Building Governance from Initiatives of Inter-Municipal Collaboration and Regionalization?

Experiences in Peripheral Regions of Newfoundland, Canada

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Objectives

- To illustrate a Canadian perspective of governance, regionalization, and collaboration

- To enhance the understanding of emergent governance themes from Newfoundland

Identifying the Canadian Periphery

- Multiple dichotomies to describe the Canadian periphery

- Periphery is (low) population DENSITY and / or (long) DISTANCE to density

- Characteristics include:
  - Small, aging, and declining populations (>10,000)
  - Out migration of youth
  - Large distances to urban areas
  - Natural resource based economies

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Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZ) in Rural and Small Town Canada, 2006
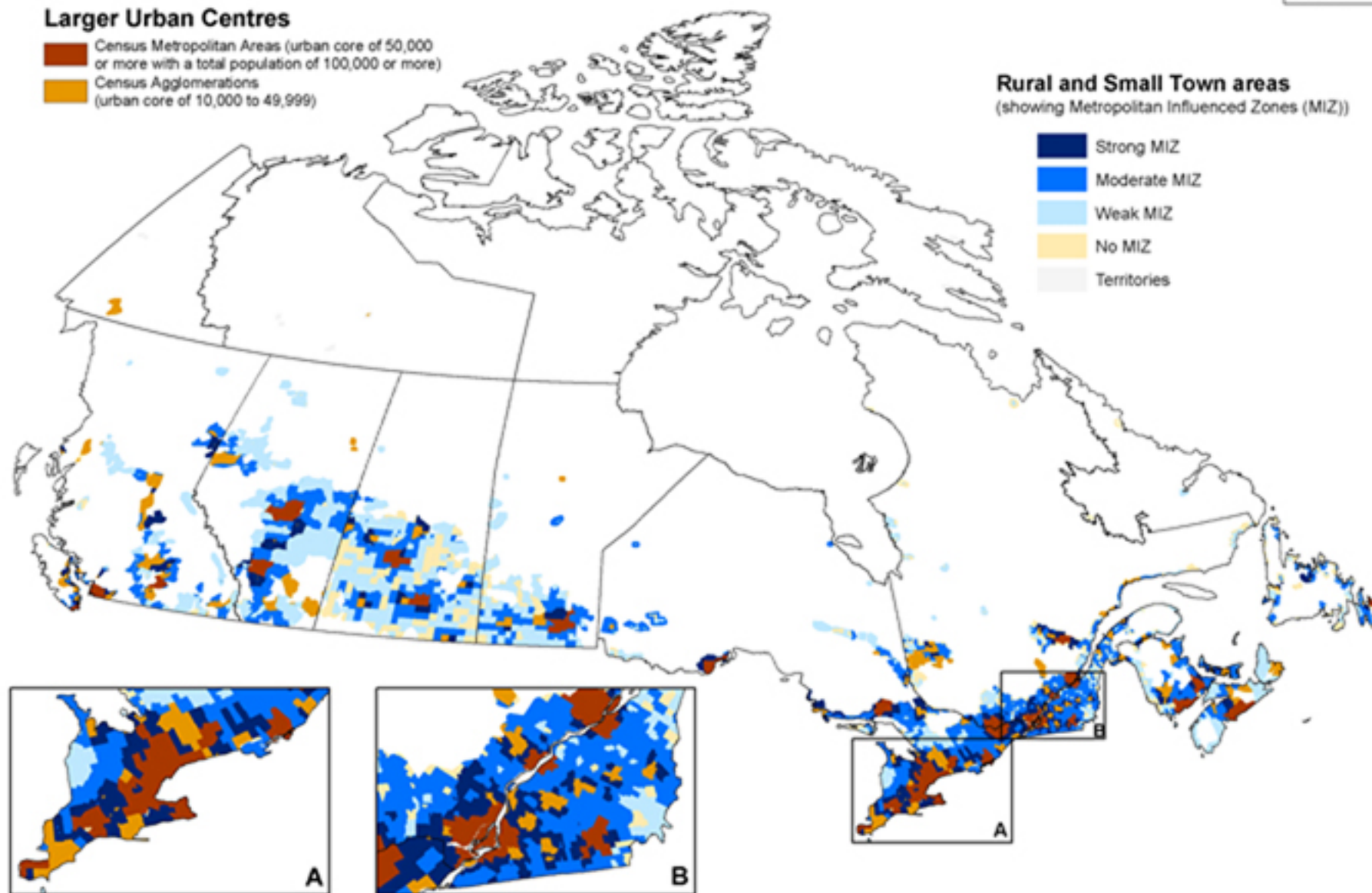## using the Statistical Area Classification

Larger Urban Centres

- Census Metropolitan Areas (urban core of 50,000 or more with a total population of 100,000 or more)
- Census Agglomerations (urban core of 10,000 to 49,999)

Rural and Small Town areas
(showing Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZ))

- Strong MIZ
- Moderate MIZ
- Weak MIZ
- No MIZ
- Territories

A

B

Canadian Context

- Local government is the responsibility of provincial governments

- Acknowledgment that decision making needs to move closer to the people involved

- Continual 'downloading' of responsibilities from provincial governments to municipalities

- Experiments of governance, regionalization and inter-municipal collaboration have existed throughout the country

Newfoundland Context

- Rich history, culture, tradition, social capital but …
  - Cod collapse – early 1990s
  - Low levels of education, entrepreneurship
  - Uneven effects of oil and mining boom in NL
  - Loss of skilled workers and population

  - Increasing expectations of local government with limited resources

Local Reality

- 594 'communities' in Newfoundland and Labrador
  - 276 incorporated municipalities
  - 182 local service districts
  - 136 unincorporated areas

  85% have less than 1,000 residents

- Local government
  - Lack of human and financial capacity
  - Increasing responsibilities
  - Low democratic participation

- High reliance on natural resources
  - Policy orientation enshrines the Staples Thesis and subsidies

- Growing number of inter-municipal collaborations

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Case Study Regions

Northern Peninsula

- 51 communities, population of 13,140

Burin Peninsula

- 39 communities, regional population of 21,600

Emerging Themes for Governance and Collaboration

- Fractured landscape/demarcation

- Fiscal Influences

- The 'Region'

- Power and Legitimacy

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Fractured Landscape

- Previous experiments of governance, regionalization, and collaboration have left:

  - a maze of boundaries,

  - contested identities, and

  - barriers to future regional work

- Who speaks for regions?

Illustrations of Multiple Boundaries

- Joint Mayors Councils

- Inter-municipal service arrangements

- Rural Development Associations

- Regional Economic Development Boards

- Rural Secretariat Regional Councils

- Community Futures

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Fiscal Influences

- Financial recession had limited influence

- Fiscal Drivers for Governance and Collaboration
  - Strive for economies of scale (i.e. shared service delivery)
  - Provincial government incentives and cost pressures

- Deterrents Drivers for Governance and Collaboration
  - Increased responsibilities, no increase in financial resources
  - Government policies and programs encourage competition between municipalities, rather than collaboration

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The 'Region'

- Increased recognition of the region as being an appropriate unit in the periphery

- The *region* is a contested unit

- Regionalism versus regionalization

- Reconciling municipal interests in 'regions'

Power and Legitimacy

- Horizontal and vertical collaboration is essential in the Canadian periphery

- Hesitancy of central governments to share power or grant new governance forums legitimacy

- New and/or enhanced capacities required by municipalities and regional partners

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Conclusion

- Regionalization and inter-municipal collaboration are not necessarily governance
  - Potential to be governance, however, do not adhere to characteristics of governance.

- New governance initiatives built on old relationships

- Considerable focus on *the region* as an appropriate scale for development in Canada

- Challenges related to shifting power to communities and regions from government

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Online Resources

- New Regionalism in Canada Research Initiative
  http://cdnregdev.wordpress.com

- Rural Regional Governance Research Initiative
  http://www.ruralregionalgovernance.wordpress.com

- Rural-Urban Interactions Research Initiative
  www.municipalitiesnl.com

- Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
  www.crrf.ca

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