provide an incentive for regeneration. Elsewhere, more cultural factors have come into play, leading to the creation of miners' museums in Glace Bay and Springhill and a more general provincial Museum of Industry in Stellarton – all important employers and generators of tourism and all evincing the trade union heritage along with the culture and the material culture of an important, though troubled, industrial past.

However, undoubtedly the most visible public memory of an industrial past, and the legacy most often evoked for purposes of urban

regeneration, has been that of shipping and shipbuilding. Frequently attributed a past significance that sits uneasily with more recent historical analyses, the age of sail – with its associated material culture in the form of vessels, lighthouses and waterfront facilities – has been repeatedly drawn upon for tourist and other regenerative purposes. Indeed, waterfronts in general have emerged as a recurrent theme of urban regeneration in the region, whether in larger urban centres such as Halifax, Saint John and Sydney, or medium to smaller ones such as Charlottetown or Pictou. The public memory involved has been deep-seated and long-established. As early as during the 1920s there emerged the mythology of the Golden Age of the Maritimes. This was perhaps compensating for the deep economic problems of the era – especially in mining and heavy manufacturing – and setting up a nostalgic source of pride in the past existence of a more vigorous economy based on shipbuilding expertise and trading activities that spanned the navigable oceans of the world. The myth could have a darker side in the hands of those who contended that Maritime entrepreneurship had ultimately proved lacking and that, accordingly, the region had been the poor relation of more productive areas of Canada ever since the supposedly abrupt collapse soon after Confederation. But the imagery of industrious shipbuilders, bold merchants and intrepid navigators was compelling enough and eminently saleable for tourist purposes, especially if for some the baleful constraints of Confederation itself could be blamed for the undermining of it all.²⁵

Industrial heritage and urban regeneration

Public memory of the industrial past of the Maritimes, therefore, is just as complex as the history of the deindustrializations that have punctuated that past. But what do these complexities mean for the realities of urban regeneration? Urban regeneration in a heritage- and culture-driven context is complicated by the reality that all initiatives (notably those that are closely connected with tourism, such as waterfronts) offer in some sense a physical representation of a particular version of historical memory. Regeneration efforts in the Maritime provinces have been numerous and disparate, rural as well as urban. Prominent among the rural examples is the conversion of the large Marysville cotton mill, a National Historic Site in a village setting some 5 kilometres from the central district of Fredericton, into a provincial office building, still adjoined by the Italianate buildings

that formed the managers' and workers' housing.²⁶ Urban projects are characterized most frequently by museums and monuments, by avowedly environmental renewals, and by waterfronts. Clearly, in the difficult economic context of the region that reaches far back into the past, and has been especially evident since the 1970s, urban regeneration of any effective kind – the reinvigoration of urban areas as contributors to social, cultural and economic vitality – offers valuable opportunities, and individual initiatives should not be lightly disparaged. Yet the absence of a consistent urban policy framework, and the piecemeal nature of the efforts launched, tends to raise both specific and general questions. Some have to do with waterfronts themselves: their strengths and limitations, and whether they tend to produce healthy linkages with nearby retail and residential areas, or whether they carry a danger of encapsulating economic development in a restricted setting. More generally, how far can heritage-related developments readily incorporate residential elements, so that they become places where people live at the same time as capturing community-driven historical memory, and how far does a concentration on tourist marketing discourage such mixed uses? Similarly, how can museums and monuments be integrated most effectively into the cultural fabric of a regenerated area? Is the Marysville model of an integrated historic district one that larger centres might emulate more closely? And how is it best to integrate environmental health as an essential value of any urban regeneration – not just one such as the tar ponds development that is explicitly environmental in its goals?

These are questions that have varying answers depending on the place or initiative to which they are applied, but it is questions such as these that collectively bring to the forefront the importance of evaluation regeneration activities. Regeneration itself is a complex and slippery concept. Libby Porter and Kate Shaw usefully define regeneration as constituting 'reinvestment in a place after a period of disinvestment'.²⁷ For Sara Dodds, urban regeneration represents a complex of strategies brought to bear when social, economic and infrastructure decay in given areas have become so pronounced that market forces alone cannot reverse the tide.²⁸ Regeneration, then, characteristically involves targeted investment that aims to combat decline. While private involvement in regeneration projects is common, and may even be a leading factor depending on the project, public expenditure is a necessary component of regeneration that fulfills the criterion of inability to rely on market forces. Yet how regeneration should be undertaken is an even more difficult question, as it is necessary to

grapple with the social, economic, environmental, physical and cultural elements of regeneration, and question how they relate to each other and how they can be properly balanced. Not considered in this essay are regeneration efforts focusing wholly or largely on ameliorating physical infrastructure (roads, industrial parks and the like), which has been a central concern of regional development programmes since their initiation during the 1960s.²⁹ The focus is, rather, on heritage-related redevelopment of post-industrial areas, in which cultural considerations are crucial and, more specifically, the historical memory of a given place must be built upon successfully. This is particularly true of areas such as waterfront developments, where the attraction of tourism is often a central goal. As noted above, waterfront regeneration areas in the Maritime provinces, such as those of Halifax and Lunenburg, are tied closely to the area's shipbuilding past, which is deeply engrained in the historical memory of the province of Nova Scotia.

Indeed, in many cases the best practice for urban regeneration – whether based explicitly on heritage and culture, or defined more generally – is for an initiative to be 'place-based' and to avoid a cookie cutter-style regeneration typical of the 1980s and 1990s. David Harvey warns of the dangers of 'serial reproduction' of past successful regeneration efforts, including waterfront developments themselves, as well as trade and convention centres, and even large-scale shopping malls.³⁰ A place-based approach to regeneration aims to make a more comprehensive appraisal of the needs of a place; it moves beyond simply considering the need for physical infrastructure to consider as well the social and cultural infrastructure required by the community.³¹ This comprehensive appraisal of place is necessary when considering how to approach regeneration, for a reason that reaches back into the complexity of the process. Regeneration often deals with the most convoluted of problems – 'wicked problems'³² – for which the only solutions are ones that will bridge traditional sectoral and departmental boundaries in order to provide creative solutions. The consideration of culture and heritage is integral to the successful implementation of place-based regeneration. Historical memory, and the interpretation through it of local heritage and culture, forms an important part of regeneration, not just for tourist purposes, but to help determine the bond or link that the community is able to form with the regenerated area. Atlantic Canada, like many parts of Northern England, Wales and Scotland, is an area rich with post-industrial history, deeply entrenched in both the culture and the identity of the area. Fred Taggart commented on the meaning of industrial buildings to community members: 'people

who worked in them see them as part of their lives, are proud of what was achieved there and appreciate the buildings as icons for their local community'.³³ Heritage has both cultural and economic value,³⁴ and both are significant when considering the role of heritage in regeneration. Using the cultural aspects of heritage in regeneration can give a local identity to communities, which, either due to the processes of deindustrialization, or of globalization, have begun to lose a sense of place.³⁵

At the same time, however, the relationship between heritage and regeneration has ample capacity to become a troubled one. Heritage, argued Brian Graham, is 'that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes'.³⁶ As Lachlan B. Barber has recently illustrated in a Halifax context, heritage is an inherently contested concept.³⁷ When applied to urban regeneration, one person's venerated heritage can be another's memory of oppression, and considerations of gender, ethnicity and social class are never far from the discussion. More generally, the process of incorporating heritage into regeneration is susceptible to the criticism of being a process of 'sanitization' of historical memory,³⁸ implying both selection of a heritage that will identify a place, and commodification of that heritage for the public and a possible tourist market. Heritage can create a link to the past and an identity for a community, and in areas of Atlantic Canada it provides small deindustrialized communities with the potential to attract tourism. But heritage and regeneration also run the risk of commodifying the past for future gain,³⁹ leading not only to distortion of historical memory but also to the risk of alienation from, rather than integration with, community values, and also to a loss even of the economic benefits that potentially flow from the accurate reflection of identity through space and the urban 'animation' that can result.⁴⁰

The roles of evaluation and evaluation guidance

The complexity of the task of regeneration, owing to the severity of the problems that it tackles and the hazards arising from the necessary association with culture and heritage values, is a key reason why effectively evaluating regeneration is essential. The incorporation of heritage in regeneration has both cultural and economic repercussions, and thus can have effects on both the social and economic levels of regeneration. Information gleaned from the evaluation of past regeneration initiatives can aid in understanding the cultural,

economic, environmental and physical impact of interventions through the processes of policy learning. Evaluation should not be solely a way of measuring the efficiency with which a policy or programme works, although that is one of its roles. More broadly, it can also be a generator of policy learning, understood as a 'change in thinking ... a structured, conscious change in thinking about a specific policy issue'.⁴¹ Ian Sanderson reflects that this action of policy learning also promotes 'reflexive social learning', and that this action of policy and social learning 'informed by policy and programme evaluation constitutes an increasingly important basis for "interactive governance"'.⁴²

The process of policy learning, particularly in a field such as urban regeneration that has a complex historical and cultural context, can facilitate not only policy learning to inform future regeneration endeavours, but also social learning in two related senses: continued community-driven development and evolution of historical memory based on an iterative social learning process as historical memory grows and develops; and a form of interactive governance that can result from ongoing dialogue between regeneration planning and the heritage sensibilities of the surrounding community. As Willeen Keough has pointed out with respect to Irish heritage initiatives in the development of cultural tourism in Newfoundland, 'residents have been active in shaping and reshaping the cultural landscape in which they live', reflecting 'a contemporary and adaptive response that is unquestionably an economic survival strategy, yet is also, more significantly, an attempt to maintain cultural community and continuity in the face of significant social and economic upheaval'.⁴³ Evaluation has the ability to provide a forum through which community and regenerative development can inform one another. As noted by Penny Gerstein and Leonora Angeles, 'reflexive social learning within the context of participatory monitoring and evaluation, integrated impact assessments, or participatory budgeting ... can constitute an important basis for participatory governance'.⁴⁴ Within a social learning environment, as facilitated by evaluation in the context of complex urban regeneration, reflection on the interpretation of historical memory can take place. This in turn can promote more 'interactive governance' in the field of complex cultural and historical urban regeneration interventions, encouraging communities to voice their own understanding and view of collective historical memory, allowing a community-driven understanding of historical memory to grow and develop, and thus shaping the process of regeneration.

Yet the evaluation of regeneration programmes and policies is certainly as complex as the formation and implementation of regeneration efforts themselves. Evaluation of urban development initiatives in Atlantic Canada has an extended history, notably as implemented by the federal agency ACOA, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.⁴⁵ As Donald Savoie has recently argued, however, programme evaluation in Canada has all too often been ineffective, as well as suffering from the narrow application of quantitative, and so easily measurable, criteria at the expense of qualitative assessment – resulting, in Savoie’s analogy, in ‘turning cranks that are not attached to anything’.⁴⁶ These shortcomings have especial significance for heritage-related regeneration, in two important respects. First, and most obviously, conventional evaluations as analysed by Savoie are clearly inadequate to encompass the complexities of the place-based approach as defined by Neil Bradford.⁴⁷ Secondly, because qualitative considerations and sensitivity to place are inherent in heritage-related urban regeneration, this field has the potential to become a leading area for innovative approaches to evaluation, and one in which evaluation guidance is necessarily qualitative as much as quantitative. Simply put, if regeneration programmes and policies embrace a place-based ethos, then it follows that a place-based approach should be adopted for the evaluation of these programmes. If the role of evaluation is to gain insight into the consequences of regeneration, either positive or negative,⁴⁸ in order to promote policy learning and feedback, then a comprehensive evaluation must consider not only the physical and economic results of regeneration but the social, cultural and environmental impacts as well. Place-based evaluation, like place-based regeneration itself, can and must tap into local knowledge and consider local experience. Accordingly, a deepening relationship of regeneration to historical and cultural understandings is not only possible through reflexive social learning but is also a necessary and integral element of evaluation in this area.

Implied in this principle is a wider view of evaluation that far from being a pro forma expression of fiscal accountability, rather it is an essential component in the process by which complex goals can be met through state investment. Savoie indicates the political nature of evaluation in the Canadian context, commenting that public servants remain wary of programme evaluation as ‘a kind of “gotcha” tool’,⁴⁹ which inevitably means that evaluations will have difficulty in highlighting the pitfalls and weaknesses of departmental programmes. It is here that guidance is crucial. While honouring the importance of context and place in the evaluation of regeneration areas, government guidance

on the evaluation of regeneration can form an effective framework to help ensure the successful evaluation of regeneration activities. Moreover, having guidance in place can tend to enhance the degree to which evaluation is integral to any given project from the outset, and is not merely an afterthought; without proper benchmark measures, accurate evaluation can be problematic, making the integration of evaluation into the project from the outset of paramount importance. Although some countries, such as the United Kingdom, offer structured guidance on the evaluation of regeneration, Canada does not. This is owed in part to the nature of Canadian federalism, with municipalities and urban affairs being the creature of the provinces. The government of Canada implemented its first government-wide evaluation policy in 1977,⁵⁰ with revisions in 1991, 2001 and 2009. This evaluation policy certainly indicates the commitment of the federal government to the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and while it is a vital exercise at the federal level, provincial jurisdiction on urban affairs means that federal evaluation policy does not always have to be applied.

Certainly, government guidance on evaluation elsewhere, such as the United Kingdom's government guidance on regeneration evaluation, *Assessing the Impacts of Spatial Interventions: Regeneration, Renewal and Regional Development: 'The 3Rs Guidance'*, released by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the United Kingdom in 2004, is not without its detractors. The tenor of the critiques reflects in part the concerns expressed by Savoie for Canada. Suet Ying Ho, for example, stated in examining British approaches to evaluating urban regeneration that 'the current ... government approach to evaluation is based on the ideology of value for money and hence skews towards the "stocktaking" of programme outputs'.⁵¹ Prior to the implementation of specific government guidance on how these regeneration programmes should be evaluated, concerns were raised as to the ability to evaluate properly the effects of these policies. H. Lim stated that regeneration was 'too general in content and conclusions, a situation clouded by the fact that there were no clear guidelines as to how the effects of these developments should be evaluated'.⁵² But due to a largely indicator-based (quantitative) approach to evaluation that was used by the UK government in its '3Rs' guidance, the guidance is said to have the tendency 'to ignore indicators that required a more subjective or qualitative assessment, given that these tended to be more difficult to measure'.⁵³

For all that, to observe that government guidance on evaluation in the United Kingdom has not escaped the shortcomings to which

programme evaluation is frequently susceptible is not to establish that these restrictions can never be transcended. Rather, it is cause to anticipate that a field such as heritage-related urban regeneration is ideally suited to model a more comprehensive approach to guidance, and to expect that an evaluation will remain culturally sensitive and place-based while taking guidance from a formal framework. The success of evaluation of regeneration is strongly dependent on the collection of baseline data and the ability to comment on change. This change can be considered only if current observations can be compared to those collected prior to the beginning of a regeneration programme. Indeed, one of the problems associated with regeneration evaluation is the inability of predicting the counterfactual⁵⁴ – there is no way to know what would have happened in an area if no regeneration programme or policy had been implemented. There is no question that the place-based element of evaluation should never be compromised. Indeed, linking an evaluation to the history and culture of a place allows a deeper understanding of the effect of a regeneration project on a community scale. A formal policy document, therefore, should not aim to generalize the evaluation of regeneration. Rather, evaluation guidance aimed specifically at the evaluation of regeneration could help clarify the expectations of regeneration evaluations and the roles of the various departments and governmental levels that are often involved in work in Canadian cities. Moreover, evaluation focused in this way can enable processes of policy learning and social learning to promote more interactive forms of governance. These processes can inform future culturally and historically based urban regeneration projects and also allow for community reflection regarding the interpretation of historical memory by any particular urban regeneration intervention. Canada has acknowledged its cities as playing a key role in the productivity and competitiveness of Canada as a whole. Consequently, a ‘joined-up’ and comprehensive evaluation platform for urban areas is becoming more and more important. Although they remain creatures of the province, cities play an integral role in Canada as a whole. Regeneration strategies require both the context of place-based evaluation and the structure of government guidance in order to foster successfully an understanding of how and why regeneration programmes do or do not work in Canadian cities. This is certainly no longer a concern that is limited to municipalities, or even to provincial governments, and yet the constitutional division of responsibilities complicates any attempt to bring urban issues under the aegis of federal evaluation policy.

Evaluation guidance and the Maritimes

In a Maritime context, evaluation of urban regeneration – and, more specifically, of heritage-related regeneration projects – has no established framework and depends at best on piecemeal criteria. Individual planning policies of urban centres, of course, form one part of the complex of possible guiding influences. However, by their nature they are embedded in the localized priorities of the urban community concerned. As important as this local focus undoubtedly is, it also brings two significant problems. One is that local guidance is uniquely susceptible to contested views of both regeneration and heritage, as the example of conflicts over urban development in Halifax, and Nova Scotia has illustrated in recent years.⁵⁵ A second is that, by definition, local guidelines do not address provincial or regional dimensions. Provincial investment in regeneration projects creates at least a *prima facie* entitlement on the part of the provinces to provide guidance. Even though state guidance characteristically has a fiscal emphasis – ensuring that disbursements bring ‘value for money’ – this can be one essential facet of an effective guidance regime.⁵⁶ The regional dimension is also crucial in gauging the relationship of heritage and regeneration, since the complexities of Maritime industrial history and heritage can be fully understood only through a regional perspective. Some guidance elements are already in place among provincial priorities. In Nova Scotia, for example, the Municipal Government Act includes a series of ‘statements of provincial interest’, of which the statement on housing imposes an obligation on municipalities to plan for the provision of multiple forms of housing, including affordable, special-needs and rental accommodations.⁵⁷ Federal involvement in evaluation, as noted above, is longstanding in the context of regional development agencies such as ACOA, and is also found in the application of other requirements such as the stipulations of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.⁵⁸ Furthermore, General Development Agreements (GDAs) with the provinces, entered into by the earlier federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion during the 1970s, also had explicit urban dimensions that were evaluated, with a strong focus on infrastructure.⁵⁹ Yet these elements of evaluation do not amount to a purposeful consideration of urban regeneration in all of its economic, social, historical and cultural complexities. They do not so much contribute to a focused guidance regime as highlight its absence.

Thus, a central question subsists: given the complexity of Maritime industrial history and heritage, and the current absence of effective regional guidance for heritage-related urban regeneration projects, where should the responsibility for evaluation of urban regeneration policy lie? Closely related is the question of what the optimum role of a policy framework should be. It is not difficult to make a case in principle for systematic fiscal oversight, but the success of urban regeneration is characteristically measured not just in fiscal terms but according to the less tangible qualitative criteria sometimes referred to as the 'softer side' of regeneration.⁶⁰ This can be stated even more emphatically for heritage-related regeneration, which carries an additional cultural freight beyond more general social and cultural considerations. Heritage, as Graham points out, is 'an elusive, ambiguous, and hybrid knowledge'.⁶¹ Evaluation of its representation in regeneration projects presents obvious complexities, not least the possible accusation of imposing a state-sponsored view of the past, and yet the necessity of the relationship of heritage to post-industrial regeneration in the Maritimes is made increasingly evident by the sophisticated recent study of historical memory.⁶² Also clear, as emphasized in a 2003 report prepared for the Greater Halifax Partnership, is the need for a regional approach to Maritime – or, indeed, Atlantic Canadian – urban policies, to reflect the distinctive characteristics of cities that, while sharing the need for regeneration initiatives, differ in scope and scale (and history) from their counterparts farther west.⁶³

Should, therefore, the thickets of municipal-provincial-federal relations be braved with a view to developing a comprehensive policy framework that accommodates Maritime needs and encompasses qualitative as well as quantitative elements of evaluation guidance? The diffuse nature of Canadian governance makes for a challenging landscape in which to implement any such over-arching structure. ACOA requirements notwithstanding, intergovernmental relationships consist primarily of federal-provincial relations, without interaction between individual municipalities and the federal government.⁶⁴ Even at the provincial-municipal level, relations remain complex. There has been significant offloading of responsibilities from provincial to municipal jurisdictions, and while provinces maintain the control of policymaking and decisions as to what services municipalities must undertake, cities have been left to foot the bill themselves. This has created a worrying dynamic of separation between policy formation (provincial) and policy delivery (municipal), which certainly extends to evaluation.⁶⁵ Furthermore, purely provincial frameworks run the risk of

ignoring the regional character of history and heritage. In this context, the development of best-practice guidelines through the Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP), even if voluntary in character, unless and until specifically adopted by provinces or municipalities, may represent one possible road forward – but the creation by the CAP of an Urban Agency would offer even greater potential for addressing urban issues in regeneration and other key areas. Within such a framework, coordinated approaches to the broad range of implications of urban regeneration, and to their connections with cultural and heritage considerations, would become feasible as never before.

Conclusion

The inclusion of heritage and culture in implementing urban regeneration, like the evaluation of regeneration programmes and policies, is as essential as it is problematic. Considering heritage means considering in a cultural sense the lived experience of place. In evaluating a regeneration area, it is this lived experience of the people in the community that provides context to the quantitative evaluation provided by measurement indicators. Both of these processes are determined by a particular perspective of a place and a perspective on what that place should be. This study has contended that both the regeneration process and the evaluation of regeneration should be place-based, and so be considerate towards the particular social and cultural needs of a community, as well as those that are economic and environmental. In a Maritime context, however, complexity prevails in important respects. The multiple deindustrializations that have characterized industrial history have given rise to mixed and often contested manifestations of historical memory. Notwithstanding a focus on ‘place,’ both the heritage of a place and the evaluation of heritage-related regeneration activities are complicated by this factor. For this reason, an effective guidance framework for evaluation can provide a needed structure within which regeneration can be assessed, and so provide a policy environment that can lend itself to policy learning. It is through these mechanisms of policy learning and feedback that communities, urban planners and policymakers have the opportunity to reach a better understanding of the relationship between historical memory and urban regeneration interventions. But in a Canadian context in general, and a Maritime context more specifically, calling for over-arching government guidance on regeneration evaluation is problematic and raises difficult questions.

A regional approach, informed by best practices in evaluation and by a historical understanding of the nature of industrial heritage in the Maritimes, offers the possibility of an integrated framework that will allow for the promotion of policy learning and for the associated development of a process of community social learning. A healthy and dynamic relationship between heritage-related urban regeneration and collective historical memory is a necessity if initiatives are to succeed at the necessary cultural, social and economic levels, and evaluation provides an essential tool to sustain the learning process that underpins this relationship.

Notes

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