**JRCD Special Issue**

**Communities and New Development Paths in the Sparsely Populated North**

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**Exploring New Development Pathways in a Remote Mining Town: The Case of Tumbler Ridge, BC Canada**

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**Abstract**

In resource-dependent boom and bust economies, accelerating change has been one of the defining attributes of rural community and economic development research. These patterns of change become more complex as rural stakeholders pursue new development pathways in efforts to diversify and strengthen the resiliency of their communities and economies. But what happens when nascent economic development initiatives are interceded by a renewed resource development? Using the concepts of regional waves and institutionalism, this research examines how civil, civic, and economic sector actors intersect to chart new development pathways in the remote mining town of Tumbler Ridge, BC Canada. We start with a review of Staples theory and the challenges for local and regional economies associated with dependency and truncated development. This is followed by the introduction of regional economic waves that are set against a context where communities, as a result of the neoliberal policy transition, are increasingly on their own to react to the pressures of change. With successive fluctuations in the coal mining sector, stakeholders in Tumbler Ridge have pursued new opportunities in a variety of sectors. We examine how these new economic development initiatives were either abandoned or strengthened by civil, civic, and economic stakeholders in the context of renewed mining activity.

**Keywords:** institutionalism, resource towns, boom-bust, place-based development

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