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Review of *The Trajectories of Rural Life: New Perspectives on Rural Canada* Edited by Raymond Blake and Andrew Nurse

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The Trajectories of Rural Life: New Perspectives on Rural Canada. Edited by Raymond Blake and Andrew Nurse. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2003. xi + 167 pp. Tables, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

The Trajectories of Rural Life presents papers from a Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy conference designed to go “beyond the myths of rural Canada’s past to develop a clear picture of the present reality from all perspectives. . . .” This could be a complicated project. The chapters range from research reports to policy essays, with notable diversity in terms of discipline and approach. Despite some lack of clarity in overall concept, many of the contributions shine through. In addition to chapters on the cultural reconstruction of rural life in Québec, minority experiences in rural Atlantic Canada, family violence in rural New Brunswick, the underrepresentation of women in rural politics, and the need to include urban as well as rural populations in any adequate model of Aboriginal self-government, more than half the papers have a distinctly Canadian Prairies focus.

As a preliminary step in a study of health services in rural Manitoba, Ramsey, Annis, and Everitt use focus groups to explore local concepts of “community” and “rural.” In “Changing Roles of Saskatchewan Farm Women,” Kubik and Moore document the stresses associated with overwork, economic duress, and underrecognition. Their research reveals multiple barriers to accessing needed services, leading them to advocate the establishment of regional centers that integrate educational, health, and counseling services in ways that promote access and privacy.

In “Bush Parties and Booze Cruises,” Wardhaugh examines youth culture in rural Saskatchewan. Acknowledging the central role of vehicles controlled by boys, he reinterprets outdoor partying as a form of collective activity and inter-community networking. In “From Rural Municipality to School District to Com-

munity,” Corman confirms the centrality of schools. For those who stayed, schools created lifelong ties reinforcing kinship and neighborhood connections. Locally embedded networks were enlarged by travel to jobs, shops, and bigger schools, but locally constituted community has been more threatened by concentration of land ownership, by renting and non-resident ownership, and by the paucity of children in these locales.

In “Social Cohesion and the Rural Community,” Diaz, Widdis, and Gauthier explore the concept and its complexities in the context of restructuring and depopulation, suggesting that regional approaches to service delivery and development rely on new forms of collaboration but may also intensify competition among communities. Papers by Gibbins and Rushton argue that western cities, not rural areas, are the natural locus of population growth, immigration, and economic development. Rushton, in particular, musters narrow efficiency and equity arguments against policies designed to stabilize rural economies. The last word goes to Jean, a proponent of rural revitalization who looks to Europe and Japan for examples. He underscores the multifunctional character of rural areas, the interdependence of urban and rural regions, and the role of states in rural development. **Michael Gertler**, *Department of Sociology, University of Saskatchewan*.