

# 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

# Metropolitan Influenced Zones (MIZ) in Rural and Small Town Canada, 2006

using the Statistical Area Classification



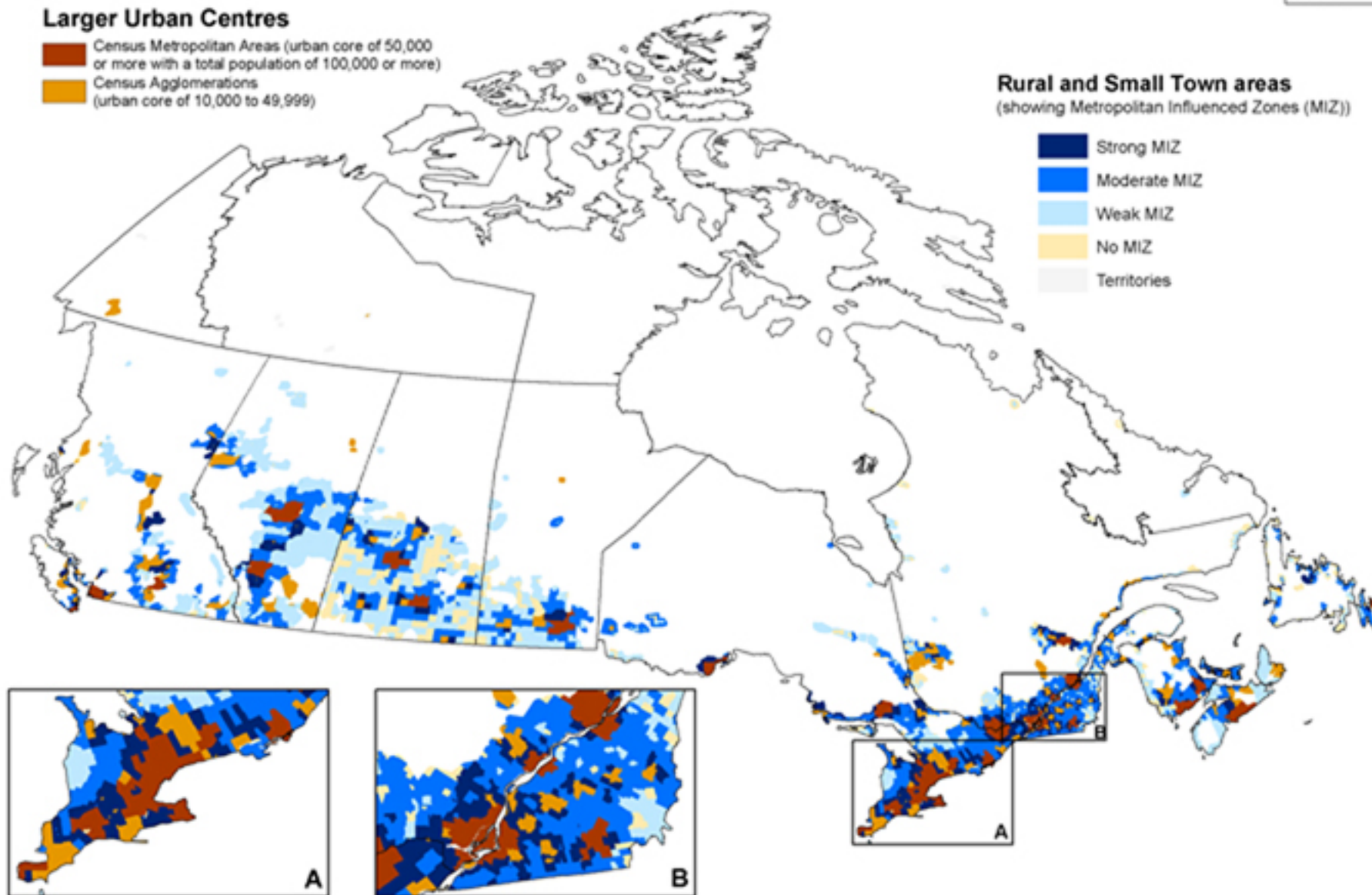
## Larger Urban Centres

- 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



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

Map produced by the Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis Section (RSGA), Agriculture Division, Statistics Canada, 2008

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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](http://www.municipalitiesnl.com)
- Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation  
[www.crrf.ca](http://www.crrf.ca)