

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE IN RURAL REGIONS:  
AN EXAMINATION OF IRELAND AND NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

by

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A Dissertation submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctorate of Philosophy**  
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Memorial University of Newfoundland

May 2014

St. John's, Newfoundland

# Abstract

Rural communities, residents, and governments at all levels are considering new forms of governance as a mechanism to assist in the revitalization and sustainability of rural regions. This search for new forms of governance is partly fueled by frustrations of residents in rural regions at the lack of central governments' abilities to respond to regional priorities, challenges, and opportunities. Recognizing this frustration, this dissertation responds to two calls for 'calls to arms' for research on rural governance.

In the early 2000s Reimer suggested governance was a revolution being missed, leading to lack of understanding of the phenomenon. He suggests additional research is required on this phenomenon in Canada. Further, in the mid 2000s Ansell and Gash encouraged researchers to test their collaborative governance model. This model was constructed from a synthesis of over 100 cases of governance and was designed to advance empirical data collection on collaborative governance. In responding to these calls, this initiative examines the collaborative governance model in two regions: the South Kerry area of Ireland and the Northern Peninsula region of Newfoundland.

This dissertation addresses four research questions through an international case study approach: (i) is the collaborative governance model, proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), appropriate for understanding rural regional governance?; (ii) how do individuals, community-based organizations, and other key stakeholders influence the rural regional governance process or processes?; (iii) how do regional boundaries influence the formation and operation of rural regional governance models?; and (iv) what is the relationship between government(s) and regional governance initiatives?

The two governance initiatives convey much of Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model components. The examination of the two cases suggests four additions to strengthen the collaborative governance model: definition of region, introduction of differentiating multi-level actors, recognition of power-resource-knowledge a/symmetries in the collaborative process component, and the addition of explicit need for power and/or responsibility sharing.

This dissertation advances academic knowledge on collaborative governance and rural regional development. The findings emerging from this dissertation hold relevance to academia, policy, and local/regional development practice.

# Acknowledgements

The future of rural regions is a topic that receives inadequate attention. This journey has been driven by a desire to contribute a piece of the puzzle to rectify this situation. Over the years I have been truly fortunate to have had opportunities to be a student, a researcher, and an admirer of leading community development practitioners, scholars, and policy-makers as they advance our understanding of rural regions. This dissertation has been influenced by each of these individuals, communities, organizations, and events.

Over the past five years I have benefited from the support, guidance, and encouragement of a number of individuals and organizations. This study would not have been possible without the dedication and determination of the partners constituting the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative and the South Kerry Development Partnership. Their commitment to exploring governance relationships and partnerships to advance their region's future has been as a source of motivation throughout this study. This research would not have been possible without their input and direction.

My deepest gratitude is extended to my supervisory committee members: Kelly Vodden, David Douglas, Brendan O'Keeffe, and Keith Storey. I have benefited greatly from your guidance and knowledge. You have continued to challenge my thinking, which in turn has advanced my contributions to the fields of geography and rural development.

This research benefited from financial support received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (J.A. Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship and M. Smith Foreign Study Supplement), the Institute of Social and Economic Research, the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development (Applied Research Fund), the Ireland Canada University Fund, and the IODE Memorial Scholarship.

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## Acronyms

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRESP	Community Response for Economic and Social Progress
LEADER	Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale
LSD	Local Service District (Newfoundland and Labrador)
MHA	Member of House of Assembly
Norpen	Northern Peninsula Waste Management Service Board (Newfoundland and Labrador)
NPRCPI	Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative (Newfoundland and Labrador)

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RDA	Regional Development Association (Newfoundland and Labrador)
REDB	Regional Economic Development Board (Newfoundland and Labrador)
SKDP	South Kerry Development Partnership (Ireland)
SWKDO	South-West Kerry Development Office
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## *1.1 Overview*

Rural communities, residents, and governments at all levels are giving consideration to new forms of governance, particularly as a mechanism to assist in the revitalization and sustainability of rural regions. The search for new forms of governance is partly fueled by frustrations of residents in rural regions at the lack of central governments' abilities to respond to regional priorities, challenges, and opportunities. At the same time the move towards governance, or at least openness to experimenting, has been advocated by theories and applications of New Public Management. Focusing on efficiency and corporate techniques/methods, the New Public Management has encouraged governments to develop partnerships and a decentralized method(s) of service delivery. Regardless of why, governance in rural regions has become a key topic of interest for academics, policy makers, and development practitioners. This dissertation



focuses on the application governance in rural regions to advance practice, scholarly knowledge, and policy.

Governance has been used to describe a wide range of processes and activities, which in turn can create confusion among academics, policy makers, elected officials, and development practitioners. Confusion is so present throughout discussions of governance that Jessop, a leading scholar in the field, referred to the situation as being eclectic and disjointed. At its core, however, governance gives rise to issues of public policy, participation, and democracy. Rhodes (1996, pp. 652–653) provides a frequently quoted definition of governance - “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed”. Governance is not a synonym for government or ‘business-like’ government.

Throughout all definitions of governance four commonalities can be distilled: (i) governance is a process; (ii) collaborations among local and regional actors are essential; (iii) collective decision-making by all stakeholders is required; and (iv) it represents a new method of engagement beyond just government. At the heart of governance is the emphasis on devolution, whereby new actors of the region are empowered. The application of governance has taken place in many countries and engaged many sectors of the economy, as illustrated in Chapter 2.

### *1.1.1 State of Rural Regional Governance Studies*

Rural regional governance has gained currency within the social sciences and the emergent culture of rural governance is receiving theoretical and applied attention.

However, this attention focus is predominantly in the European context (cf. Goodwin, 1998; Jones & Little, 2000). Unfortunately, parallel research to that being conducted in Europe is not taking place at the same rate in rural Canada. This is not to imply that rural governance is not taking place in Canada. To the contrary, governance initiatives have been playing out throughout Canada through both formal and informal arrangements. Bill Reimer (2004), a leading Canadian rural researcher, suggests that ‘new governance’ is the revolution that no one noticed; the academy and the research community have not paid adequate attention to these initiatives. This research is partly designed to fill the void articulated by Reimer and others (cf. Annis, 2006; Douglas, 1998; Woods, 2005).

The study of governance within academia is not reserved for any single discipline. The origin and evolution of governance studies is diverse, engaging multiple academic disciplines and political ideologies. Chapter Two of this dissertation provides an account of this evolution from the Westminster model, to New Public Management, to the current iterations. Geography as a discipline, and geographers, are uniquely positioned to contribute to rural regional governance discussions and debates within the realms of theory, policy, and practice. Geographers bring key concepts such as place and space into

the dialogue on rural regional governance. These are concepts too often overlooked by other disciplines. Geographers also bring the concept of region into the analysis. The region, as a unit of study, has received considerable attention in the past twenty-five years. Although the concept is one of the most contested in development studies, it is described by many as the most appropriate unit of analysis for revitalization and sustainability as it is at this level that much of economic and social functions take place (Storper, 1995). It is also suggested the processes of globalization have placed the region as an important unit for economic planning and political governance (Keating, 1998; Morgan, 2007).

### *1.1.2 Collaborative Governance Model for Rural Regions?*

To understand and advance rural regional governance this research utilizes the collaborative governance model developed by Ansell and Gash (2007). The collaborative governance model emerged as a response to failures of implementation of policies and programs at the community level (Fung & Wright, 2001). Ansell and Gash (2007) define collaborative governance as an “arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage programs or assets” (p. 2). This model was developed through reviewing over a hundred cases of governance and distilling the common elements and processes.

Although collaboration is implicit in many definitions of governance, creating a redundancy in the title *collaborative* governance, Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model places emphasis on the role of collaboration at multiple points throughout the multi-phased governance process. The model also places emphasis on consensus building, an element not always witnessed in other models of governance. The collaborative governance model outlines five main components: starting conditions, institutional design, facilitated leadership, the collaborative process, and outcomes.

Rather than focusing on building new theories of governance Stoker (1998) argues the function of the governance perspective "rests in its capacity to provide a framework for understanding changing processes of governing" (p. 18). This framework, or model, facilitates an examination of local experiences, which highlights processes and actions that may otherwise not be noted. Heeding Stoker's call for the use of frameworks to describe changes in governance, this dissertation utilizes the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) in rural regions. In presenting the collaborative governance model Ansell and Gash encouraged researchers to evaluate, assess, and critically reflect on its accuracy and applicability.

Collaborative governance is by no means the only way to view governance. Over the past 10 to 15 years a number of alternative models of governance have been proposed: good governance (Leftwich, 1994; Weiss, 2000), multi-level governance (Hix,

1998; Scharpf, 1997), partnerships (Ansell, 2000; Bache, 2000), policy networks (Bogason & Toonen, 1998; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998), interactive governance (Chuenpagdee, Kooiman, & Pullin, 2008), and contemporary governance (Magnette, 2003). The key elements of each model parallel the four commonalities discussed earlier: process, partnerships, collective decision-making, and new forms of engagement.

## *1.2 Research Questions*

This research is constructed to help fill the void on rural regional governance articulated by Reimer (2004) and others (cf. Annis, 2006; Douglas, 1998; Woods, 2005). Ansell and Gash (2007) issued a ‘call to arms’ in their seminal work encouraging researchers to examine and assess their collaborative governance model. This was proposed to increase the amount of empirical data on collaborative governance for the purposes of theory building. This research was designed to enhance the understanding of collaborative governance in rural regions. The dissertation addresses four research questions, the first question emerging from Ansell and Gash’s (2007) call and the remaining three questions emerging from Reimer (2004), Annis (2006), Douglas (1998), and Woods (2005):

1. Is the collaborative governance model, proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), appropriate for understanding rural regional governance?
2. How do individuals, community-based organizations, and other key stakeholders influence the rural regional governance process or processes?
3. How do regional boundaries influence the formation and operation of rural regional governance models?
4. What is the relationship between government(s) and regional governance initiatives?

The research employed a case study approach to address the four research questions above, using multiple methods to ensure a robust understanding of two governance initiatives. Through these methods a critical assessment of Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model is conducted along with reflections on the influence of people, geography, and government relations. Further details on the methods employed can be found in Chapter Three.

### *1.3 Cases of Governance*

The dissertation conducts a comparison of two initiatives in rural regions, one in Canada and one in Ireland. Case study research strives to understand complexities

through investigations of contemporary phenomena within their real-life context. This study follows the writings of Yin (1994, 2004, 2009) and the suggested approach for developing case studies.

To address the four questions of this research two cases were identified. The identification and selection of cases adheres to Stake's (1995) belief that cases should be selected to maximize what can be learned about the central focus of study, in this case collaborative governance in rural regions. This study made no attempt to locate representational cases, whereby background conditions, actors, and processes were identical or similar. Rather, this research selected cases that would generate a critical reflection on the collaborative governance model and its application to policy and practice in two differing circumstances where at least some attempt at collaborative governance had been expressed. With this in mind, the selection of the two cases was made after consideration of five key factors:

1. based on a review of secondary information, each case appeared to have each of Ansell and Gash's six criteria of collaborative governance;
2. based on a review of secondary information, each case appeared to address each of Stoker's governance propositions;
3. based on a review of secondary information, each case has a rich history of bottom-up initiatives and exhibited capacity for collaborative governance;

4. based on discussions, representatives of each regional governance initiative expressed their willingness to work collaboratively on the research initiative; and
5. based on the feasibility of access, each region was accessible to conduct on-site research.

A further discussion of these five factors takes place in Chapter Three. A brief introductory description of the two cases is provided below.

#### Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative (Newfoundland and Labrador)

In 2009 the Speech from the Throne committed the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador to explore a new model of regional collaboration. The Northern Peninsula region on the Island of Newfoundland was selected for study because of the breadth of regional partnerships and experience with collaboration, including NorPen, St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc, and the Nordic Economic Development Corporation. Information gleaned from the new governance initiative in the Northern Peninsula region was to be utilized to inform discussions about governance in other regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.



### South Kerry Development Partnership (Ireland)

The South Kerry Development Partnership (SKDP) represents an established regional governance forum in a rural region of southwestern Ireland. This partnership has grown through the participation in the European Union LEADER program. In Ireland the concept of regional governance has become an important outcome of reconfigured rural development policy and lends itself useful for comparison to the Canadian context (Bartley & Kitchin, 2007; McDonagh, 2001).

Detailed discussions of the two regions and their respective governance initiatives are contained in Chapter Three and Chapter Four.

## *1.4 Significance of Research*

This dissertation on rural regional governance has relevance in the realms of academia, policy, and regional development practice. The research directly responds to both Ansell and Gash's (2007) call for researchers to examine the collaborative governance model and Reimer's (2004) call for more attention to rural governance. This research pushes forward academic knowledge on collaborative governance, regional development, and the role of geographic concepts in development. This initiative set out to understand if Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model is appropriate for

rural regions. The research contributes to building a collection of empirical evidence on collaborative governance required for theory building. Discussion of the implications for academia, policy, and regional development practice based on this research are outlined in Chapter Seven.

## *1.5 Organization of Dissertation*

This dissertation is organized in six sections. **Chapter Two** commences with a discussion of the evolution of rural geography as a sub-discipline. The chapter examines why rural geography and rural geographers are suited for investigating collaborative governance. This section introduces the theoretical understanding of the concept of governance. The discussion is explored by differentiating governance from government, particularly the Westminster model of government, derivatives of which operate in both Canada and Ireland. The exploration of governance continues with a discussion of the influence of the New Public Management theories, culminating in a discussion of five dominant discourses of governance. Collaborative governance, as one of the five governance discourses, is examined for its strengths and challenges for capturing regional governance in peripheral regions.

**Chapter Three** provides details on the methods utilized to examine the collaborative governance model in the Northern Peninsula region of Newfoundland and Labrador and the South Kerry area of Ireland. The discussion highlights research design, case study research history, and the associated methods. The five criteria for selecting the two cases are identified. The chapter then outlines the analytical framework employed in the research and the three methods for data collection: key informant interviews, literature reviews, and member checking/triangulation. Throughout the undertaking of the research several challenges were encountered, each of which influenced the availability and accessibility of information required for the study. Each of these challenges is outlined. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations employed in the study.

**Chapter Four** introduces the two cases of this research: the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative (NPRCPI) in Newfoundland and Labrador and the SKDP in Ireland and their respective host regions. This section includes a description of the region including history, physiographic features, demographics, economy, local government, and regional actors. This section provides an initial scan of the actors, processes, and dynamics taking place in each of the cases, which are built upon in Chapter Five.

**Chapter Five** presents the key findings from the two cases when viewed through the collaborative governance model. Following Ansell and Gash's model (2007), the findings are presented in the five categories: starting conditions, institutional design, facilitated leadership, the collaborative process, and outcomes. The narratives from key informant interviews and literature reviews are integrated into the findings. Emerging from Chapter Five is the understanding that the collaborative governance model needs to be modified to fully capture the nuances of regional governance in its entirety in Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Chapter Six** assesses the four research questions of this dissertation utilizing the key findings presented in Chapter Five. The chapter first examines Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model for rural regions based on the experiences in Ireland and Newfoundland. The assessment calls for four elements for addition to Ansell and Gash's model. The chapter also analyzes the influence of individuals in the governance processes, the influence of regional boundaries on governance processes, and the relationships between government and governance.

**Chapter Seven** serves to connect this research initiative to wider audiences. The section discusses the implications of the research findings to the fields of theory, policy making, and regional development practice. The chapter also identifies future research questions. While these questions were beyond the scope of this research, they would be natural next steps in continuing to advance collaborative governance.

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Introduction*

This chapter outlines the emergence and rise of rural geography as a sub-discipline. The discussion illustrates why rural geography is an appropriate foundation to undertake an investigation into collaborative governance. This discussion highlights the separation of rural from natural resource, underscoring an increased complexity in rural communities. The region, as a unit of study, is explored as the most appropriate unit of study.

The concept of governance is explored, with common definitions provided from a wide array of disciplines and approaches. The concept of governance is explored from the perspective of its emergence, starting with a comparison to the Westminster model of government. The influence of the New Public Management theories on governance studies is explored, concluding with a discussion of the distinctions between government

and governance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of four challenges presented in governance studies and their relationship to rural regions.

## *2.2 Rural and Regional Geography*

Rural communities have always been an area of interest in the discipline of geography. The prominence of rural communities within the discipline has fluctuated over the years. The focus on rural areas principally emerged in the 1970s as a sub-discipline of geography.

The sub-field of rural geography is diverse. The sub-field has close, and often overlapping, relationships with other academic disciplines such as agricultural economics, economics, political science, social anthropology, and sociology. The concept of rural is not unique or exclusive to the discipline of geography. Geography is a recent entrant to the realm of rural studies; disciplines such as sociology and economics have been engaged for over a hundred years. The contributions of rural geographers are uniquely positioned in multi-disciplinary discussions of rural by bringing concepts such as place, space, and region into the dialogue; concepts often overlooked by other disciplines.

This section presents an overview of the evolution and genesis of the sub-field of rural geography within the discipline of geography. Unlike the discipline, the sub-field of

rural geography does not have a long history. This section briefly describes the influences on the emergence of rural geography, principally contributions from sociology, economics, and regional geography. A discussion of rural geography's changing theoretical considerations is provided based on seminal publications within rural geography from the 1970s until the present. Based on the literature reviewed it is clear rural geography is a robust sub-field of the discipline shaped by multiple factors. This discussion provides justification for a rural geography approach to collaborative governance studies.

### *2.2.1 The Demise of Regional Geography and the Emergence of Rural Geography*

The sub-field of rural geography did not emerge in a vacuum or in isolation; the sub-field emerged between the 1950s and the 1970s on the foundation of work by earlier geographers, sociologists, regional scientists, and economists. Although a short temporal period, the sub-field builds on a rich and deep academic tradition.

Two early contributions utilized by rural geographers external to geography are Ferdinand Tönnies and Johann Heinrich von Thünen. Sociologist Tönnies' seminal work, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (1887), roughly translated to community and society, explored the social and cultural values of two dichotomous socio-economic systems:



*gemeinschaft* (predominantly rural areas) and *gesellschaft* (predominantly urban areas).

Tönnies focused on constructing a theoretical framework for describing the differences in these two regions, culminating in discussions of the rural-urban continuum and notions of place and community (Cloke, 1985; Halfacree, 1993; Lee & Newby, 1983; Murdoch & Pratt, 1993).

The work of von Thünen (1826) modeled the economic relationship between the city and areas of natural resources. This model provided a treatise on functional inter-relationships between urban ('the city') and areas of natural resources ('rural') a component omitted in Tönnies' continuum. Tönnies and Thünen are illustrative examples of academic contributions used by rural geographers from sources external to the discipline of geography. Rural geography has also used contributions from within the discipline of geography, such as the French geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache (1880s-1910s). His concept of region and the examination of the characteristics within the boundaries of the region were important contributions. Rural geographers, among other sub-fields and other disciplines, benefited from Vidal de la Blache's work on the region.

Although the history of geography places strong emphasis on regions, Woods (2005) suggests rural geography did not emerge as a sub-discipline until the 1970s. Until this time topics of relevance to today's rural geographers were consumed under the sub-fields of regional geography, agricultural geography, cultural geography, or social

geography (Lewis, 1979). Rural was never the principal focus of study in any of these sub-fields. Johnston *et al.* (2000) noted that the demise of regional geography in the 1960-1970s created a void in rural studies within geography allowing the emergence of rural geography in the 1970s. The criticism of regional boundaries being irrelevant in societies with multiple linkages between regions was a contributing factor leading to the demise of regional geography (Wrigley, 1965). Coupled with the perceived importance of social, economic, and land use changes taking place in rural areas, the sub-field of rural geography emerged (Clout, 1972). Woods (2005) describes the initial three foci of rural geography as agriculture, impact of human activity on rural spaces, and rural land use/landscape. In addressing these initial foci, rural geography utilized theory and methods from other geography sub-disciplines, such as economic geography, demography, and biogeography.

The first broad and holistic writing in rural geography was Hugh Clout's *Rural Geography: An Introductory Survey* in 1972 (Munton, 2008). Clout's writing provided a comprehensive description of the sub-discipline and definition for rural geography, "the study of recent social, economic, land use, and spatial changes that have taken place in less-densely populated areas which are commonly recognized by virtue of their visual components as countryside" (Clout, 1972, p. 1). The definition of rural geography has changed somewhat over the past 40 years; however, in most subsequent definitions parallels can be found to Clout's original definition. Johnston *et al.*'s (2000) definition is

an example: “the study of people, places, and environments in rural areas, with special reference to society, economy, politics, and culture.” Other definitions of the sub-field are defined by the activities, such as Gilg’s (1978) definition “rural geography is what rural geographers do”.

### *2.2.2 Seeking Validation: Rural Geography Throughout the 1990s*

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s rural geographers spent considerable energy and efforts in seeking validation for the sub-discipline and its associated research. The need for validation was ignited from within the sub-discipline. In 1980, Buttel and Newby critiqued the broad area of research referred to as rural studies, which included rural geography, for its lack of theoretical contributions. Further, Cloke (1989) suggested rural geographers had focused their attention on empirical investigations of case studies at the expense of theoretical underpinnings and conceptual frameworks. To facilitate theoretical contributions Buttel and Newby suggested political economy theories could be reviewed for their application to rural studies, such as theories related to class structure and agriculture as capitalist enterprises. The ‘cultural turn’ of the 1980s shed new light on rural geography, which translated into a revival for rural studies (Cloke, 1997; Woods, 2005). The cultural turn “promoted new understanding of culture as the product of discourses through which people signify their identity and experiences” (Woods, 2005, p.

24). Based on this revival, Cloke (1997) identified four areas of focus for rural geographers: (i) nature-society relations, (ii) discourses of rural experiences and imaginations, (iii) symbolic text of rural cultures, and (iv) movements in rural spaces.

The initial focus of early rural geographers was agriculture, other natural resource-based production systems (e.g. forestry), the natural resources themselves (e.g. water), and the countryside. This focus is still present among current rural geographers (cf. Beesley, Millward, Ilbery, & Harrington, 2003; McCarthy, 2007); however, new foci have been added, such as climate change, culture and society, economics, employment, governance, housing, immigration, land use planning, local government, politics, and rural-urban interactions. The decade from 1980-1990 represented a period of prolific academic writing in rural geography (cf. Gilg, 1985; Hoggart & Buller, 1987; Pacione, 1983). In 1985, the *Journal of Rural Studies* was launched to be the primary peer-reviewed journal for rural geography contributions. The *Journal of Rural Studies* has continued and emerged as a focal point for rural geography, as well as for contributions on rural studies from other disciplines such as sociology, economics, and gender studies. The production of rural geography literature has continued in the 1990s and through the 2000s (cf. Beesley, Millward, Ilbery, & Harrington, 2003; Halfacree, 1993; Halseth, 1999; Holloway & Kneafsey, 2004; Ilbery, 1998; Munton, 2008; Woods, 2005).

Throughout this period considerable attention was paid to the concept of rural, how it is defined, its explanatory ‘powers’, and its transferability as a universal unit of analysis. A key dilemma within and about rural studies has been the lack of a consistent definition for the unit of study. The search for a universal definition is compounded by the myriad of usages, as variously defined by community members, the media, policy analysts, and by academics. A number of vernaculars for rural exist, such as countryside, non-urban, and small town. As a result, the concept is highly subjective, debated, and contested by many groups in many jurisdictions.

Mormont (1990) suggests that rural, as an academic concept, emerged in the 1920s-1930s. Historical definitions of rural focused on values and morals associated with rural as defining characteristics, such as close family cohesion. Definitions of rural have varied from the generic to the specific.

“Rural becomes a world of social, moral, and cultural values in which rural dwellers participate.” (Cloke & Milbourne, 1992, p. 360)

Rural is “words and concepts understood and used by people in everyday talk.” (Halfacree, 1993, p. 29)

Population in communities with densities less than 150 people per square kilometer (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development[OECD], 1994).

Given the complexities and challenges of defining ‘rural’, Hoggart (1990) proposed to eliminate the term as it was confusing and lacked explanatory power. This notion, albeit convenient given the complexities, is not useful for community development practice, policy, or academia. Since Hoggart’s statement considerable effort has been placed on defining the term. The notion of rural as a geographical concept versus a social representation has been debated (DuPlessis, Beshiri, Bollman, & Clemenson, 2002; Halfacree, 1993; Shucksmith, 1994). Over time, Woods (2005) explains academia has migrated away from defining rural by moral characteristics and towards a descriptive and quantitative definition, or what Halfacree (1993b) suggests as a social construction of rural. Compounding the difficulty in defining rural is the concept of region, which is explored in 2.2.4.

### *2.2.3 Separating Rural from Natural Resources: The Current*

#### *Landscape of Rural Geography*

Since the late 1990s, the focus of rural geography has been both refined and broadened. Rural geography has also sought to foster multidisciplinary collaborations involving multiple stakeholders to understand the theoretical, policy, and development practice dimensions of rural communities and regions.

Throughout much of the history of rural studies, particularly in Canada, locations and distributions of natural resource industries and rural were considered synonymous. This synonymous attachment is no longer viewed as correct. Rural communities are not synonymous with sites of natural resource industries, such as agriculture, forestry, or fishing. With reference to the agricultural industry, for example Bollman (2006, p. 6) notes that, “the ‘people-scape’ of predominantly rural regions in the OECD countries is not agricultural – even though the landscape may be agricultural”. Within Canada, the de-coupling of rural and natural resource industry locations has been articulated by rural geographers (Halseth, 1999; Markey, Pierce, Vodden, & Roseland, 2005) and academics from other disciplines (cf. Annis, Bollman, Gibson, Jean, & Pack, 2008; Bollman, 2006). This de-coupling fits within the dialogue of post-productivism and the post-productivist transition.

Post-productivism and the post-productivist transition emerged in the 1990s to describe the shift in emphasis from the use and ownership of, and the policy regimes for, agricultural and rural areas for mass food production to a diversified arrangement of uses and non-uses. Through this functional transition, the use of agricultural and rural areas for non-agricultural purposes is seen as a greater importance (Halfacree, 1997; Ilbery & Bowler, 1998; Wilson, 2001). The shift towards post-productivism is characterized by intensive agriculture losing a central role in both society and the economy (Ward, 1993), shifts in public attitudes towards agriculture and its relationship to the environment

(Marsden, Murdoch, Lowe, Munton, & Flyn, 1993), and decreased financial assistance for intensive agricultural practices (Lowe, Murdoch, Marsden, Munton, & Flynn, 1993). Post-productivism has witnessed a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation programming and amenity-based development. Another key element of the shift towards post-productivism is changing dynamics in decision-making, specifically around governance at the regional level (Cloke & Goodwin, 1992; Lowe et al., 1993; Ray, 2000).

It is this element of re-crafting governance at the regional level that is investigated in the two cases examined in this dissertation. It should be noted that the transition to post-productivism is strongly influenced, and in many instances regulated, by the nation state (Ilbery & Bowler, 1998). Governments can encourage the post-productivist transition through both policies and programs, such as the General Agreement on Trades and Tariffs of the World Trade Organization and the Common Agricultural Program of the European Union.

Post-productivism is not without contestation. Critics are quick to note three challenges with post-productivism. First, the literature on post-productivism is predominantly based on experience in the United Kingdom context. Second, post-productivism assumes a simple linear nature of post-productivist transitions. Thirdly, there is a lack of evidence that post-productivism is taking place (Argent, 2002; Evans, Morris, & Winter, 2002). This dissertation does not address the post-productivism debate



except to note that the debate suggests changes on the horizon for rural and agricultural areas away from intensive natural resource industries towards more diversified and non-agricultural approaches. The dialogue, discussions, and debates surrounding post-productivism are important for governance studies given that these discussions acknowledge the changing processes, scales, and complexity for decision-making in agricultural and rural areas. It is specifically the processes and scales of governance that are examined in this dissertation.

The multidisciplinary approach to rural studies is not unique to the *Journal of Rural Studies*. The nature and dynamics of rural communities necessitate a multidisciplinary approach. As a result, collaboration between disciplines and sub-fields has been characteristic of rural research (cf. Lethbridge University, 2011; Memorial University, 2010; Rural Development Institute, 2009; Concordia University, 2009). The multidisciplinary approach allows rural geographers to work with rural researchers from other disciplines (Apedaile & Tsuboi, 2008; Douglas, 2010; Jean, 1997; T. Johnson, 2001; B Reimer, 2006).

European scholars, particularly from the United Kingdom, dominated the emergence, development, and initial contributions to the sub-field of rural geography. The hegemonic influence of British rural geographers is evident in books, journals, and conference proceedings. Although British scholars continue to generate contributions in

the field, researchers from elsewhere in the European Union, Canada, and Australia are now making strong contributions.

Having only a brief history in comparison to other disciplines and sub-disciplines in geography, rural geography has made substantial contributions to academia and policy. The past forty years have been witness to the emergence of the sub-field, as evidenced by a prolific range of publications and diversification of research interests beyond agriculture, together with contributions to policy formation and analysis.

#### *2.2.4 The Region as a Unit of Study*

The region, as a unit of study, has received considerable attention in the past twenty-five years. Regions have long been a focus of geographers, folklorists, social anthropologists, and others. Although the term is widely used throughout the media, government, and at the local level, a common understanding is often missing.

There is an abundance of studies on regions but what constitutes a region has received insufficient attention (Passi, 2001). Regions have been defined by many factors, including physical features (e.g.: rivers, mountains), economic indicators, political administrative criteria (e.g. health service regions), and shared identity. Given the multitude ways of delineating a region, Douglas (1998) contends the concept is one of the most contested categories in development studies. Although contested, the OECD (2001)

reports national governments are increasingly recognizing the need for increased local and territorial approaches to development, such as the New Rural Paradigm (OECD, 2006). The dominant response to this need is at the regional level (Douglas, 1998).

Storper (1995, p. 191) suggests the region has developed into “a fundamental basis of economic and social life”. Further, Morgan (1997) states the region may be the most appropriate unit for development. In the context of nation state rescaling the region has (re)gained prominence. The processes of globalization, coupled with the current emphasis on place-based development, have re-ignited regions and regional thinking. Scott (1998) suggests the region is being viewed as a building block in the current economic climate and the scale for economic planning and political governance (Keating, 1998).

In this research the term ‘rural regions’ is based on the OECD’s ‘predominantly rural regions’ classification. Predominantly rural regions are ones in which over 50% of the region’s population lives in a community with less than 150 inhabitants per square kilometre (DuPlessis et al., 2002; OECD, 2010). Both cases examined in this dissertation meet the definition of predominantly rural regions.

## 2.3 Governance

Governance has been used to describe a wide range of processes, structures, institutions, and activities. Given this diversity, clarity on what is meant by governance is often missing, confusion too often present. Regardless of definition, governance gives rise to issues of public policy, participation, and democracy (Bevir, 2009). The following section outlines the origin and evolution of governance studies, including discussions of influences such as neo-liberalism, new public management, and privatization. This discussion of the origin and evolution identifies why governance and governance studies matter to communities, private sector interests, and governments in today's context. Commonly utilized definitions and criteria of governance are highlighted below, drawing on multiple disciplines. The section concludes with a discussion of how collaborative governance is operationalized in rural regions in this research.

### 2.3.1 *Definitions of Governance*

Jessop (1995) describes the state of academic governance literature as eclectic and disjointed. At the center of this 'disjointed' effort is the lack of a clear definition of governance. The outcome has been ambiguity regarding the definitions and the practices

of governance by all levels of government, corporations, nonprofit organizations and the media.

As a concept of study, governance is not reserved for any one discipline. Multiple disciplines are actively engaged in governance research, each with its own lens, perspectives and definitions. Disciplines ranging from development studies to economics, geography, international relations, planning, political science, public administration, and sociology are currently undertaking governance research (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Bevir, 2009; Jessop, 1995). Unfortunately, as Bevir (2011, p. 1) notes, “each discipline sometimes acts as if it owns the word and has no need to engage with the others”. The multiple disciplinary nature of governance studies, compounded by researchers too often working in isolation from each other, has generated what Jessop (1995) refers to as ‘disjointed’ effort.

At the basic level, Bevir (2011, p. 1) states that governance refers to “theories and issues of social coordination and the nature of all patterns of rule”. In this broad understanding the theories and issues refer to a decreasing emphasis on the hierarchy of the state, dispensing legitimacy, authority, and power. Consequently, there is an increased importance on networks and the market. Parallel to Bevir, Rhodes (1996, pp. 652–653) provides a frequently quoted definition of governance as “a change in the meaning of government, referring to a new process of governing; or a changed condition of ordered

rule; or the new method by which society is governed”. Three themes emerge from Rhodes’ description of governance: the movement away from government, use of new processes, and change of ordered rule. These three themes emerge in each of the following alternative, yet complementary, definitions of governance:

- “Governance is the interactions among institutions, processes, and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how decisions are taken on issues of public and often private concern, and how citizens or other stakeholders have their say” (Abrams, Borrini-Feyerabend, Gardner, & Heylings, 2003, p. 11)
- “Governance is a social process that attempts to steer a society by influencing its orientation, capacity, and stability” (Vodden, Ommer, & Schneider, 2006)
- “The processes and institutions, both formal and informal, that guide the collective activities of a group” (Keohane & Nye, 2002, p. 12)
- “the pattern or structure that emerges in a socio-political system as a common result or outcome of the interacting intervention efforts of all involved actors. This pattern cannot be reduced to one actor or groups of actors in particular” (Kooiman, 1993, p. 4)

In all definitions of governance, regardless of the proponent, four common elements are apparent. The first is that governance is a **process**. The process may be either formal or informal. Formal processes may involve legal agreements among partners whereby informal processes may involve a commitment by stakeholders to work together.

Second, **collaborations** among local and regional actors are essential in governance, whether it be long- or short-term and formal or informal. The number and types of collaborations are dictated by the purpose of the governance arrangement; however, partners should include local residents, community/regional-serving organizations, the civil society, the public sector, and the private sector.

Third, governance requires **collective decision-making** by all stakeholders. It is suggested the process of decision-making under a governance model strive for consensus, realizing however, it may not always be attainable.

Finally, governance represents a new method of engagement **beyond just government**. The process is characterized by a local/regional level emphasis with the engagement of stakeholders, such as civil society actors, community leaders, and the business sector, in an autonomous and legitimate organization.

Rhodes (1997) stresses that governance is not a synonym for government. Governance is a more inclusive and participatory phenomenon. Governance denotes a

change in the status quo of government through new processes and methods (Rhodes, 1997). Rosenau (1992, p. 4) articulates that governance “embraces governmental institutions, but it also subsumes informal, non-governmental mechanisms whereby those persons and organizations within its purview move ahead, satisfy their needs, and fulfill their wants”. Governance recognizes that “no single public or private actor, has all knowledge and information required to solve complex dynamic and diversified problems; no actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally in a particular governing model” (Kooiman, 1993, p. 4).

In a seminal contribution to this field of study Stoker (1998) sheds light on the value of governance studies. Rather than focusing on building new normative theories of governance, Stoker (1998, p. 18) argues the function of the governance perspective “rests in its capacity to provide a framework for understanding changing processes of governing”. This framework facilitates an examination of local experiences, which highlights processes and actions that may otherwise not be noted. Through conceptual frameworks, attempts can be made to explicate paradigm shifts (Judge, Stoker, & Wolman, 1995; Stoker, 1998). This dissertation uses the collaborative governance discourse presented by Ansell and Gash (2007) to examine regional governance initiatives in both Ireland and Newfoundland and Labrador.



Stoker (1998) proposed five propositions of governance that illustrate the breadth of its characteristics. The five propositions are:

1. governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government;
2. governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues;
3. governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relations between institutions involved in collective action;
4. governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors; and
5. governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide.

Each of these five complementary propositions embeds critical issues. These critical issues associated with governance, as labeled by Stoker (1998), range from the blurring of responsibilities, to determining accountability, and to understanding failure. The five propositions provide key areas for investigation and a platform for investigating and assessing governance initiatives in rural areas.

## *2.2.2 Origin, Evolution and Contemporary Governance Studies*

### *2.2.2.1 The Westminster Model – A Starting Point*

Rhodes (Rhodes, 1997) suggests that to understand governance in English speaking nations one needs to return to the Westminster model<sup>1</sup> of government as a starting point. It is from this perspective the differences between government and governance can clearly be demonstrated.

The Westminster model of government, modeled on the government of the United Kingdom, has been employed and adapted by many current and former members of the British Commonwealth, including Canada and Ireland. The Westminster model is characterized by an image of a “unitary state directed and legitimated by the doctrine of ministerial responsibility” (Stoker, 1998, p. 19). Key components of the Westminster model include parliamentary sovereignty, strong cabinet government, accountability through elections (essentially cabinet minister/Prime Minister to parliament to electorate), and majority party control of the executive (Gamble, 1990; Rhodes, Wanna, & Weller, 2009).

The study of politics has long concentrated on the state as a sovereign authority (Bevir & Rhodes, 2011; Hay, Lister, & Marsh, 2006). The sovereign authority consists of a series of institutions and organizations, with dedicated personnel with a monopoly of

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<sup>1</sup> The Westminster Model can also be referred to as the Westminster System.

power within a bounded territory (Hay et al., 2006). As noted by Bevir and Rhodes (2011, p. 203), “once the idea of the state as sovereign authority had arisen, it proved to be remarkably powerful and resilient”. Power in the Westminster model, as noted by Rhodes (1997, p. 6), is an “object which belongs to the prime minister, cabinet or civil service. So, power relationships are a zero-sum game where there is a winner and a loser”.

In the Westminster model there is an implicit assumption that there is a singular centre of power – such as the house of parliament. Luhmann (1982) notes that in reality we live in a ‘centreless society’ – essentially contradicting the Westminster model assumption. This centreless society is often described as polycentric, which Morgan (2007, p. 1238) describes as “multiple centres of democratic deliberation”. Polycentric societies consist of multiple centres of power – such as at the family level, community level, organizational level, provincial level, national level, or supranational level. As Kooiman and Chuenpagdee (2005, p. 336) note, this centreless society is a “complex configuration of horizontal coordination and synchronization”. Polycentrism strives to have public policy constructed and implemented by a mix of government, networks, and markets (Shergold, 2008). In the discussions of polycentrism and the changing scales of decision-making it is important to recognize that the political power is not absolute. Economic actors, particularly corporations, are having a dramatic influence on power.

Governance clearly represents an alternative polity to the Westminster model of government (Rhodes, 1997). Bevir and Rhodes (2011, p. 203) claim that there has been “a change in the pattern and exercise of state authority from government to governance; from a hierarchic or bureaucratic state to governance in and by networks”. This pattern change has been influenced by many factors, including New Public Management and neo-liberalist ideologies each of which is discussed in the next sub-sections.

#### *2.2.2.2 From Public Administration to the New Public Management*

The movement from theories of public administration towards the New Public Management in the late 1970s and early 1980s set the stage for governance in most English speaking nation states. The New Public Management was a distinct movement, albeit a loose collection of theories, which promoted marketization and corporate management practices in the public sector.

Prior to the emergence of the New Public Management, policy and service delivery were influenced by theories of public administration. Public administration, as described by Hood (1991), focused on the dominance of rule of law, administering rules/guidelines, commitment to incremental budgeting, rationality, public interest, and the hegemony of professionalism in public service delivery. By the end of the 1970s the New Public Management emerged as an alternative to traditional public administration (Chandler, 1991; Osborne, 2010; Rhodes, 1997). New Public Management was a union of new institutional economics, including public choice theory, transaction cost theory

and principal-agent theory, with managerialism (Hood, 1991). New Public Management emerged in the 1970s and accelerated with the decline of public administration. The uptake in the New Public Management corresponded to the decline of Keynesian economic thinking and policymaking (de Vries, 2010). The tenets of New Public Management focused on:

- building on lessons from the private sector through increased role of the markets and corporate management techniques (Bevir, 2009; Osborne & Gaebler, 1993; Osborne, 2010);
- entrepreneurial leadership within the public services;
- explicit standards and measures of performance (Hood, 1991);
- enhanced focus on outputs and results and diminished focus on processes and procedures (Hood, 1991; Osborne, 2010); and
- creation of financial efficiencies through competitive market forces.

Bevir (2009, p. 141) notes New Public Management was not a well defined construct; rather, it was a “loose term, used to categorize a broad set of administrative ideas and reforms”. Although New Public Management originated in the United Kingdom it quickly diffused to other English speaking nations, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Hardiman (2010) suggests the New Public

Management was slow to enter the Irish context. Interestingly, the New Public Management was never adopted, or at least fully embraced, by non-English speaking countries such as France, Germany, or Spain.

New Public Management took two main forms: marketization and corporate management. Drawing on neoliberal and managerial theories, marketization strove to enhance efficiency by re-organizing the state through privatization. Under this rubric, publically owned assets and responsibilities were moved from the realm of government to the private sector (Bevir, 2009). Under the thrust of corporate management, performance incentives were initiated to increase productivity and ultimately enhance efficiency (Chandler, 1991).

The asserted weaknesses of New Public Management thinking are categorized into three themes. First, the New Public Management resurrects a ‘management-by-objective’ philosophy. In doing so, there is no emphasis or acknowledgement of relationships. Second, the New Public Management is too focused on results, which is problematic when no single actor is responsible for an outcome. Finally, there is an inherent contradiction in the New Public Management between the belief in competition and the free market for creating efficiencies and the desire of governments to steer the direction of arm’s length agencies.

From the perspective of governance the New Public Management was a critical development. The New Public Management movement and the associated public sector reforms in the 1980s and 1990s gave rise to new governance initiatives (Bevir, 2009). New Public Management facilitated the shift from government to governance but also civil society's desire to be engaged in decision-making. Civil society, as a broadly defined group of non-government actors, pushed and demanded inclusion in decision-making partly out of mistrust for government agencies and a belief that decision-making should be closer to the people to be affected. Through New Public Management reforms many civil society actors were engaged, or contracted, to deliver public services and programs. Seidle (1997) notes the involvement of civil society actors in this manner was beneficial when the engagement was designed as a genuine power-sharing agreement. In instances where the engagement was not a genuine power-sharing agreement Browne (1999) suggests that the arrangement could "compromise their political and financial autonomy, erode their organizational identity, and turn them away from their original mandate".

#### *2.2.2.3 Shifts from Government to Governance*

The theories and applications of New Public Management, although a loose collection as described previously, provided an ideal platform for governance to develop, foster, and spread. The concept of governance was viewed as a potential set of mechanisms to assist the New Public Management strive for its ideals of marketization

and corporate management. Initially, the New Public Management processes were referred to as partnerships and networks, rather than governance. As these new arrangements grew in terms of frequency and responsibly it has been suggested that governance was metaphorically like taking the lid off the black box of the state. In addition to the influence of New Public Management, governance emerged from the criticism of large central governments' inabilities to accommodate the preferences of diverse communities or regions (Hooghe & Marks, 2002; Newman, Barnes, Sullivan, & Knops, 2004; Rosenau, 1997).

Within the New Public Management there was an attempt to develop a series of cross-linked networks, including government actors, the private sector, and non-government local actors (Bevir, 2009). The need for partnerships and networks in the New Public Management arose from the fragmentation of the public service following from initiatives of marketization and corporate management. This fragmentation of public services created a need for coordination of the multiple actors and agencies; giving rise to governance. In this environment, the role of the central government is decreased and a new reliance on the engagement of new policy actors is required (Adshead, 2002).

In the transition from government to governance, Osborne and Gaebler (1993) suggest governments need to be particularly astute in their role and responsibilities. A great challenge is to create new mechanisms for governance, but continue their



traditionally performed roles (Bevir, 2009). Osborne and Gaebler, to illustrate this perspective, provide the analogy of rowing. Steering of the boat is the activity of policy making, while rowing the boat is the activity of delivering services. In the transition from government to governance they state should be moving from rowing to steering (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993). In this new environment, Bevir (2009) suggests governments should be focused on how to generate efficient, effective, and accountable policy decisions; not delivering services or “rowing”. Vodden (2009b), Ansell and Gash (2007), and others, however, suggests collaborative governance should not be about government as the sole organization steering. Based on a review of collaborative governance in coastal regions of Canada Vodden noted collaborative governance requires co-steering between government and other stakeholders, such as community organizations, civil society actors, and the private sector.

Woods and Goodwin (2003) identified five changes to illustrate the transition from government to governance.

- First, there a reduction of central government activities through the process of deregulation and privatization of crown corporations.
- Second, the central government transfers responsibilities to local citizens and community-serving organizations.

- Third, central governments seek avenues to harmonize rural policy delivery through partnerships and amalgamation of government departments and agencies.
- Fourth, local rural institutions are re-organized to address regional issues.
- And finally, there are amendments to local government to increase power, responsibilities, and finances.

Woods (2005, p. 163) notes “collectively, these changes have been argued to represent a transition from a system of ‘government’ to one of ‘governance’”.

The increased attention to governance is a result of academic and policy interests in shifting patterns of governing (Stoker, 1998). The shift from government to governance is a debate still taking place. However, there is a growing consensus and recognition of the shift towards governance, as illustrated through policy and programming initiatives of nation state and sub-nation state governments (Goodwin & Painter, 1996; Jessop, 1998; Rhodes, 1996). The outstanding debates surrounding the shift to governance largely focus on how to measure the shift, the effectiveness of the shift, and whether the shift is a meaningful attempt to empower regions (Bell & Hindmoor, 2009; Heinrich, Lynn, & Milward, 2010; Taylor, 2007).

Focusing of government actions on ‘steering’ and ‘co-steering’, or policy making, has led to the concern of the state being hollowed out (Jessop, 2004; Rhodes, 1994). The

act of focusing on steering often suggests governments are no longer engaged in ‘traditional roles’, such as the provider of public goods, regulator of economic activities, owner of public enterprises, and architect of economies (Coe, Kelly, & Yeung, 2007). The hollowing out of the nation state includes the move towards privatizing current crown corporations or state-owned agencies (Coe et al., 2007). Bevir (2009, p. 6) suggests, “a range of processes – including the functional differentiation of the state, the rise of regional blocs, globalization, and neoliberal reforms – have left the state increasingly dependent on other organizations for the delivery and successes of its policy”. It has been suggested that governance, due to networks, partners, and processes, has reduced the ability of the nation to steer effectively (Bevir, 2009).

Although substantive concern has been raised, Bertucci and Alberti (2002) suggest there is no evidence of the hollowing out of the state or reduced relevance of the state. The emergence of multi-national regional regimes, such as the European Union or regional trading blocs, has changed the autonomy of the state (Bevir, 2009; Robichau, 2011). The nation state is performing new and different roles, however, it is by no means being hollowed out or becoming irrelevant. In fact, Jones (2000, p. 268) states: “the need to supply collective public goods, to manage externalities, and to provide for minority needs will persist even in a world of expanded globalization”. From this assessment, nation states continue to have an important, albeit changed, role.

#### *2.2.2.4 Emergence of Rural Governance*

As noted previously, the application of governance was predominantly an urban phenomenon, commencing in the 1980s. When exploring the expansion of governance to rural areas Jones and Little (2000, p. 171) suggest this movement emerged from the “traumatic neo-liberal restructuring of urban politics and has been brought to bare in rural areas”. Combined with the changing economic state of rural regions (i.e.: decline of natural resource industries, out migration, declines in employment), both government and communities began exploring the application of governance to rural development (Storey, 1999).

In Europe the push towards examining rural governance has been advanced by the European Union through their funding programs with a requirement of local, regional, and national actors are required to work together (Paul Cloke, Milbourne, & Widdowfield, 2000). Derkzen (2010) describes the role of the European Union as institutionalizing the role of governance and partnership in rural development. Rural governance in the European context is supported by the discourses of integration, participation, and self-help.

In Canada, rural governance studies have followed a similar pattern. The pioneering governance studies in Canada were urban-based, focusing on issues related to poverty and housing. Discourses of bottom up strategies, self-help and a downloading of responsibilities to local agents have facilitated governance initiatives in rural Canada.

Goodwin's (1998a) criticism that rural scholars were reluctant to study governance has spurred academic study in Europe, Canada, United States, and Australia. Within rural governance studies there are a number of critics and concerns raised (cf. Boonstra, 2006; Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; O. Jones & Little, 2000). Pini (2006) suggests rural governance has not created decentralization, rather it has reinforced existing power relationships. Further, MacKinnon (2002) and Storey (1999) expresses concern in that many cases 'bottom up approaches' or local empowerment are the byproduct of top-down interventions. Derksen et al. (2008) highlight the participants of rural governance initiatives often have dramatically different access to both financial and human resources to support the initiative. Cloke et al. (2000) raise concern that rural governance initiatives are simply a re-packaging of existing organizations and relationships, without any devolution of power or responsibilities. This is further compounded in what Jones and Little's (2000) describe as 'false partnerships'; partnerships listed in funding applications that formally do not exist.

Although fraught with critiques, the concept of rural governance is frequently utilized by multiple governments and local actors. With these critiques in mind, this research examines the application of rural governance. The degree to which these critiques are present in the two cases is explored further in Chapters 5 and 6.

### *2.3.3 Collaborative Governance*

The collaborative governance model emerged as a response to failures of nation states' implementation of policies and programs at the community level (Fung & Wright, 2001). In addressing these failures collaborative governance attempts to create, interpret, and apply policy through the participation of multiple stakeholders. Van Buuren and Edelenbos (2007, pp. 105–106) describe collaborative governance as “a reaction to traditional planning and policy-making approaches that are primarily top-down oriented, focusing on the government instead of the governed, mainly technocratically oriented and adversarially organized.” As an interactive and iterative process, collaborative governance engages multiple actors with different and complementary knowledge and experience.

Over the past fifteen years, collaborative governance has been utilized in a variety of cases from protected areas (Abrams et al., 2003; Borrini-Feyerabend, 1999), to coastal planning (Buanes, Jentoft, Karlsen, Maurstad, & Soreng, 2004; Coffey & Vodden, 2013; Vodden, 2009a), to natural resource management (Ansell, 2003; Coggins, 1999; Memon & Weber, 2010; Taylor, de Löwe, & Bjornlund, 2012; Weber, 2009), and to policy making (Freeman, 1997; Shergold, 2008). At its core, collaborative governance is about involving non-traditional policy actors in decision-making (Bevir, 2009; Van Buuren & Edelenbos, 2007).

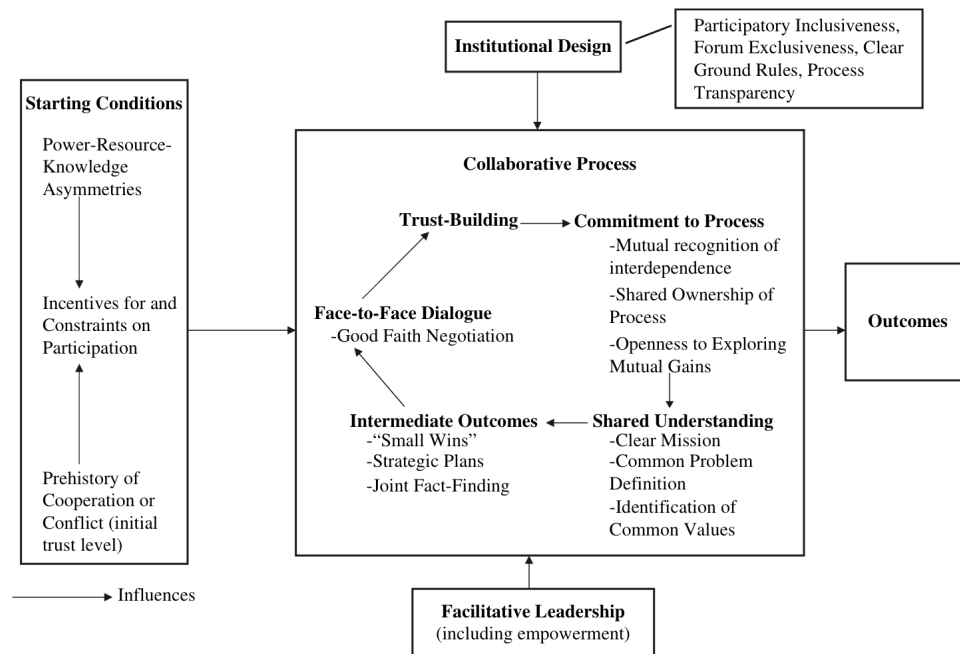
In building a definition of collaborative governance and a broader collaborative governance theory Ansell and Gash (2007) reviewed over 130 cases of collaborative governance from the English literature. From this review Ansell and Gash (2007, p. 652) define collaborative governance as an “arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage programs or assets”. In their seminal work, Ansell and Gash (2007) outline six criteria for collaborative governance:

1. the collaborative governance forum is initiated by public agencies or institutions;
2. participants in the governance forum include non-government actors;
3. participants engage directly in the decision making process, and are not just consulted;
4. the governance forum is formally organized and meets collectively;
5. the governance forum aims to make decisions by consensus; and
6. the focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management.

According to Ansell and Gash, collaborative governance processes need to include all six criteria to be categorized as collaborative governance. The collaborative governance model (see Figure 1) outlines the conditions for the emergence of new

governance, the requirements to facilitate the process, and description of the collaborative process.

**Figure 1. Model of Collaborative Governance**



Source: Ansell and Gash (2007)

The emphasis on discussions, cooperation, and collaboration among stakeholders distinguishes collaborative governance from other discourses of governance. The focus on collaborating with non-traditional policy actors, sharing of power, and new interdependencies clearly illustrate the move from government to governance (Van Buuren & Edelenbos, 2007). Collaborative governance embodies the shift from



hierarchical structures to co-constructed networks. The model also places emphasis on consensus building, an element not always witnessed in other models of governance.

The strengths and advantages of collaborative governance, compared to the traditional government relationships to regions, are many. First, there is an expansion of the number and diversity of policy-making contributors and decision-makers.

Collaborative governance creates and fosters an environment of participation among regional actors, governments, and the private sector. This facilitates new networks, further enhancement of the trust base, and the ongoing sharing of ideas. The involvement of diverse actors contributes to a heightened examination of policy and programs in the region (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Bevir, 2009).

Second, collaborative governance leads to an increase in the legitimacy of public policies. Accounts of government policies being dis-connected to regional realities are plentiful in the media and academic literature, leading Van Buuren and Edelenbox (2007) to suggest collaborative governance is a mechanism to restore relationships between regional actors and traditional decision-makers. Through the engagement of regional actors in discussions, priority setting, and decision-making policies, are viewed and interpreted by regional constituents as more legitimate (Beierle & Konisky, 2001; S. Smith, 1998). Collaborative governance practices give rise to enhanced accountability, transparency, and empowerment (Bevir, 2009; Day & Gunton, 2003).

The third strength of collaborative governance is the ability to generate flexible and regionally appropriate solutions. Through the broader range of involvement of individuals and organizations in decision-making processes and enhanced legitimacy collaborative governance is able to generate policies and programs that make sense for the reality and priorities of the region. “Collaborative governance offers the potential to utilize the creativity and experience expertise of those involved in order to address issues on a broader, and possibly more innovative way” (Van Buuren & Edelenbos, 2007, p. 106).

Collaborative governance at the same time has been critiqued, with researchers identifying challenges with the model. Frequently mentioned challenges to collaborative governance revolve around three issues: speed of the process, contested legitimacy, and hesitancy by government to change. Adding new actors to the policy discussions process can reduce the speed at which decisions can be made. New actors, particularly actors who have never traditionally been involved in policy discussions, may require new or enhanced skills and capacities to participate in a meaningful manner. The transaction costs, those costs incurred through the process such as the time associated with collaborative governance, can be substantial (Van Buuren & Edelenbos, 2007). The legitimacy highlighted as a strength can also be contested. The collaborative governance’s legitimacy is directly tied to who is involved in the process, its transparency, and its record of outputs. If key organizations and/or individuals are not present or

remove themselves from the process the legitimacy can be challenged. Directly related to this notion is that not all organizations have similar capacities to participate.

Organizations with lower capacities will struggle with being engaged in a collaborative governance process. The third challenge to collaborative governance is that it is based on the notion that the culture and organization of the actors can, and are willing to, change to meet the new realities of governance. The traditional procedures and practices utilized by both government and regional actors may not be suitable for collaborative governance. The inability to revise and adapt these procedures and practices hinders governance.

Many studies have emerged since Ansell and Gash's seminal work on the collaborative governance model. Collaborative governance studies frequently focus on the governance of natural resources, such as fisheries, wildlife, and water/watershed management (cf. Bodin & Crona, 2009; Kallis, Kiparsky, & Norgaard, 2009; May, 2013; B Taylor et al., 2012; Brent Taylor & de Loë, 2012, Vodden, 2009a). Collaborative governance studies are not reserved for only studies of natural resources. Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model has been utilized in areas such as health (cf. Cohen, Kinlaw, Kurtz, Radford, & Rooker, 2011; Larkin, Ciepial, Stack, Morrison, & Griffith, 2008), local economic development (cf. Erkuş-Öztürk & Eraydın, 2010; Robertson, 2011), and examinations of the interactions of multiple levels of government (cf. Conteh, 2013; Fortier, Wyatt, Natcher, Smith, & Hébert, 2013).

This diversity of foci is present within previous studies on collaborative governance in both Canadian and Irish. In Canada, recent collaborative governance studies have included Conteh's (2013) examination of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's movement towards collaborative governance, Fortier et al.'s (2013) assessment of forestry-based collaborative governance initiatives between Aboriginal peoples and the federal government, Kearney et al.'s (2007) review of integrated coastal management, and Vodden's (2009a) assessment of coastal governance. In the Irish context collaborative governance research has included Scott's review of governance and the LEADER program, O'Keeffe's (2008) case study of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Creamer et al.'s (2011) review inter-jurisdictional planning in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and Mahon et al.'s (2009) examination of urban housing. The emerging results from these collaborative governance studies are touched upon in Chapter Six.

#### *2.3.4 Other Models of Governance*

Collaborative governance, as proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), is not the only model of governance or lens to view and analyze governance. Over the past 10 to 15 years a number of alternative models of governance have been proposed.

Popular alternative models of governance emerging from recent literature range from good governance (Leftwich, 1994; Weiss, 2000), to multi-level governance (Hix,

1998; Scharpf, 1997), to partnerships (Ansell, 2000; Bache, 2000), to policy networks (Bogason & Toonen, 1998; Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998), to interactive governance (Chuenpagdee, Kooiman, & Pullin, 2008), and to contemporary governance (Magnette, 2003). The key elements of each model parallel the four commonalities discussed earlier: process, partnerships, collective decision-making, and new forms of engagement. Each model of governance proposes a slightly different emphasis, which makes models more or less appropriate depending on the local context.

The literature on collaborative governance does not provide much discussion on the role of the different levels of actors. The model of collaborative governance, for instance, does not stipulate the engagement of multiple levels of actors nor differentiate the actors engaged in the process. The literature on multi-level governance (cf. Bache & Flinders, 2005; Hooghe & Marks, 2002; Marks, 1992; Peters & Pierre, 2004), particularly regarding differentiation of levels and the role of polycentrism, may be useful complementary components to Ansell and Gash's (2007) model of collaborative governance. The role of multi-level actors will be revisited in Chapter 6.

### *2.3.5 Issues in Governance*

Throughout the literature on governance four key challenges have been identified. Each of these challenges is briefly described below.

#### *2.3.5.1 Accountability and Legitimacy*

Obtaining accountability and legitimacy for new governance arrangements is a critical challenge. New forms of governance are unfamiliar to most and the mere fact these approaches operate outside of the traditional realms of government may be difficult for many to comprehend. Governance processes do not necessarily establish and authenticate accountability or legitimacy through a popular election process common to government. Instead, governance processes obtain legitimacy and accountability through the breadth and support of the actors involved (individuals, organizations, department of government, and the private sector) and the resulting outputs and outcomes (Edwards, Goodwin, Pemberton, & Woods, 2001; Woods, 2005).

Legitimacy can be defined as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). At its core, legitimacy is about tacit knowledge – “the recognition, acceptance and support of a political system by those who are governed” (Haikio, 2007, p. 2149). Maurer (1971) suggests legitimacy needs to be viewed in terms of a justification for initiatives to exist, which in turn asks questions of social responsibility. It should be noted that legitimacy and accountability are not synonymous (Considine & Ali Afzal, 2011).

Accountability is defined as “a relationship where an individual or body, and the performance of tasks or functions by that individual or body, are subject to another’s

oversight, direction or request that they provide information or justification for their actions” (Shapenhurst & O’Brien, 2005, p. 1). There are multiple types of accountability, typically delineated on the type of accountability being exercised. Types of accountability may include legal, political/parliamentary, public, or social. Legal and political/parliamentary accountability, often referred to as horizontal accountability, is the capacity of the government institutions to place checks and balances on state agencies and recipients of public funding. The capacity of civil society to impose checks and balances is referred to as public and social accountability, or vertical accountability (Bovens, 2005; Malena, Forster, & Singh, 2004).

In the search for accountability and legitimacy, Woods (2005) stresses new governance arrangements need to be careful not to create an exclusive structure by concentrating power in a small group of people and organizations. Governance arrangements need to ensure they are building partnerships with key actors and actively seeking methods for community/regional engagement.

#### *2.3.5.2 Political Pluralism*

The engagement of the public and key stakeholders is a critical concern. Given the complex nature of new collaborative governance arrangements there is a concern that community residents will not engage in the process. Political pluralism is by no means unique to studies of governance; in fact, the notion of political pluralism predates collaborative governance studies. That being said, the concerns stemming from political

pluralism remain outstanding and influence governance studies, application, and theory. Political pluralism can limit the potential of collaborative governance in two main ways. First, the public is deemed to be ill informed about the governance initiative and therefore chooses not to be involved. Second, pluralism suggests community members will neglect to be active in the public policy arena. Since governance initiatives operate outside the traditional structures of government, community residents believe new governance arrangements lack authority and legitimacy (Booher, 2004; Meehan, 1997). To overcome this barrier, new forums need to be created to facilitate the participation of the public. These forums also serve the purpose of providing clear information regarding the purpose, mandate, process, and anticipated outputs and outcomes to the public at large.

#### *2.3.5.3 Human and Financial Capacities*

The capacity of actors can be a significant barrier to governance initiatives. There are both human and financial capacities required to initiate and sustain governance arrangements (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Newman et al., 2004). Research has shown communities need to have a local ‘champion’ or ‘leader’ willing to spearhead the initiative and build necessary linkages to other required actors. There is a need for skills in networking, conflict resolution, partnerships building, and cooperation. From the financial capacities side, new governance arrangements require process funding to permit partnerships building. The current directive of governments is moving away from process-oriented projects, leaving regions struggling to locate these financial resources to



support process. A related concern is balancing the optimism for new forms of governance arrangements with the reality of regions, particularly given that rural areas are encountering high rates of volunteer burn-out and population out-migration. The lack of capacity in non-governmental actors at the regional level has led to concerns about the utility of governance, particularly in peripheral regions (Lipton, Hagens, & Reimer, 2009).

#### *2.3.5.4 Relationship between Government and Governance*

The emergence of governance arrangements revises the role and responsibilities of government. As a result, the relationship between government and governance can be tense (Eberlein & Kerwer, 2004). Tension may arise from confusion of respective roles and mandates or the willingness of government representatives to participate in new governance initiatives. A tense relationship between government and governance casts a shadow of doubt on the legitimacy of the new group.

These four issues complicate the process and outcomes of governance initiatives, regardless of the model. It should be recalled that Bevir (2009) and Day and Gunton (2003) both noted the collaborative governance model provides opportunities to overcome these barriers. More specifically, collaborative governance can facilitate enhanced accountability (both horizontal and vertical) and transparency through the engagement of stakeholders. It is also suggested collaborative governance can take steps towards reducing political pluralism through empowering local stakeholders to become

aware and engaged in the process of shifting power and responsibilities from government to governance initiatives.

## *2.4 Summary*

Rural geography, as a sub-discipline, has a solid tradition for studies in rural and regional development. Although it emerged as a sub-field of the discipline of geography between 1950 and 1970, rural geography researchers have made substantial contributions to advance theory, policy, and practice. Two central contributions utilized in this research is the region as a unit of study and the identification of the changing processes, scales, and complexity in rural communities. Morgan (1997) declared the region as the most appropriate level of studying regional development. Furthering Morgan's claim, the OECD (2001) stresses the need for increased focus on territorial, or regional, approaches to development.

The second key contribution of rural geographers to this study emerges from research on post-productivism. Rural geographers have identified changes, or transitions, in processes, scales, and complexity of decision-making in rural communities and regions. The latter transition has witnessed discussions regarding changing leadership and governance at the regional level.

Rural geography provides an ideal platform for investigating collaborative governance in peripheral regions. The contributions of the region and the changing dynamics emerging from post-productivism make timely contributions to collaborative governance studies.

Governance is a diverse concept engaging multiple disciplines, including rural geographers. The emergence of governance materializes from the influence of the Westminster Model and the theories of New Public Management. Under the Westminster Model a single centre of power is created. This mono-centric system reserves decision-making, responsibilities, and power for an entity such as a parliament or an elected office. Governance seeks to change the mono-centricity by creating multiple centres of power, or polycentric.

The rise of New Public Management theories in the 1970s and 1980s influenced the movement to polycentrism. As an alternative to theories of public administration whereby the public service was dominant, the New Public Management initiated corporate management techniques in the public service and promoted marketization. The wave of changes associated with the New Public Management facilitated governance through two aspects. First, New Public Management shifted the scales of power. In achieving more efficient and accountable outcomes, power and responsibilities for program delivery shifted from central governments to civil society organizations and the

private sector. The shift facilitated the move from mono-centrism to polycentrism. Second, New Public Management facilitated the engagement of civil society into decision-making that was once reserved only for government. A growing mistrust of central governments fueled the sentiment that decision-making should be moved as close to the people being influenced as possible.

Although governance studies have been described as disjointed, Ansell and Gash (2007) provide a model for understanding and measuring collaborative governance based on an analysis of over 100 governance studies. The model is premised on six central criteria, each required to be collaborative governance. The collaborative governance model focuses on collaboration and cooperation among non-traditional policy actors. Through this model a sharing of power takes place between government and non-governmental actors.

The literature review of rural geography and governance provides justification for the four research questions. The collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) is largely utilized in urban contexts. Given the contributions of rural geographers regarding post-productivism, how appropriate is the collaborative governance model for peripheral regions? The literature denotes a substantial role for non-governmental actors, identified through the rise in New Public Management and the collaborative governance model. The exact nature of the role and influence of these non-

governmental actors is not well articulated, deserving further investigation. Likewise the relationship between government, as a historic mono-centric agency, and governance, as a new polycentric initiative, needs further exploration. Further, Morgan's and Paasi's emphasis on the role of regions gives rise to questions of how physical landscape and regional boundaries influence collaborative governance initiatives. This literature influences the four research questions, each thoroughly examined and addressed in Chapter Six.

The themes of collaborative governance, region, and Stoker's propositions will be addressed in Chapter Three. First, the next chapter outlines the methods used within the research to select two case regions to examine the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007). The concepts of polycentrism and the four issues influencing the application of governance will be addressed in subsequent chapters, specifically Chapters Five and Six.

## Chapter Three - Methodology

### *3.1 Introduction*

This chapter commences with a discussion of case study research, its evolution, and its merits for social science research. Building on this contextual understanding the chapter identifies and discusses the process utilized for selecting two cases to answer these four questions. The selection was based on five main criteria: meeting the collaborative governance definition, meeting the governance propositions, a history of bottom-up initiatives, willingness for collaborative research, and feasibility of access.

To capture the nuances of rural regional governance in relation to the research questions an analytical framework was generated based on seminal literature. The framework outlines indicators and measures for each of the five concepts of the collaborative governance model. In implementing the analytical framework four methods were utilized: key informant interviews, secondary document review, member checking, and data analysis through coding and theme analysis.

The chapter concludes with commentary on challenges encountered during the research initiative and a statement about ethical considerations. These challenges each have an influence on data availability, data quality, data analysis, and the outcomes of this research. Challenges ranged from poor weather conditions to gatekeepers preventing access to information.

### *3.2 Theoretical Perspective*

Ansell and Gash (2007) offer a contingency “theory”<sup>2</sup> for collaborative governance; more specifically they offer a model for investigating collaborative governance. In building the collaborative governance model Ansell and Gash purposively construct a call to arms for researchers to test, evaluate, and elaborate on their work. This research initiative was undertaken, in part, to response to Ansell and Gash’s call. The complexity of governance studies, as demonstrated in the previous section, illustrates the need for a multi-method research approach. The use of Ansell and Gash’s (2007) collaborative governance model does not predetermine that their model is the most appropriate for explaining or assessing governance in rural regions. Rather, using Ansell

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<sup>2</sup> The quotation mirrors the original work of Ansell and Gash (2007), in which they question the strength of the ‘theory’ and encourage researchers to test this theory through empirical research.

and Gash's model provides an opportunity to enhance the understanding of regional collaborative governance. The degree to which the Ansell and Gash's (2007) model is accurate, appropriate, and relevant is discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

This study employed a case study approach to address the four research questions posed in Chapter One. The study blends both inductive and deductive methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of rural regional governance, which in turn enables a critical reflection and commentary on Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model. Each of these methods is outlined later in this chapter.

### *3.3 Case Study Research*

Case study research methods are widely used throughout the social sciences. Yin (1994) describes the case study approach as an appropriate method for research focused on issues of planning, policy and public affairs as the approach facilitates research whereby the "holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" are retained (p. 3). Case studies can employ qualitative, quantitative, or a blend of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques.

Case study research strives to understand complexities through investigations of contemporary phenomena within their real-life context. Case study research is guided by



theoretical propositions, which in turn guide data collection and analysis. Through multiple sources of data collection and triangulation, case study research generates in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

### *3.3.1 Evolution of Case Study Research*

The definition of case study research is far from universal. Notwithstanding the definitional challenge, case studies are employed in many academic disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, medicine, and geography. The lack of a universally accepted definition has, in the view of many researchers (cf. Ragin & Becker, 1992; Yin, 1994) hindered the use and acceptance of case study methods. As Platt (2007) notes, case study definitions, literature, and methods often differ by discipline. Frequent definitions presented for case study methods include:

“an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, set within its real-world context - especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009)

“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Platt, 2007, p. 103)

“A case study is defined as an in-depth multi-faceted investigation, using qualitative research methods, of a single social phenomenon. The study is

conducted in great detail and often relies on the use of several data sources”

(Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991, p. 2)

The origin and evolution of case study research is a story of several hundred years. Although its origin lay in Europe, it was researchers from the United States who greatly expanded its reach, structure, and acceptance. The latter has not been without considerable debate.

One of the first researchers to purposively utilize the case study was French engineer and social scientist Frederic Le Play (Healy, 1947). In *Les ouvriers européens*, the first of six volumes published in 1855, Le Play outlines case study methods as part of his investigation of the morale of working families. Le Play expanded the repertoire of social science methods through the focus on observation of contemporary people (Healy, 1947). Over a thirty year period, Le Play produced more than three hundred case study monographs on working class families (Zonabend, 1992).

It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that case study research emerged as a driving force in social science research in the United States. The adoption and use of case study research picked up momentum in the mid-1930s when it met substantial opposition from proponents of the ‘scientific method’. During this period case study research was criticized for its subjectivity and lack of ability to generalize findings to theory (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993). Given that case study research was depicted as

not adhering to the scientific method it was seen as an inferior method. It wasn't until the 1960s that case study research re-emerged with prominence.

The 'turn to case' in the 1960s, as described by Bryne (2009), was a fundamental break with positivist epistemologies. This period coincided with the cultural turn taking place among the social sciences whereby new theoretical and methodological considerations were valued, particularly related to postmodernism and post-structuralism. The cultural turn was a significant influence on case study research, and rural geography, as it "promoted a new understanding of culture as the product of discourses through which people signify their identity and experiences" (Woods, 2005, p. 24). Bryne (2009) further articulates that the re-emergence of case study research as "predicated on an explicit rejection of the utility of causal modeling based on variables" (p. 4). Even with the re-emergence of case study research after the cultural turn criticism still appears. As Harvey (2009) notes, the scientific status of case studies remains contested. Long after the cultural turn and the 'turn to case', critiques of case study research suggest the studies are overly impressionistic and findings are non-generalizeable due to small sample sizes.

### *3.3.2 Operationalizing Case Study Research*

Over the past twenty years seminal case study researchers, such as Yin, Stake, Hamel et al., have outlined procedures to ensure methodological rigor. Ragin (2007)

states case study research “focuses on phenomenon that are of interest because they are infrequent – precisely because the N is small” (p. 68). Although infrequent, these phenomena are no less historically, culturally, or economically important.

This study follows the writings of Yin (1994, 2004, 2009) and the suggested approach for developing case studies. Yin stresses the difference between a case and case study. The case is the real-life events that generate data, whether concrete or abstract. The case study is “the substance of your research inquiry, consisting of your research questions, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, interpretations, and conclusions” (Yin, 2004, p. xiv).

Gathering information within a case study methodology can be undertaken in a variety of fields. Stake (2000) identifies five major areas for case study data collection. First, the historical background or context of the phenomenon provides a foundation for building an understanding. Second, the physical geography, or landscape, and its influence on people, the economy, and interactions provide another source of information. Third, the political, economic, social, and legal environments encompassing or involving the phenomenon can provide a rich source of information. Fourth, an examination of existing literature speaking to the phenomenon can serve as a source of important information. Finally case study can allow case studies to connect with informants who are informed about the phenomenon. From these five sources of data, leading researchers

(Smith & Deemer, 2000; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009) suggest a process of triangulation that enhances the value of case studies. Triangulation serves to enhance understanding by utilizing multiple viewpoints of the same phenomenon. This dissertation's research focuses is mainly on the fifth source as described by Stake (2000) – knowledgeable informants and incorporates each of the other four source.

### *3.3.3 Selecting Cases for Collaborative Governance*

To address the four questions of this research two cases were identified. The identification and selection of cases adheres to Stake's (1995) belief that cases should be selected to maximize what can be learned about the central focus of study, in this case collaborative governance in rural regions. This study made no attempt to locate representational cases, wherein background conditions, actors, and processes were identical or similar. Rather, it selected cases that would generate a critical reflection on the collaborative governance model and its application to policy and practice in two different circumstances; circumstances where at least some attempt at collaborative governance had been made.

With Stake's tenet in mind, the selection of the two cases was made after consideration of five key factors:

1. based on a review of secondary information, the case appeared to exhibit each of Ansell and Gash's six criteria of collaborative governance;
2. based on a review of secondary information, the case appeared to address each of Stoker's governance propositions;
3. based on a review of secondary information, the case had a rich history of bottom-up initiatives and exhibited capacity for collaborative governance;
4. representatives of the regional governance initiative expressed a willingness to work collaboratively on the research initiative; and
5. the regions were accessible to conduct the research.

Each of the five factors is explored further below.

#### *3.3.3.1 Criteria of Collaborative Governance*

To critically reflect on the collaborative governance model each of the cases needed to meet the definition of collaborative governance. An examination of potential cases was conducted through a review of literature (academic, policy-based, and community-based), online resources, personal communications with researchers engaged with potential cases, and with stakeholders in the potential study regions. The outcome of this initial assessment is outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Preliminary Assessment of Collaborative Governance Criteria by Case**

Criteria of Collaborative Governance	Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative	South Kerry Development Partnership
Collaborative governance forum is initiated by public agencies or institutions	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, through 2009 Speech from the Throne, initiated the Northern Peninsula Pilot Initiative	The SKDP has a complex initiation that included both the Government of Ireland and the European Union's LEADER program
Participants in the governance forum include non-government actors	Participants range from elected municipal officers, to economic development boards, to tourism operators, and government agencies.	Participants represent a broad spectrum of the region, including non-government actors.
Participants engage directly in the decision making process, not just consulted	Participants engaged a consensus oriented process for decision making.	Stakeholders, through board representation, engage in decision making.
The governance forum is formally organized and meets collectively	The Pilot Initiative has a formal membership list and meets semi-regularly.	The initiative is formally incorporated and meets regularly.
The governance forum aims to make decisions by consensus	Yes	Yes
The focus of collaboration is on public policy or public management	One of the initiative's focuses was on advocating regional priorities to provincial government departments.	Immediate focus can be towards project outputs, however, this can contribute directly to public policy.

Adapted from Ansell & Gash, 2007; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador,

2009; Laffan, 2007; Pozzoli, 2006

The NPRCPI (Newfoundland and Labrador) and the SKDP (Ireland) both exhibit the six criteria proposed by Ansell and Gash for collaborative governance. Although not identical in their exhibition of the criteria, the two case studies appeared to provide ample information to reflect on the four research questions.

### *3.3.3.2 Propositions of Governance*

In addition to Ansell and Gash's criteria for collaborative governance, the second factor is the need for the cases to adhere to Stoker's (1998) five propositions of governance. These propositions represent a seminal definition of the general concept of governance. Stoker's propositions provide a more general understanding of governance, and although the work of Ansell and Gash incorporates Stoker's propositions, it is useful to gauge the cases against both sets of propositions. Given this conceptual overlap, it comes as no surprise that each case appeared to meet this definition (see Table 2).



**Table 2. Preliminary Assessment of Regions by Governance Propositions**

Criteria of Collaborative Governance	Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative	South Kerry Development Partnership
Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government	The Pilot Initiative consists of a set of members including provincial government departments, municipalities, and non-profit organizations.	The SKDP's members come from statutory agencies, County officials, and the voluntary sector.
Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues	The mandate of the Pilot Initiative includes the blurring of boundaries. Boundaries are still be sorted.	Social and economic issues are both addressed by the SKDP through a suite of programs.
Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action	This appears to have been identified, however, multiple understandings of this dependence exist.	Power dependence among partners is defined through well-articulated terms of reference, by-laws, mandates, and external fee for service contracts.
Governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors	Yes, although the degree to which the Pilot Initiative is self-governing is not clear.	Yes – both the Irish government and European Union recognize the Partnership as autonomous.
Governance recognizes the capacity to get things done does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority	Yes, by virtue of the Pilot Initiative implementation and membership.	Yes, by virtue of SKDP's membership and contracts with the central Irish government.

Adapted from Stoker (1998)

This understanding of the case's relationship to Stoker's propositions of governance is important in the event that neither case fits Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model after in-depth empirical data collection. In this scenario, the case's application of Stoker's propositions of governance would be useful in analyzing the collaborative governance model.

#### *3.3.3.3 History of Bottom-Up Initiatives*

The third factor for identifying cases in this study was a diverse history of region-led initiatives. Bottom-up initiatives, as opposed to top-down or government implemented initiatives, provide evidence of cohesion, innovation, and collective identity. In developing and maintaining new forms of governance these attributes, among others, are suggested as being critical to its success.

In both the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area there are well-documented accounts of region-led collaborative development initiatives. The communities of the Northern Peninsula have witnessed the emergence of multiple regional organizations in the past 40 years. Illustrations include the Regional Development Associations, REDBs, Strategic Social Partnerships, Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat, Joint Mayors' Council, and a regional waste management organization (Douglas & O'Keeffe, 2009; Fuchs, 1995; House, 2001; Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Development Association, 2010; Rural Secretariat, n.d.; David Simms, 1986; Sinclair, 1989).

There are many illustrations of multi-community collaboration in the Northern Peninsula region over the past century. In 1905, a consumer cooperative was established in St Anthony and shortly afterwards a salmon producer cooperative and a salt fish marketing cooperative were established (Sinclair, 1989). More recent illustrations of multi-community collaboration include the Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council. The Joint Council consists of elected officials from 16 municipal councils of the communities in the Northern Peninsula region. The Joint Council's mandate is to foster relationships among municipalities of the region, to serve as a collective voice for the region, and to seek discussion and solutions to common issues (Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council, 2007).

This pattern of regional collaboration is paralleled in the South Kerry area. This region, as noted by Pozzoli (2006), has had a rich history of local and regional development initiatives. These initiatives have spanned the realms of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship. In the past thirty years the region has had collaborative organizations such as strategic policy committees, County Development Boards, Area-Based Partnerships, LEADER Programme, and the local development partnerships (Adshead & Brid, 1998; Broaderick, 2002; Callanan, 2005; Daly, 2008; Douglas & O'Keeffe, 2009).

Regional collaborations and partnerships are not a recent phenomenon in South Kerry. Collective formal action can be witnessed back to the 1880s. Agricultural cooperatives, particularly related to the dairy industry, emerged in the region in 1895 (Kerry County Committee of Agriculture, 1972). These were followed by a series of additional cooperatives in the region, numbering over 350 in County Kerry by 1970 (Duffy, 1976). Starting in the 1930s and 1940s group water schemes were established throughout the region facilitated by *Muintir na tire*, a national non-governmental organization promoting community development (Brady & Gray, 2010). By 2006, over 360 group water schemes were operating in County Kerry (Kerry County Council, 2006).

#### 3.3.3.4 *Willingness for Collaborative Research*

A key consideration for case selection was a willingness from regional stakeholders to be engaged in a collaborative research initiative. Stakeholders needed to share an interest in understanding regional governance and be willing to facilitate connections for the researcher. No direct financial investment was asked of local partners, only a minimal contribution of time towards the project.

An introduction to the research project was circulated to both the NPRCPI and the SKDP in the spring of 2010. Follow up conversations with key stakeholders took place in each region shortly thereafter. In the winter of 2010 the NPRCPI extended an invitation to make a presentation on alternative forms of governance (cf. Gibson, 2010). Building

on this engagement, a formal request to work with the NPRCPI was made at their fall 2010 meeting, at which time they agreed to participate.

Communications with the SKDP continued through the summer of 2010. Dr. Brendan O’Keeffe of Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick facilitated follow up communications in the region, after the introductory communiqué. A decision to participate in the research was taken by the SKDP in November 2010 via email communications.

#### *3.3.3.5 Feasibility of Access*

The fifth factor in identifying cases for the research was the feasibility of access to the region and within the region. The focus is on rural regions, however, peripheral areas without access to public transit would be considerably more difficult to work with. Both regions provided adequate transportation access to enable and facilitate the research activities.

The Northern Peninsula’s transportation network consists of highways, ferries, and an airport connecting communities to the rest of the Island of Newfoundland and the Canadian mainland. The transportation network of the region is dominated by one central highway (PR 430) running north from the intersection of the Trans-Canada Highway to its terminus in St Anthony. Highway 430 largely parallels the west coast of the peninsula with a series of secondary highways branching out to provide access to the eastern side of

the peninsula, such as highways 432, 433, 434. At the time of this research, public transportation within the Northern Peninsula region was non-existent. No inter-community transportation mode was available in the region, necessitating a private vehicle to travel between communities.

Similar to the Northern Peninsula, the South Kerry area is accessed by multiple modes. Highways dominate the transportation network in South Kerry, with the Ring of Kerry being one of the most famous routes. Communities on the Iveragh Peninsula are connected via highways N70, N71, and N72, while secondary roads R571 and R561 connect communities on the Beara and Dingle Peninsulas. Unlike the Northern Peninsula, most communities in South Kerry have regular daily bus service to Killarney provided by Bus Éireann, the national bus operator. Unlike the Northern Peninsula, limited public transportation within South Kerry was available during the research. Bus Éireann provided daily bus service to communities directly on the Ring of Kerry highway.

Further details of the linkages and maps of each region are illustrated in Chapter Four.

### *3.3.4 Rationale for International Comparative Case Study Research*

Comparative research in the discipline of geography, and in fact most social science disciplines, is a recognized method of research. Comparisons, whether they be

quantitative or qualitative, are almost inescapable in regional development, rural studies, and public policy (Mills & Bruijn, 2006; Ragin & Robinson, 2009). Rural and regional development research from the 1880s to the present has exemplified the deep rootedness of comparison: for example, Le Play (Healy, 1947), Vidal de la Blanche, Clout (1972), Gilg (1978), Cloke (1977), Reimer (2002), Polèse and Shearmur (2002), Beer et al. (2003), Woods (2005), and the OECD (2008). This research initiative follows the comparative research path set forth by these and other researchers.

In addition to its recognition and application, Cliche (1995) describes comparative research as critical for the development of public policy and programs. Former United States President Woodrow Wilson's quote "so long as we know only ourselves, we know nothing" has been a call to arms for the use of comparison for the enhancement of public policy (Wilson, 1887, p. 220). The ability to understand policy, its context, and its potential application to other jurisdictions has been a trademark of public policy. Further, Hantrais (2009) describes comparative research as key to gaining understanding of phenomena, advancing knowledge, and testing theory.

An international comparative approach was undertaken in this study for two primary reasons. First, the comparative research approach facilitated assessing and critiquing the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007). This approach generated empirical evidence for evaluating the model. The use of two

international jurisdictions allowed for a heightened understanding of the role and influence of actors and institutions. Although the two regions hold many similarities, each operates in a unique current and historic policy environment. The comparative approach highlights the dissimilarities, particularly the role and influence of a supra-national entity like the European Union in the Irish case.

Second, comparative research methods facilitate demonstration of policy relevance to participants and relevant actors in both jurisdictions (Hantrais, 2009). Results emerging from the research will help inform existing policy in both jurisdictions and draw lessons on best practices. This research assists policy makers and regional stakeholders to look to the future of regional governance and development through evidence-based decision-making.

Through international comparative methods this research increases our understanding of the influence of people, relationships, and regional boundaries on governance within peripheral regions. The findings contribute to a growing body of research and facilitate comparisons to other case study findings, such as the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded project *Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials*.<sup>3</sup> Through effective policies, rural communities have the opportunity to increase their contributions to their

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<sup>3</sup> Further information on this research initiative can be located at <http://cdnregdev.ruralresilience.ca>.



national economies (Johnson, 2001). The research makes a timely contribution to the challenges and opportunities faced in rural regions.

### *3.4 Analytical Framework and Methods*

The building off the in-depth case descriptions presented in Chapter Four consisted of two main components. Building on the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) an analytical framework was devised to guide information collection among knowledgeable regional stakeholders. Second, literature reviews about each region and their governance initiatives were conducted to link the historical contexts with the contemporary situation. This sub-section provides an overview and discussion of the analytical framework for the in-depth regional case descriptions, including indicators and measures. Further, the sub-section provides a discussion of methods employed in carrying out the framework investigation, including key informant interviews and literature reviews as well as the analytical techniques used.

#### *3.4.1 Framework: Indicators and Measures*

The case descriptions present in-depth and rich descriptions of the regional governance initiatives, which, in turn, facilitate a conceptual examination of collaborative

governance theory and its policy implications. Case descriptions outline the historical context of endogenous development initiatives, key actors and networks operating in the regions, and the policy environments.

To facilitate the collection of similar information in both cases and to ensure appropriate information was collected to examine Ansell and Gash's (2007) model of collaborative governance, an analytical framework was generated based on Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model. The analytical framework is primarily based on Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model, supplemented by governance literature by Stoker (1998) and Woods and Goodwin (2003) discussed in Chapter Two. The analytical framework guided data collection to contribute to the four research questions of this study.

Each of the five components of the collaborative governance model (see Figure 1 in Chapter Two) is outlined in tables 3-7. Components are sub-divided into sub-components, each with a series of illustrative indicators and their associated measures (see Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7). Through the use of key informant interviews and secondary document reviews, discussed in the next section, the analytical framework was populated with information from each case.

Table 3. Analytical Framework – Starting Conditions

Indicators	Assessment
Power-Resource-Knowledge Asymmetries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do organizations in the region have similar skills/expertise to engage in a collaborative initiative?</li> <li>Does organizational capacity, or lack thereof, prevent any organizations from participating in the process?</li> <li>What strategies have been employed, if any, to overcome any imbalances of capacity?</li> <li>Has the imbalance of capacity or expertise hindered the process? If yes, describe how the process has been hindered and actions taken to rectify the situation/process (if any).</li> </ul>
Incentives for and Constraints on Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who invited your organization to partake?</li> <li>Why did your organization choose to participate in this initiative?</li> <li>What were the perceived benefits for your organization?</li> <li>What were the perceived constraints on your participation?</li> </ul>
Prehistory of Cooperation and Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How would you describe the formal and informal relationships among organizations in the [region] prior to the initiative?</li> <li>Describe the catalysts for any conflict/cooperation?</li> <li>What are the reasons why (or why not) cooperation among groups in the [region] have (or have not) taken place?</li> </ul>
Timeline of organization's development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When did your organization begin its participation with the initiative?</li> <li>Has your organization's representative to the initiative changed since the beginning?</li> <li>When did the initiative begin?</li> <li>How did the governance initiative begin?</li> </ul>

Table 4. Analytical Framework – Collaborative Process

Indicators	Assessment
Trust Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How would you describe the level of trust among initiative partners? Has this level of trust changed over the course of your involvement?</li> <li>▪ What actions or activities have assisted to enhance or deplete trust among members?</li> </ul>
Commitment to Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How would you describe the level of commitment of your organization to the process? Do all other members exhibit the same level of commitment to the initiative?</li> </ul>
Shared Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does the initiative have a shared understanding of short- and long-term goals?</li> <li>▪ How were these goals identified? Are they reviewed on a regular basis?</li> </ul>
Intermediate Outcomes <sup>4</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was the first output/come of the initiative? Did this output/come contribute to building a stronger sense of collaboration?</li> </ul>
Face-to-face Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What methods does the initiative utilize for meetings, such as face-to-face, conference calls, and Skype?</li> <li>▪ Is the geography of the region a hindrance to meeting?</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Ansell and Gash (2007) defined intermediate outcomes as “either tangible outputs or critical process outcomes that are essential for building the momentum that can lead to successful collaborations” (p. 561)

Table 5. Analytical Framework – Facilitated Leadership

Indicators	Assessment
Process for Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the initiative identify and respond to conflict among member organizations?</li> </ul>
Leadership Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the leadership structure of the initiative?</li> <li>▪ Has this structure changed since the start of the initiative?</li> <li>▪ What are the benefits and drawbacks of this leadership structure?</li> <li>▪ Have there been discussions of alternative leadership structures?</li> </ul>
Facilitating Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the leadership structure of the initiative encouraged participation of organizations? Particular interest in organizations with low capacity for collaboration.</li> </ul>

Table 6. Analytical Framework – Institutional Design

Indicators	Assessment
Participatory inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How was the membership in the initiative decided?</li> <li>In your opinion, are all the key stakeholders present? If not, who is missing from the process?</li> <li>How genuine is the decision making? Do participants feel their input has been seriously taken into consideration? Do they feel they actually have decision making power?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How were the boundaries of the region created? Do the boundaries match/correlate with other regional boundaries (ie: municipal/county, health, education, political)? Has the regional boundary been revisited since the start of the governance initiative? Who determined the need for a revised boundary?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could new members be added to the initiative? If yes, describe the process for gaining membership. If no, why can new members not be added?</li> </ul>
Forum exclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there other forums in the region undertaking similar discussions?</li> <li>If yes, how does this initiative relate to the other forums? Is there duplication/overlap?</li> </ul>
Clear ground rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the initiative have clear guidelines or rules governing its actions?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are decisions made by the initiative? How are decisions carried out?</li> </ul>
Process transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is information about the initiative and decisions taken by the initiative communicated to people in the region?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on your experience, does this initiative have legitimacy within the region? Describe the response.</li> </ul>

Table 7. Analytical Framework – Outcomes

Indicators	Assessment
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What outputs has the initiative achieved?</li> <li>▪ What is the most important output achieved to date? Why? What were the contributing factors to these outputs?</li> </ul>
Outcomes (short, medium, long) <sup>5</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What outcomes has the initiative achieved?</li> <li>▪ Has trust among initiative partners increased, decreased, or remained the same since the initiative commenced? Describe illustrations that demonstrate this. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Among community/regional organizations</li> <li>○ Among government departments (provincial and federal)</li> <li>○ Among businesses/private sector</li> <li>○ Among academic institutions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Unintended outputs/outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since the beginning of the initiative have there been any unintended outputs/comes? Please describe.</li> </ul>
Learning and evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the initiative engaged in evaluation or reflections on their activities?</li> </ul>

### 3.4.2 Methods

To capture the nuances of regional governance initiatives in both cases a multiple methods approach was employed. Given the complexities of the two governance initiatives a mixed methods approach facilitated the assessment of the four research questions. Babbie (2002) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005), among others, explain that the

<sup>5</sup> Ansell and Gash (2007) provide a loose definition of outcomes in their paper, which includes both process outcomes and managerial outcomes. The ambiguity is further addressed in Chapters Five and Six.

mixed methods approach ensures a rich, accurate, and appropriate source of data for qualitative research. Each research method utilized is described below.

#### *3.4.2.1 Literature Review*

A review of documentation on the regional governance theory, application, and critiques was undertaken early in the research. Further literature reviews on the regional governance initiatives and their regional contexts were also embarked upon after case study selection. Documents reviewed were retrieved from primarily three sources: local and regional documents, government reports and policy documents, and academic literature. Documents were reviewed against the analytical framework to assist in populating pertinent information for building accurate case descriptions and to assess the four questions of this research. Each of the three sources of literature is outlined below.

Academic literature on governance, and more specifically collaborative governance, was utilized to construct the analytical framework and provide a contextual background for the study. The literature from multiple disciplines was reviewed on topics such as governance, collaborative governance, multi-level governance, good governance, interactive governance, regional development, rural geography, new regionalism, community development, public policy, and the new rural paradigm. Literature reviews were also conducted at multiple scales, including the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, Ireland, and internationally.



In selecting cases and building knowledge of the regional governance initiatives a variety of local and regional documents was examined. These documents are what Weintraub (2012, p. 1) refers to as grey literature or “publications issued by government, academia, business, and industry, in both print and electronic formats, but not controlled by commercial publishing interests, and where publishing is not the primary business activity of the organization”. Jeffery (2000) notes that this grey literature is increasingly valuable as it often contains information on organizational structures, processes, organizational evolution, identification of policy environments in which they operate, and details of partners, stakeholders, and funding sources. A key element to grey literature is the opportunity for non-traditional publishers of information to capture and describe their own narrative on its own merits (Gelfand, 1998). Key sources of local and regional documents reviewed include organizational annual reports, notes from meetings, grant proposals, project final reports, organizational websites (municipalities, counties, non-profit organizations, associations, and private entities), and public media stories (newspapers, broadcasts, and podcasts). Banks (2006) encourages researchers to pay attention to this knowledge.

A third key source of literature was government reports, policy documents, and evaluation summaries. Information was gathered from government sources such as the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Government of Canada, Government of Ireland, Kerry County Council, and the European Union. Government documents utilized include:

departmental annual reports, policy documents, program guidelines, program evaluation reports, Hansard records, and the Oireachtas papers. Statistical information related to demographic change and employment trends was also gathered from Statistics Canada, the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, and the Central Statistics Office of Ireland.

#### *3.4.2.2 Key Informant Interviews*

Semi-structured key informant interviews were arranged in both cases with individuals possessing knowledge and insight of the regional governance initiative. Interviews were conducted with current and past members of the governance initiatives representing community leaders, community/regional-serving organizations, private businesses, and government. Additional interviews were conducted with other key stakeholders from the regions based on their ability to contribute information to the analytical framework.

Key informants were identified through three methods. First, all current and past members of the governance initiative were invited to participate in the study through a letter/email invitation. Members of the governance initiatives included non-governmental organizations, government agencies, and the private sector. A second invitation to all governance initiative members was delivered during a presentation to each respective board. Second, through a 'snow-ball' approach (Neuman, 2003), key informants were asked to identify additional individuals and/or organizations who might be able to

contribute to the study. Through this process in particular connections were made to organizations involved in activities of the governance initiative. Third, as part of the member checking and reporting back both regional governance initiatives were probed for further individuals and organizations that should be approached to participate in the research.

Interviews were primarily conducted in person in rural communities throughout both case regions and in the administrative centres for each jurisdiction. Interviews were conducted in six communities in the Northern Peninsula region (Plum Point, St Anthony, Port Saunders, Main Brook, Roddickton, Conche) and three administrative centres outside the region (Corner Brook, Deer Lake, and St John's). In the South Kerry area, interviews were conducted in four communities (Cahersiveen, Killarney, Kilorglin, and Waterville) and in five administrative centres outside the region (Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Tralee, and Thurles). When possible, interviews were scheduled in conjunction with existing meetings. In addition to the in-person interviews, three interviews in Newfoundland and two interviews in Ireland were conducted via phone. In each case, the medium of telephone permitted individuals located in peripheral communities to participate in the research and offered flexibility in timing for their participation.

Interviews were conducted over three separate occasions in each region to capture inputs from as many key stakeholders and events as possible. Northern Peninsula region

interviews were conducted in December 2010, February – March 2011, and in October 2012. South Kerry area interviews were conducted from March – August 2011, October – December 2011, and July – August 2012. A total of 43 individuals were interviewed: 20 from the Northern Peninsula region and 23 from the South Kerry area. Interview lengths ranged from 45 to 180 minutes, with the median being approximately 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted in both regions until it was felt that information saturation was achieved.

When possible, interviews were conducted in meeting rooms in public buildings or individuals' offices to provide a quiet and private space for the discussion. In some instances, less than five, interviews were conducted in public spaces such as coffee shops or restaurants due to a lack of meeting rooms in the community at the time of the interview. Prior to beginning an interview, permission was sought from the participant to audio record the discussion for the purposes of creating a transcript and assisting in data analysis. Unexpectedly, a substantial proportion of participants requested their interviews not be recorded: 35% of the Northern Peninsula interviews and 48% of the South Kerry interviews.

In lieu of audio recordings extensive notes were taken during non-recorded interviews. Shortly after the non-recorded interviews, hand written notes were word processed and sent via email to the participant for their comment on accuracy, errors, and

omissions. Comments received from the participant were then inserted into the record of the discussion. Participants electing to not have an audio recording were not pressed to provide a reason for their decision. This being said many participants alluded to their reasons, which included one or more of the following: (i) concerns related to confidentiality and attribution of comments even though participants were assured this would not take place in the letter of consent and verbal introduction, (ii) concerns about potential risks to government funding to both the regional governance initiative being investigated as well as other current and proposed initiatives, (iii) concerns that the competitive advantages of the governance initiatives would be lost or diminished through the sharing of information, or (iv) a general uneasiness with being audio recorded.

In addition to hesitation towards audio recording, a second dilemma was encountered during interviews in both regions. Over the course of the interview many participants asked for at least one component of the discussion to be ‘off the record’ – a discussion to be neither captured by audio recording nor written notes. Participants provided information they deemed to be important to the research, however, it could not be documented or utilized in the analysis. All requests for ‘off the record’ discussions, which took place in 13 interviews in the Northern Peninsula region and 15 interviews in the South Kerry area, were honoured. Information shared during the ‘off the record’ discussions included the identification of internal documents/reports, tensions among actors and networks, and critical reflections on processes. In many instances, information

shared during the ‘off the record’ component would have made valuable contributions to the understanding of collaborative governance and the research questions. None of the information received during the ‘off the record’ conversations has been included in the analysis for this research.

The hesitations towards recording conversations and high prevalence of ‘off the record’ conversations could indicate regional governance initiatives are still in their infancy, with sensitivities and potential fault lines existing. It also could suggest the interrelationships between members/stakeholders, funders, and partners are not as strong as sometimes indicated in mainstream communications, such as annual reports. These hesitations revealed the necessity of building considerable rapport and trust between the researcher and participants.

#### *3.4.2.3 Triangulation and Member Checking*

All social science researchers, according to Stake (1995), need to ensure mechanisms to minimize misrepresentation and misunderstanding. To limit misrepresentation and misunderstanding triangulation and member checking were utilized.

Triangulation was utilized to advance accuracy of the research. Triangulation is the combination of multiple data collection methods on the same phenomenon – regional governance in this study (Jick, 1979; Stake, 1995). Since the 1950s social science

researchers have been making use of triangulation to overcome limitations associated with a single data collection method (Blaikie, 1991). In this study the phenomenon of regional governance has been viewed from multiple perspectives: community residents, municipal/county leaders, community- and regional-based organizations, private industry, and government representatives. Further, additional perspectives on regional governance have been obtained from government documents and local and regional literature as well as through the interviews.

In addition to triangulation, member checking, or informant feedback, is an opportunity to systematically receive feedback regarding the data collected, missing informants, analysis, and conclusions (Creswell, 1998; Morse, 1994). Through member checking, research participants are empowered to assess the credibility of the research (Stake, 1995). Member checking is a key method in qualitative research to “eliminate the possibility of misrepresentation and misinterpretation of ‘voice’ ” (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006, p. 241).

Member checking was continually utilized throughout this research initiative, both formally and informally. Below are four key member checking activities that took place throughout the research.

1. For interviews where audio recording was not permitted a copy of the researcher's notes was circulated by email to the respondent to ensure accuracy by requesting identification of omissions and revisions to errors or incomplete note statements.
2. For interviews where audio recording was permitted five participants requested a draft transcript for review to ensure accuracy. Participants provided minor comments to the transcript notes and in each case the participant returned additional follow up information in the form of website links to information referenced in the discussion.
3. Throughout the period of data collection, key leaders from each regional governance initiative were asked to provide feedback on who had been interviewed with the purpose of identifying potential gaps.
4. Board members and stakeholders of both regional governance initiatives were provided the opportunity to provide feedback on the initial analysis. At the conclusion of interviews and the document review a draft case description of each governance initiative was generated. An oral presentation was delivered to board members of the SKDP in July 2012. Delivering a presentation to members of the NPRCPI was difficult due to the group's mandate expiring in March 2012 (further information on the mandate expiration is provided in the discussion of methodological limitations, Section 3.5). As an alternative, key findings were



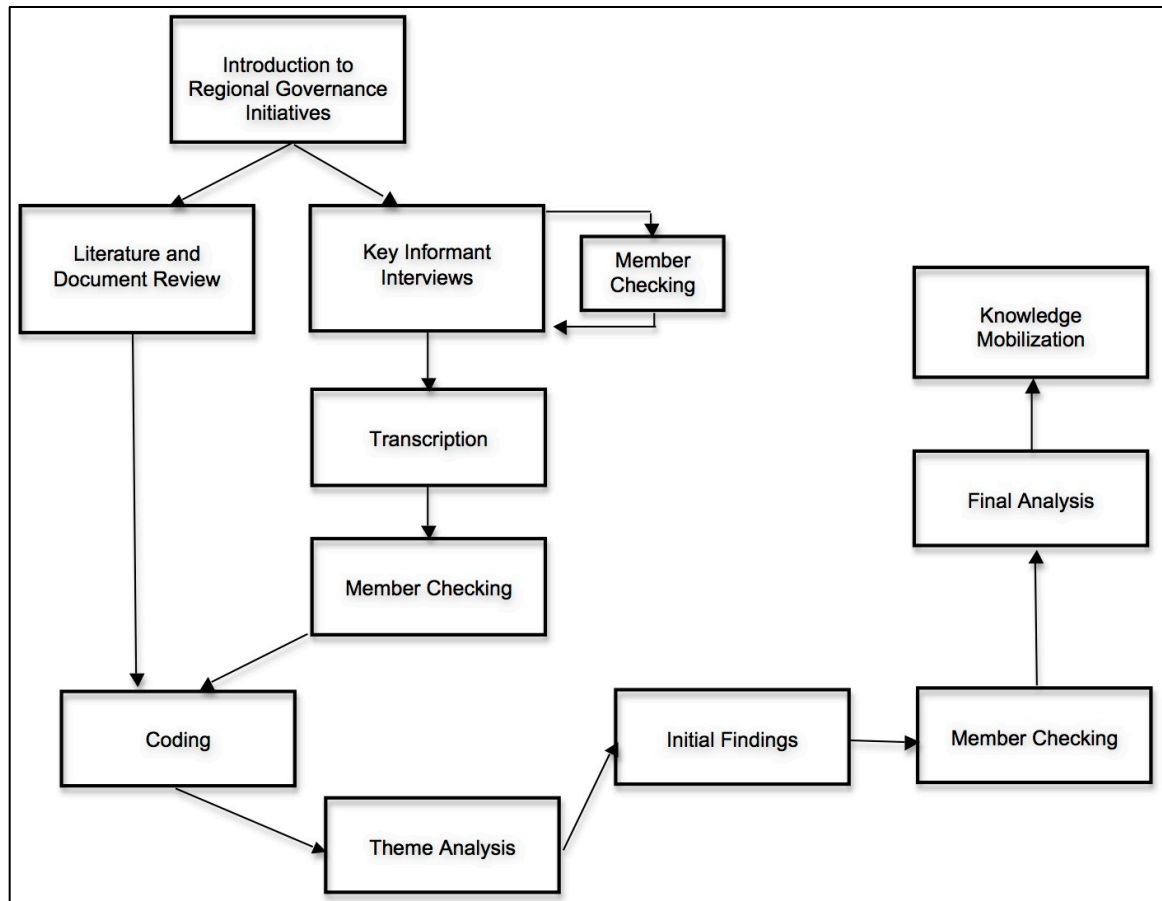
circulated via email to members of the NPRCPI with an invitation for comments and reflections.

Triangulation and member checking provided a platform for resolving conflicts between narratives provided by informants. In the event where two or more respondents provided conflicting stories of the same event(s), which happened in a small number of times in both case regions, triangulation and member checking provided a process to seek clarification. Group member checking sessions were particularly useful in resolving conflicts emerging from the interviews. In instances where the conflict between narratives could not be determined the analysis in Chapter Five acknowledges this conflict.

#### *3.4.2.4 Data Analysis*

To respond to the four research questions data were analyzed through a process of coding and theme analysis. Coding is essentially a method of organizing and evaluating data to extract collective meanings (Cope, 2010). The illustrative steps followed in the collection and analysis of data is outlined in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Data Analysis Flow Chart**



The analytical framework presented earlier guided the coding of key informant interviews. To capture commentary not pre-identified in the analytical framework an open coding approach was used. The open coding process is essentially a freely generated code constructed when reading through a transcript (Burnard, 1991). Open codes were added to the coding book and included throughout the analysis.

At the conclusion of coding a theme analysis was employed to generate an initial findings report, specifically related to research questions 2-4. The theme analysis consisted of reviewing the codes, code frequency, and general patterns recorded during the coding exercise. As Leininger (1985) notes, thematic analysis brings “together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone” (p. 60). During the theme analysis comparisons of findings to literature were also made. Member checking with board members, stakeholders and interview participants provided an opportunity to validate the emergent themes. Feedback from the member checking sessions was integrated into the final analysis and is presented in Chapter 5.

Question one of this research project, the assessment of Ansell and Gash’s (2007) model of collaborative governance, was assessed by examining whether the two cases fit within the model. Differences between the collaborative governance model and the observations in both the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area were noted and investigated to gauge potential influences on the model. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter Five.

### *3.5 Research Challenges*

Throughout the research a number of challenges were encountered. When possible, the researcher made modifications to the research plan to accommodate and mitigate unforeseen challenges. Nevertheless, they are worthy of note because these challenges each had an influence on data availability, data analysis, and the outcomes of this research.

#### *3.5.1 Distance and Weather*

In general, the physical distance between and within the regions hindered case immersion by the researcher. Attempts to overcome this challenge were made through extended stays in the regions, with the longest continuous stay at six months. The researcher also made efforts to volunteer in the regions to enhance rapport.

In the Northern Peninsula two research journeys were thwarted by inclement weather. This resulted in the cancelation of key informant interview appointments. Although most key informant interviews were able to be re-scheduled there was one participant interview scheduled that was never able to be re-scheduled.

### *3.5.2 Change in Key Personnel*

The beginning of fieldwork in the South Kerry area in March 2011 met with substantial confusion. Prior to arriving in the region arrangements were made with the Manager of the South Kerry Partnership in the fall of 2010. Due to unforeseen issues, the Manager went on an indefinite leave in March 2011 and knowledge of this research initiative went with this individual. With the assistance of professors with connections to the region, communications were re-established to the SKDP through an interim management committee.

When communications were re-established, the organization was in the process of coping with personnel changes. Initial discussions with the interim management committee noted their general interest in the research; however, the committee indicated they could not participate until much later due to current commitments and a reduced staff complement. At this stage, mid-April 2011, the SKDP appeared to be unable to participate in the research. Networks in Ireland facilitated future communications with the interim management committee of the SKDP in late April 2011, which resulted in the interim management committee agreeing to participate in the research.

### *3.5.3 Lack of Public Visibility and Knowledge*

In Newfoundland the research was confronted with the lack of public visibility of the NPRCPI. Although this initiative started in 2009, knowledge regarding its mandate, activities, and outcomes was reserved for participating local residents and government representatives. This greatly decreased the number of people and organizations in the region who could speak about the initiative. It also created a potential challenge for releasing research findings, as they might have been the first introduction to the initiative for people living in the region.

### *3.5.4 Overlap with External Evaluation Process*

In the fall of 2011 and continuing through the winter of 2012, after completion of regional field interviews, but before conducting government interviews, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador commissioned an external process evaluation of the NPRCPI. The external evaluation process provided unanticipated challenges. The overlap generated confusion among some stakeholders. Given the considerable overlap of key informant interviews, participants had difficulty in deciphering the difference between this study and the evaluation process. In two instances, key informants declined to be interviewed and were frustrated because they believed they had already participated in the research, when in fact they had only participated in the external evaluation interview.

The direct overlap of interview requests was only discovered through communications with and confusion on the part of participants. Upon discovering the overlap, the researcher placed a hold on interviewing government representatives<sup>6</sup> until after the external evaluation was complete.

### *3.5.5 Gatekeepers*

Throughout the research, in both Newfoundland and Ireland, series of ‘gatekeepers’ were encountered which limited and/or delayed access to key information. It is difficult to determine with any certainty the motivations for these gatekeeping actions. The sensitivities of the topic and the bureaucratic processes associated with governance were contributing factors.

In Newfoundland gatekeepers were encountered when documents were requested from the provincial government. Key informant interview participants often identified documents and reports they received in meetings that they believed would be useful in this research. Requests for these documents, such as the draft terms of reference for the NPRCPI, often went unanswered by government departments.

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<sup>6</sup> The external evaluation included interviews with both local/regional stakeholders and government representatives. There was only an overlap between this research and the evaluation process with government representative interviews. Community and regional interviews had already been completed by the time the evaluation process began, hence avoiding confusion at this level.

In South Kerry the SKDP staff served as gatekeepers who limited and delayed opportunities for the researcher to interact with the board of directors. Contact information for board members was delayed by four months, invitations to speak at board meetings were ignored for three to five months, and general phone and email communications were not responded to for months if at all.

In both regions a series of alternative approaches was explored to circumvent gatekeepers. Due to substantial concerns with alienating partners and repercussions to relationships these approaches were not actively employed. As a result, delays were regularly encountered and a number of resources identified by interview participants were never received or included in the analysis.

### *3.5.6 'Off the Record' Discussions*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, during key informant interviews a total of 28 respondents (65% of the sample) requested at least one portion of their discussion to be 'off the record'. Information provided by participants during the 'off the record' discussion was often critically important to the research. As noted earlier, information shared during the 'off the record' discussions included the identification of internal documents/reports, tensions among actors and networks, and critical reflections on



processes. In honouring their requests, all information received in ‘off the record’ discussions was omitted from the analysis.

### *3.5.7 Timing*

The timing of this research in both Ireland and Newfoundland created a series of unanticipated challenges. In the Northern Peninsula two key events took place during the research, each having an influence. The first timing issue – political elections - emerged on two separate occasions, each having a similar influence. In the 2007 general election Trevor Taylor, candidate for the Progressive Conservative party, was re-elected to the House of Assembly. Mr. Taylor was a member of the governing party and was a senior cabinet minister in the government, holding the portfolios of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development; Fisheries and Aquaculture; and Transportation and Works. In the fall of 2009, Mr. Taylor resigned his post and during the subsequent by-election Marshall Dean, the Liberal Party candidate, was elected. The by-election outcome meant the riding went from the government benches to the opposition benches; a move noted as critical in how the government subsequently interacted with the regional governance initiative (to be described further in the results chapter). In the 2011 general election the riding once again changed, with Christopher Mitchelmore of the New Democratic Party being elected

(Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012a). In a span of two years, each political party had represented The Straits – White Bay North riding.

The second timing issue in the Newfoundland case was the expiration of the NPRCPI's mandate. The mandate of the initiative expired at the end of the 2012 fiscal year. As a result of interviews being postponed because of the conflict with the external evaluation, a small number of key informant interviews were conducted with members after the initiative's mandate expiration date. The expiration of the initiative's mandate was a consistent theme in the post-April 2012 interviews, while, not surprisingly, it had not been present in the other interviews. Although members in the region were keen to see the initiative continue, no formal announcement had been made by government partners regarding their willingness for it to continue at the time of writing.

In Ireland, the research fieldwork commenced during a period of extensive fiscal restraint by the national government. Cutbacks, cohesion, and recession planning dominated national and regional news. For community- and regional-based organizations this was a period of great uncertainty and concern. This uncertainty combined with the unexpected change in senior management created a sense of urgency regarding the organization's future and created an inward, survival attitude that may have contributed to some of the gatekeeper behaviour described above.

### *3.6 Ethical Considerations*

An ethics certificate for this research was acquired from the Memorial University of Newfoundland's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, 2010) based on the principles of the Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement for research involving human subjects. The committee reviewed the research application to ensure the rights of all potential participants and the objectives of the research were made clear. All potential respondents were provided with verbal or written information, depending on the method by which they were contacted, explaining that their participation posed no risk, that it was voluntary, and that the information collected would be kept in confidence (i.e., their identity would not be revealed in any subsequent presentations or publications). Potential participants were also informed that they could refuse to participate in the research, withdraw from it at any time or refuse to answer any of the questions. All key informant interviews were initiated with the review and signing of an informed consent form.

### 3.7 Summary

This dissertation responds to Ansell and Gash's (2007) call for researchers to examine and critique their collaborative governance model. Using their model and an associated framework a case study approach to research was developed. The framework outlines indicators and measures for each of the five concepts: starting conditions, collaborative process, facilitated leadership, institutional design, and outcomes. Four methods were utilized in implementing the analytical framework: key informant interviews, literature review, triangulation and member checking, and data analysis through coding and theme analysis.

To examine the model two cases were selected: the NPRCPI and the SKDP. Both cases appear to meet the criteria for collaborative governance set out by Ansell and Gash (2007) and the Stoker's (1998) five propositions of governance. Further, both governance initiatives appear to meet Stake's (1995) tenets for selecting cases: meeting the collaborative governance definition, meeting the governance propositions, a history of bottom-up initiatives, willingness for collaborative research, and feasibility of access. This rationale provides legitimacy to the selection of the Northern Peninsula and South Kerry as cases in the proposed research.

The next chapter begins to fill out the analytical framework of collaborative governance through detailed case descriptions of both the NPRCPI and the SKDP. The description of each region facilitates an understanding of the ‘starting conditions’ for each governance initiative, which is continued in Chapter Five. The assessments of the collaborative governance model and framework are presented in Chapters Five and Six.

## Chapter 4. Case Studies of Collaborative Governance

### *4.1 Introduction*

This chapter introduces the two case regions used to investigate and assess Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model discussed in Chapter Two: the Northern Peninsula region of Newfoundland and Labrador and the South Kerry area of Ireland. The description of each case focuses on the history of the region, the physiographic features, demography, economic sectors, infrastructure, and local government. The descriptions also briefly outline a number of the key actors within the respective regions.

Through the case discussions it is evident both regions exhibit a long-standing history of regional collaboration and cooperation. Ansell and Gash articulate this history of collaboration and cooperation as a critical component of the collaborative governance model.

## *4.2 Northern Peninsula Region, Newfoundland and Labrador*

### *4.2.1 Brief History of the Region*

The Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland (hereafter referred to as the Northern Peninsula) has a rich history of inhabitants and settlements. Natural resources of the region, particularly fishing, have been a driving influence in the settlement of the region. Settlements in the Northern Peninsula have taken place for the past 4,500 years, with the earliest known inhabitants being the Archaic Indians (Reader, 1998) and the Dorset Palaeoeskimo culture (Hartery & Rast, 2003; Renouf & Bell, 2008). The Dorset Palaeoeskimo settlements were located at current day communities of Port au Choix and Bird Cove. The history and remnants of the settlements at Port au Choix are preserved as a National Historic Site by Parks Canada.

After the Archaic Indians and the Dorset Palaeoeskimo settlements the tip of the Northern Peninsula was briefly established by Vikings around 1000 AD (Ingstad & Ingstad, 1986). Evidence of the Norse settlement in the Northern Peninsula was confirmed through excavations and carbon dating in the 1960s (Nydal, 1989). Similar to

Port au Choix, Parks Canada maintains a National Historic Site at L'Anse aux Meadows to document the settlement and history of the Norse settlement.

The colonial influence of the French and the British greatly influenced the Northern Peninsula region. The Basques and Bretons began their influence in the region through fishing the waters during the 16th century (Browning, 1895; Rompkey, 2003), but permanent settlement of the region did not take place until the late 18th century (Simms, 1986). The Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713, witnessed the retreat of French control of the Hudson's Bay and Newfoundland. As a concession to the treaty, the British granted France the exclusive use of the area known as the French Shore for seasonal fishing, an area from Cape Bonavista to Point Riche (Crosbie, 1956). The boundaries of the French Shore were revised to Cape St John to Cape Ray under the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. The French had rights to seasonal fishing in the French Shore region, but no rights to establishing permanent settlements. As a result settlements in the French Shore, and specifically the Northern Peninsula, remained small in population and sparse (Rompkey, 2003; Sinclair & Felt, 1993).

French exclusivity to seasonal fishing in the French Shore continued until the 1904 Anglo-French Convention, at which time France conceded fishing rights in all jurisdictions in North America with the exception of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (Crosbie,



1956). The history and influence of the French Shore in the Northern Peninsula is celebrated and maintained by the French Shore Historical Society, based in Conche.

#### *4.2.2 Physiographic Description*

The Northern Peninsula is the largest peninsula on the Island of Newfoundland, encompassing approximately 17,483 km<sup>2</sup>. The Northern Peninsula is the most northern region of the Island. The region consists of all communities north of River of Ponds and is bound by water on the other three sides: the Atlantic Ocean and the Strait of Belle Isle. The definition of the southern boundary of what is referred to as the “Northern Peninsula region” is not unanimously agreed upon. Two key demarcations to mark the southern boundary are used by community leaders: (a) north of Gros Morne National Park and (b) the Rural Secretariat Regional Council boundary (River of Ponds and north). This project has utilized the Northern Peninsula region represented by the Rural Secretariat Regional Council (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Map of Northern Peninsula Region, Newfoundland**



The physical geography of the Northern Peninsula has been described as an “inhospitable natural environment” (Simms, 1986, p. 4) consisting of barren hills, flat marshy plains, rock outcrops, fjords, and mountains. The Long Range Mountains form the central core of the region, reaching a maximum elevation of just over 800 metres (Simms, 1986). Mineral exploration for deposits such as uranium, zinc, and copper have taken place in the Long Range Mountains, however, only zinc has been commercially mined at Daniel’s Harbour (Ryan, 1983). The zinc mine at Daniel’s Harbour operated from 1975 until 1990.

The Northern Peninsula has distinct vegetation from the remainder of the Island given its northern location. On average the Northern Peninsula region receives 110-150

frost-free days, compared to 145-170 for the remainder of the Island (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012b). Non-mountains portions of the region have nutrient rich soils, underlined with limestone. The dominant forest cover is balsam fir at lower elevations and black spruce at higher elevations.

The waters surrounding the Northern Peninsula include a wide array of fish species, including: capelin, clam, cod, crab, flounder, halibut, herring, lobster, lumpfish, mackerel, mussel, redfish, salmon, scallop, seals, shrimp, skate, smelt, snow crab, turbot, whelk, and winter flounder (Great Northern Peninsula Fisheries Task Force, 2006; RED Ochre Development Board, 2010).

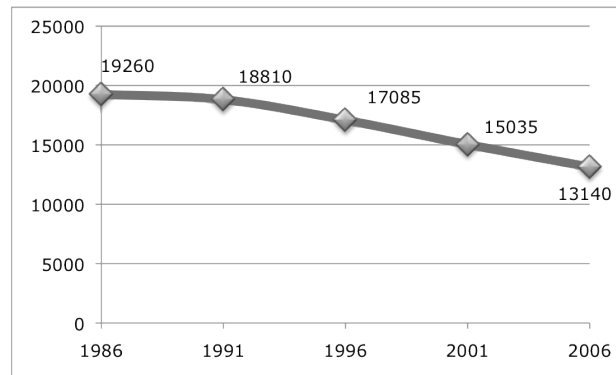
#### *4.2.3 Demographic Profile*

The demographic profile of the Northern Peninsula is a story of population declines, low-income levels, and an aging population. Sinclair and Felt (1993) characterize the Northern Peninsula as a region of marginality, marked with high unemployment, underdeveloped service economy, and high dependence on transfer payments.

According to the 2006 census the Northern Peninsula's population was 13,140, a decline of 12.6% from 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2006). During the same period of time the province of Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a population decline of 1.5%.

The population decline witnessed by Northern Peninsula between 2001 and 2006 is part of a longer term decline occurring continuous since 1986 (see Table 8<sup>7</sup>).

**Table 8. Population Change in the Northern Peninsula Region, 1986-2006**



Source: Community Accounts (2012)

Individual communities within the Northern Peninsula region have experienced similar declines. The largest communities in the region by population are listed in Table 9.

**Table 9. Population Change in Largest Northern Peninsula Communities, 2006-2011**

Community	2011 Population	2006-2011 Population Change
St Anthony	2,418	-2.3%
Roddickton	1,057	-4.2%
Port au Choix	839	-6.0%
Port Saunders	697	-6.7%

Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

<sup>7</sup> Statistics from the 2011 census have not been aggregated for the Northern Peninsula region.

Population declines are not taking place in all communities in the Northern Peninsula region. A number of smaller communities are experiencing population growth, such as Anchor Point (1.6%) and Flower's Cove (14.1%). In both instances the population increase can be attributed to a small number of people moving into the small communities which had 2011 populations of 325 and 308 respectively (Statistics Canada, 2011).

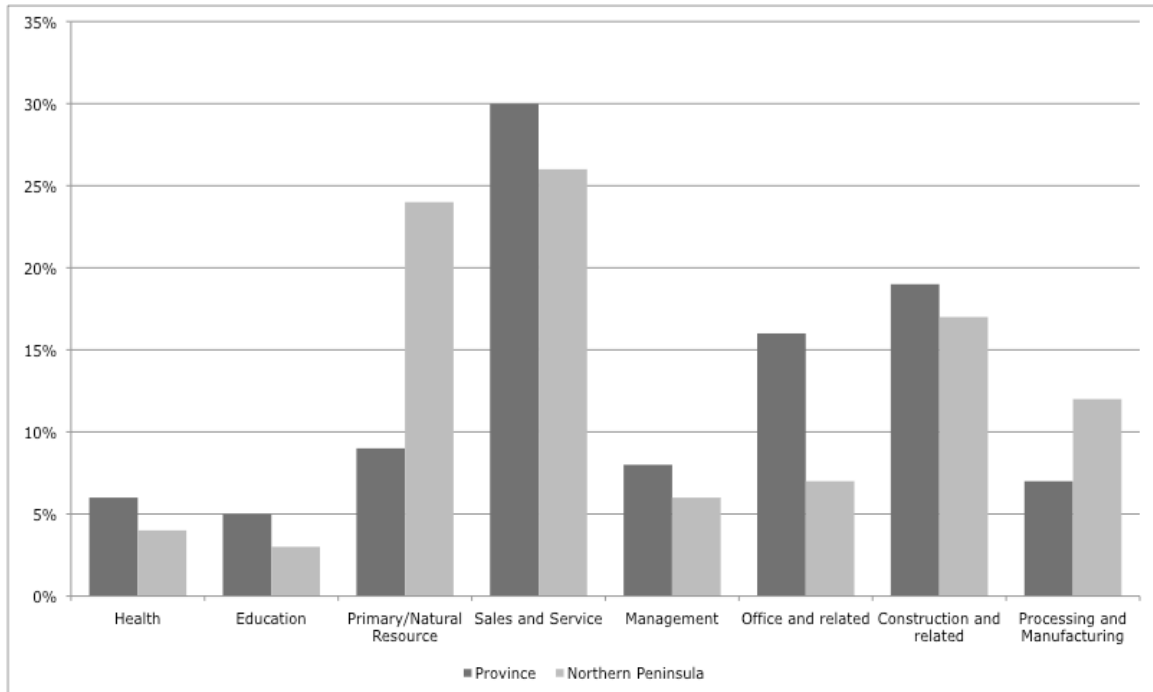
#### *4.2.4 Economic and Employment Characteristics*

Natural resource extraction has been a constant throughout the history of the Northern Peninsula's economy. Fish originally drew the Norse, French, and British to the region. The dominance of two natural resources, fishing and forestry, continues today in the region. Compared to the province, the Northern Peninsula's economy has a higher unemployment rate and lower family incomes.

The economy of the Northern Peninsula is concentrated in four economic categories, as represented by occupational classifications: 'Sales and Service' (26%), 'Primary/Natural Resource' (24%), 'Construction and related' (17%), and 'Processing and Manufacturing' (12%). The influence of natural resources is clearly evident with 1,740 people employed in fishing and forestry and 610 people employed in fish

processing. Figure 4 compares the economic sectors of the Northern Peninsula region with those of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Figure 4. Comparison of Economic Sectors in Northern Peninsula and Province, 2006**



Source: Community Accounts (2012)

Employment and unemployment in the Northern Peninsula vary throughout the year, depending on seasonal employment opportunities. In the 2006 census, the Northern Peninsula's employment rate for adults between the ages of 18 and 64 was 46.7% and the unemployment rate was 36.5%. The provincial employment rate in the 2006 census was 58.7% and the unemployment rate was 18.5%.

The average couple family income in the Northern Peninsula was \$60,600 in 2007, dramatically lower than the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial average of \$74,900 and the national average of \$93,700. The Northern Peninsula's self-reliance ratio, a measure of the region's dependency on government transfers, was 67.5% in 2007. The self-reliance ratio for the province was 79.4%. The sources of government transfers in the region include Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, and Income Support Assistance (Community Accounts, 2012).

#### *4.2.5 Local Government*

“Although its history has been lengthy, Newfoundland's experience with local government has been relatively brief.”

(Government of Newfoundland, 1975)

Local government in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is a complex and crowded story, leading some to label the state of local government in the province as weak (Freshwater, Simms, & Vodden, 2011). Local government among communities in the periphery of the province can be characterized by low democratic participation, limited human and financial capacities, and increasing responsibilities.

Crosbie, in his 1956 assessment of local government in the province, noted that small settlement patterns dispersed across a large land mass and the isolation from

political movements taking place elsewhere in Canada shaped the local government system, whereby local communities were essentially left to organize independent of provincial interference. That being said, Greenwood et al. (2011) note the province of Newfoundland and Labrador maintains tighter reins on local governments than any other Canadian provincial government. In his submission to the Commission on Employment and Unemployment, Simms (1986, p.4) noted, “despite the interest and intent of numerous programs, there is a strong feeling that there has been no real effort made towards adopting an effective integrated approach for the long-term development of the province’s rural sector”.

In the Northern Peninsula a mixture of local government structures exist, with different responsibilities and capacities. Although permanent settlements in the region have long histories, municipal incorporation did not occur in the Northern Peninsula until after World War II, such as St Anthony in 1945. The region consists of incorporated municipalities, local service districts, and unincorporated communities. In total, the region is home to 51 communities (Rural Secretariat, 2012).

Incorporated municipalities are legal entities with jurisdictions within a specific geographical boundary. Incorporated municipalities adhere to responsibilities outlined by the *Municipalities Act*. There are 16 incorporated municipalities in the Northern Peninsula.



Local Service Districts (LSDs) are a level of local government permitted under the Municipalities Act. LSDs do not have the same authority or requirements for provision of services as incorporated municipalities. A LSD can provide services to communities or geographic areas that have similar needs in seven areas: water supply, sewer systems, fire services, garbage collection/disposal, street lighting, animal control, and snow clearing. A LSD is created after a petition supported by the majority of local residents within a geographic zone is presented and accepted by the provincial government. A LSD is led by an elected Committee consisting of 5 to 7 members of the geographic area (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1999). In the Northern Peninsula there are 18 LSDs (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2013).

In addition to incorporated municipalities and local service districts the Northern Peninsula region has a number of unincorporated areas. Unincorporated areas are small settlements that are not recognized by the *Municipalities Act*. These settlements do not have a collective leadership or administration. Service provision in unincorporated areas is the responsibility of the provincial government. The Northern Peninsula region includes 17 unincorporated areas.

#### 4.2.6 Key Regional Actors

Over the past century there are many illustrations of multi-community collaboration in the Northern Peninsula region. In 1905 a consumer cooperative was established in St Anthony and shortly afterwards a salmon producer cooperative and a salt fish marketing cooperative were established (Sinclair, 1989). More recent illustrations of multi-community collaboration include the Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council. The Joint Council consists of elected officials from municipal councils in the Northern Peninsula region. The Joint Council's mandate is to foster relationships among municipalities of the region, to serve as a collective voice for the region, and to seek discussion and solutions to common issues (Great Northern Peninsula Joint Council, 2007).

The Northern Peninsula region is home to a number of regional actors, representing a variety of interests such as economic development, waste management, municipal collaboration, and tourism development. A brief description of a few key regional actors is provided below.

##### Regional Economic Development Boards

The formation of REDBs emerged from the provincial government's strategic economic plan, Change and Challenge (Government of Newfoundland

and Labrador, 1992). The strategic economic plan articulated a need for establishing 17 economic zones in the province to pursue long-term economic development. In response to requests from local regional development associations and municipalities the province launched the Task Force on Community Economic Development to examine organizational structures and programs/services of REDBs. In 1995, at the conclusion of the Task Force, nineteen REDBs were established in the province. All REDBs were given a mandate for strategic economic planning, developing regional partnerships, capacity building to strengthen the regional economy, and coordinate linkages between local, regional, provincial and federal organizations responsible for economic development (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012c).

At the time of this study two REDBs were located in the Northern Peninsula: the Nordic Economic Development Corporation and the Red Ochre Board. Nordic Economic Development Corporation provide services to 35 communities in the northern and eastern portion of the region (Nordic Economic Development Corporation, 2012), while the RED Ochre Board provide services to 34 communities (Red Ochre Regional Board, 2011). It should be noted that only one of three RED Ochre Board sub-regions was within the boundaries of the Northern Peninsula.

As of May 2013, both the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced they would be discontinuing their funding agreements with the REDBs (Gibson, 2013). As a result, Nordic and Red Ochre have discontinued their operations, leaving the region with substantial confusion regarding regional development roles and responsibilities.

#### Rural Development Associations

The Northern Peninsula region was home to the province's first rural development association (RDA). In 1967, the Northern Regional Development Association was created to support local development issues in the region from grassroot endeavours. RDAs are incorporated agencies and operate with a democratically elected board of volunteers. In the early 1980s the Northern Regional Development Association was devolved into six sub-regional RDAs (Sinclair, 1989), of which two still operate: St Barbe Development Association and White Bay Central Development Association (Freshwater et al., 2011).

#### St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

The establishment of the Rural Secretariat as a unit within the Executive Council of the provincial government in 2004 also created the St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council. The Regional Council consists of a government appointed board of seven members from the Northern Peninsula region. The

Regional Council is charged with the mandate to provide regionally appropriate advice to government on policies, programs, and other initiatives relevant to their region (Rural Secretariat, 2011). The St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council facilitates discussions and information sharing, and provides advice to government on issues relevant to the Northern Peninsula region.

#### Northern Peninsula Waste Management Service Board

The Northern Peninsula Waste Management Service Board (Norpen) emerged from a waste management study conducted by Nordic Economic Development Corporation in 2001. Norpen is a regional authority, incorporated under the Regional Service Board Act, that provides residential, municipal, and commercial waste collection and disposal services to communities of the Northern Peninsula region. A board composed of individuals elected from regional public meetings governs Norpen (Northern Peninsula Waste Management Service Board, 2012).

#### NORTIP Development Corporation

NORTIP Development Corporation is a Community Business Service Center funded through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, a federal

government agency. Created in 1989,<sup>8</sup> NORTIP Development Corporation provides assistance to residents of the Northern Peninsula region in developing, expanding, and stabilizing businesses and opportunities. NORTIP partners with regional stakeholders and government departments to facilitate economic diversification in the region and support economic and social development (NORTIP Development Corporation, 2010). An elected board of directors governs NORTIP.

#### Viking Trail Tourism Association

The Viking Trail Tourism Association is a non-profit organization composed of tourism operators, municipalities, and government departments in the Northern Peninsula region and southern Labrador. The Association was formed in 1988, replacing the Northern Travels organization, from the belief that the region was not receiving adequate publicity. The mandate of the association is to market and promote the region and the region's assets, which include national parks, national historic sites, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Viking Trail Tourism Association, 2012).

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<sup>8</sup> NORTIP Community Futures was established in 1989 and later merged with Northland Business Corporation in 1995 to create NORTIP Development Corporation.

These are not the only regional stakeholders in the Northern Peninsula, they but have been the key groups involved in regional development. Historical collaborations in the Northern Peninsula region are discussed further in Chapter Five.

## 4.3 South Kerry, Ireland

### 4.3.1 Brief History of the Region

*Kerry people say there are only two kingdoms,  
the kingdom of Kerry and the kingdom of God.*

*- Popular expression in Co. Kerry*

County Kerry has a long and rich history. This history spans the Celtic invasion, Goidels, the Christian invasion, and the English invasion (Barrington, 1976). Located in southwestern Ireland, County Kerry is situated in the historic province of Munster.

The earliest recorded evidence of human settlement in the South Kerry area dates from the Mesolithic period (Mitchell, 1989; Woodman, Anderson, & Finlay, 1999). Excavations have revealed evidence of human settlements in the areas of Valencia Island and the south coast of the Dingle Peninsula, dated at around 4,600 B.C. (Mitchell, 1989).

During the period of 2,400 – 600 BC the South Kerry area received an additional influx of inhabitants driven by the presence of copper, particularly in the region around present day Killarney (Connolly, 2009). During the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the dynamics of population continued to change with the Elizabethan and Cromwellian invasions and attempted conquests of Ireland (Crowley & Sheehan, 2009).

Throughout all of these developments, Johnson claims that the “past still remains firmly embedded in the Irish present” (1994, p. 1). South Kerry, and Ireland in general, has a deep tradition of settlement and agriculture extending over thousands of years (Freeman, 1972). At the end of the day, Ireland still remains a geographic outpost in relation to mainland Europe (Johnson, 1994).

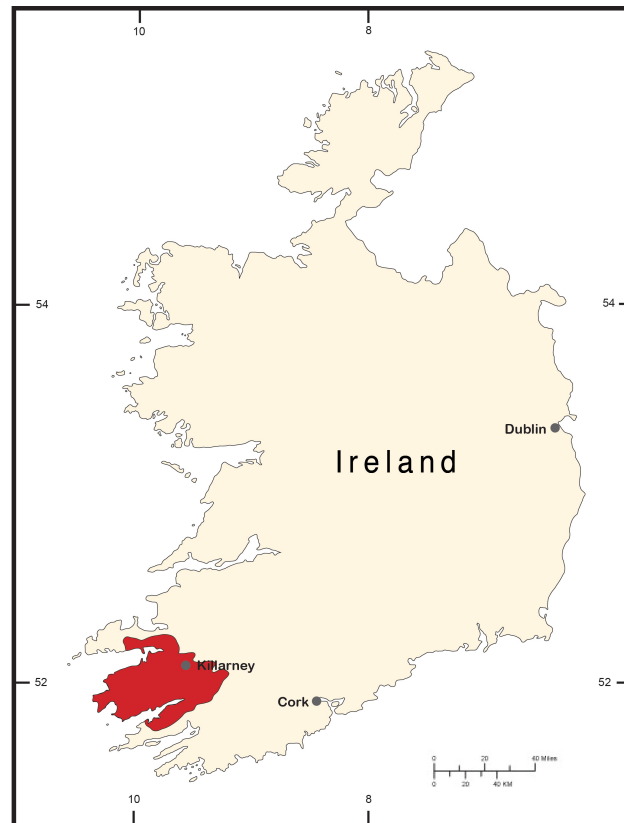
#### *4.3.2 Physiographic Description*

The South Kerry area is located in southwestern Ireland, encompassing an area of approximate 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> (O’Keeffe, 2007). South Kerry, one of the western most parts of the European Union, consists of approximately half of the surface area of County Kerry. The region consists of 65 electoral districts, the smallest statistical unit in Ireland. The boundary of the region is based on the approximate merging of the South Kerry, Mid Kerry, and West Kerry Gaelic Athletic Association Boards. The region is bordered on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, includes all of the Iveragh Peninsula, the southern Dingle



Peninsula, the northern Beara Peninsula, and the areas surrounding Kilorglin and Killarney (see Figure Five).

**Figure 5. Map of the South Kerry area**



The physical geography of South Kerry has been described as a “museum of glacial forms” as much of the topographic features are the outcome of four continent-wide periods of glaciation (Freeman, 1972, p. 352). The region consists of diverse landforms, including the highest lands in Ireland, uplands, and coastal lowlands (Drew, 1989). The diversity in the region led Freeman (1972, p. 351) to describe the region as “maritime, peninsular, and mountainous”. As a result of glacial activity, the region has

limited land use capabilities for agriculture (Gardiner, 1979). The exceptions to this are lands in the Killorglin, Killarney, and Kenmare areas. Farms in the South Kerry area are typically smaller than farms elsewhere in the Republic of Ireland (Kerry County Committee of Agriculture, 1972), with the majority of farms in County Kerry region being 34 hectares, slightly larger than the Irish average of 32.47 hectares (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2012a).

The South Kerry area has a moderate climate subject to high winds, high levels of rainfall, and a small range of temperatures. The high winds prevent significant vegetation from growing in the region. Throughout the valleys of the region oak, birch, ash, hazel and holly can be found (Freeman, 1972). The annual rainfall in the region ranges from 1,600 to 2,000 mm (Drew, 1989), with the number of days with rain ranging from 250 to 275 days per year (Johnson, 1994). The rainfall amounts in South Kerry are more than double the precipitation received in the Irish capital.

#### *4.3.3 Demographic Profile*

The demographic profile of South Kerry is complex due to the mix of agricultural lands, distance, and urban pockets of growth. Cawley (1986) noted the South Kerry area has been described as a “problem area” due to population declines, low population densities, an above average number of elderly people, and a long history of out-migration.

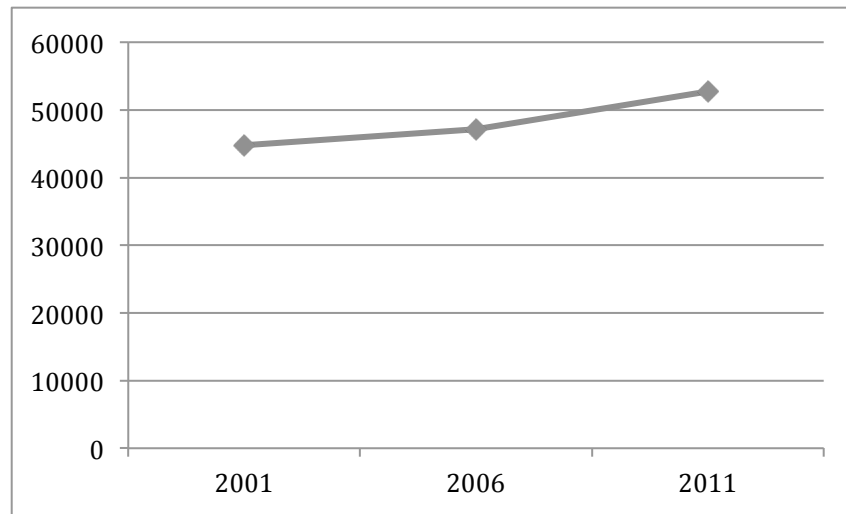
Recent demographics for the region suggest the label of ‘problem area’ may not be completely accurate.

The Town of Killarney, an internationally renowned beauty spot, dominates the population dynamics of the South Kerry area: it is the largest community, has the most diverse employment opportunities, and the largest selection of amenities. Population growth in the South Kerry area is concentrated in the east and north regions.

Communities such as Killarney and Killorglin are centres of population growth, attracting new businesses and new residents. The remainder of South Kerry continues to encounter population declines, predominantly in rural areas of the region. As O’Keeffe (2007, p. 5) notes, the South Kerry area is “much more rural than most of the state. This rurality is compounded by peripherality and isolation in many parts, particularly in the Iveragh and Beara Peninsulas.” As a result, many areas of South Kerry are demographically weak, with high age dependencies and a continuing high reliance on agriculture.

According to the 2011 Census the population of the South Kerry area was 52,685, an increase of over 10% from the 2006 census (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2011). During the same period, the Republic of Ireland’s population increased by 8.2%. Over the past three census periods, the population of South Kerry has experienced continuous increases (see Table 10).

**Table 10. Population Change in the South Kerry area, 2001-2011**



Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland (2011)

Three of the four largest communities in the South Kerry area experienced population increases from 2006 to 2011 (see Table 11). The rate of population growth in Killorglin and Kenmare exceeded the regional average of 10%. Only Cahersiveen experienced a population decrease during this census period.

**Table 11. Population Change in Largest South Kerry Communities, 2006-2011**

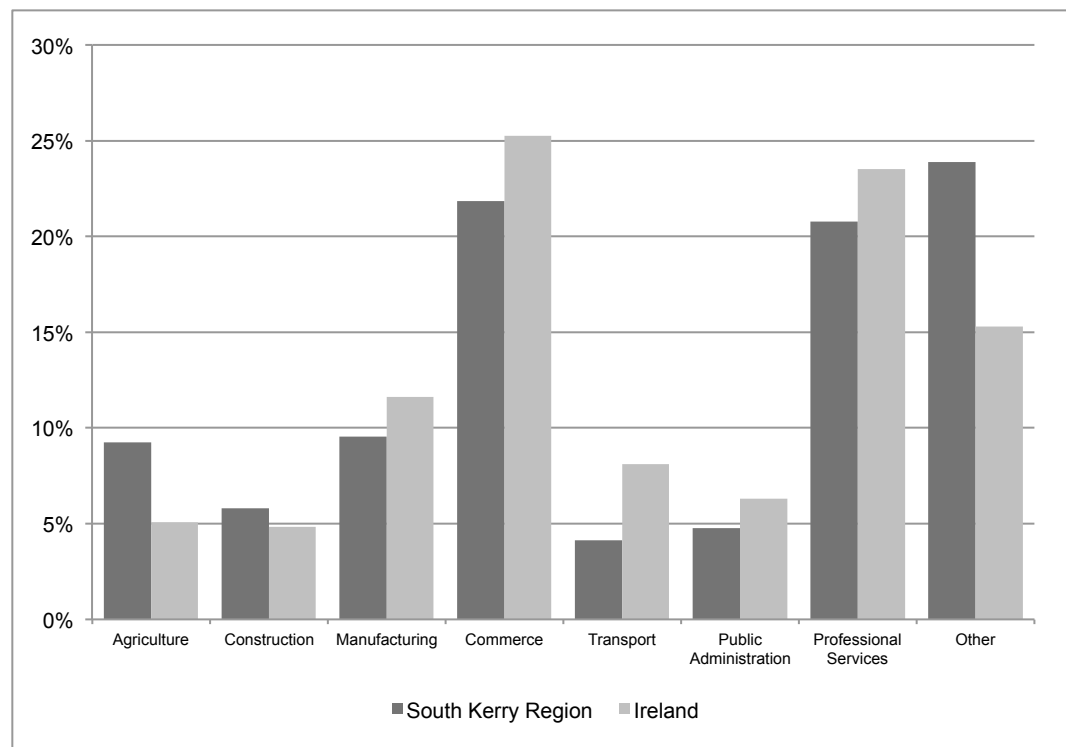
Community	2011 Population	2006-2011 Population Change
Killarney	14,219	1.5%
Kenmare	2,175	10.3%
Killorglin	2,082	27.9%
Cahersiveen	1,168	-11.3%

Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland (2011)

#### 4.3.4 Economic and Employment Characteristics

The agricultural sector has long been the historic backbone of the region's economy (Kerry County Committee of Agriculture, 1972). O'Keeffe (2007) notes South Kerry has a higher level of dependence on primary agriculture than does the Republic of Ireland. As Figure 6 illustrates, the proportion of residents employed in agriculture is nearly double that of the average for the Republic of Ireland.

**Figure 6. Comparison of Economic Sectors in South Kerry and Ireland, 2011**



Source: Central Statistics Office Ireland (2011)

The economy of South Kerry is dominated by three sectors: commerce (21.8%), professional services (20.7%), and other/non-listed occupations (23.8%) (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2011). Much like population growth, the quantity of employment positions within these three sectors is not uniform across the region. Commerce, professional services, and manufacturing position are predominantly located in the east and north of the region in larger populations centre of Killarney and Killorglin.

The unemployment rate in South Kerry, paralleling the situation nationally in Ireland, has been on the rise in the past decade. During the ten year period, 2001 to 2012, the number of registered unemployed individuals in County Kerry increased by 150% (Hickey, 2012). Between 2006 and 2011, South Kerry registered an 11% increase in the unemployment rate, the same rate as the country (Central Statistics Office Ireland, 2012b). Increases in unemployment have been most dramatically witnessed in Kenmare, Killarney, and Killorglin.

#### *4.3.5 Local Government*

The emergence of local government in Ireland is intimately tied to its history; particularly as a response to colonial rule by the United Kingdom. Adshead (2002, p. 3) notes that after Ireland gained independence the new central government “sought to exercise as much control over the machinery of government as possible”. As a result, the

original Irish constitution made no provisions for sub-national levels of government. Considerable power was reserved for the central government, even with the *Local Government Act* being implemented in the 1920s (Haslam, 2003). Over the past 90 years, local government legislation has been modified many times, with the current incarnation being the *Local Government Act of 2001*. The outcome of these legislative changes has contributed to the region having one of the weakest sub-national levels of government in the European Union (OECD, 2008b).

Within the South Kerry area two types of local government are present: the County Council and the Town Council. The entire South Kerry area is contained within the boundaries of County Kerry, one of the 29 county local governments in Ireland. Counties, such as Kerry, are the primary area of local government in Ireland. County Councils are corporations under Irish law, which can only be terminated by parliamentary statute (O'Sullivan, 2003). County Councils have elected membership, with elections conducted every five years. Each county is further divided into electoral districts that often correspond to towns and villages; however, these districts are predominantly statistical collection units. The role of the county government is focused on housing and building, road transportation, water supply and sewage, planning, environmental protection, and recreation and amenity (Callanan, 2003). Kerry County Council is the formal name of the county council in the region.

In addition to Kerry County Council, one Town Council exists in the South Kerry area: Killarney Town Council. Town councils are a lower level of local government, subsidiary to county councils. Town councils, representing communities with a central population exceeding 7,500, have limited powers and responsibilities. Typical responsibilities include housing, water services, and amenities within the boundaries of the town (O’Sullivan, 2003). An elected board of nine members represents each town council, with elections held every five years. It should be noted that by 2014, the government of Ireland has proposed to dismantle all town councils (Department of Environment Conservation and Local Government, 2012).

No community in the South Kerry area, other than Killarney, has a community-specific government body. All communities in the South Kerry area are members of Kerry County Council.

#### *4.3.6 Regional Actors*

In the 1960’s, South Kerry was described as a “rural problem area” (Cawley, 1989) – an area of stagnant population growth, large distances to urban centers, and difficulties in service delivery. Further, rural problem areas were centres of low population density, higher proportions of elderly people, and centres with a history of out-migration (Cawley, 1986). This notion of a ‘rural problem area’ facilitated the South



Kerry area's participation in Irish and EU schemes designed to promote local economic development and equitable service delivery.

Similar to the Northern Peninsula region, the South Kerry area is home to a number of regional actors. A brief description of a few key regional actors is provided below.

#### Kerry County Development Board

In 2000 the Irish government created a series of county development boards based on recommendations in the Report of the Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems (1998). The county development board is a statutory board and, while operating under the County Councils, independent in their activities (Kerry County Council, 2012).

The County Development Boards were designed to coordinate economic, social, and cultural development in the counties. The membership of the county development boards consists of four sectors: local government, local development organizations, social partners, and state agencies operating in the county (Department of Environment Community and Local Government, 2007; Kerry County Council, 2012).

Each year the Kerry County Development Board organizes a series of community engagement sessions. These sessions, referred to as the Community

and Voluntary Fora, provide an opportunity to identify community and volunteer representatives to the various local authority structures and the County Development Board.

#### Kerry County Enterprise Board

In 1993, the Irish government created 35 county and city enterprise boards. The enterprise boards were created to support and facilitate micro-enterprise development and entrepreneurship in each county (County and City Enterprise Boards, 2012).

The Kerry County Enterprise Board operates for the entire county, not just the South Kerry area. The Kerry County Enterprise Board promotes small business start-ups and job creation through a suite of financial assistance programs and capacity building sessions. The board consists of representatives from 14 organizations, including local authority, state agencies, social partners, and community organizations (Kerry County Enterprise Board, 2012).

#### Family Resource Centres

Family Resource Centres were created throughout Ireland to address disadvantages associated with families. In the South Kerry area there are four family resource centres: Ballyspillane Family Resource Centre (Killarney), Droichead na Daoine (Sneem), Killorglin Family Resource Centre (Killorglin),

South West Kerry Family Resource Centre (Cahersiveen). Each family resource centre operates a series of skill and capacity-building programs, offers family oriented services, and generally works with marginalized groups in the region (Family Support Agency, 2012). As a non-profit organization, Family Resource Centres are frequently partners and program deliverers of government initiatives.

### Teagasc

Teagasc is the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority, a state funded national organization. Teagasc has provided research, training and advisory services to communities throughout Ireland since its creation in 1988 (Teagasc, 2013). Teagasc, particularly through its regional office in Tralee, provides services throughout the South Kerry area. Teagasc is also a legislated board member of the SKDP.

These are by no means the only regional stakeholders in the South Kerry area; but they are key groups involved in regional development. Historical collaborations in the South Kerry will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

## 4.4 *Summary*

Each of the case regions demonstrates a unique history, physical landscape, and demographics. Similar across both cases, however, is weak local government apparatuses. Building on the context of each case region the next chapter presents the findings of interviews with key informant interviews. The governance initiatives taking place in each of the regions are placed in Ansell and Gash's (2007) five component collaborative governance model, commencing with 'starting conditions'.

## Chapter 5. Findings

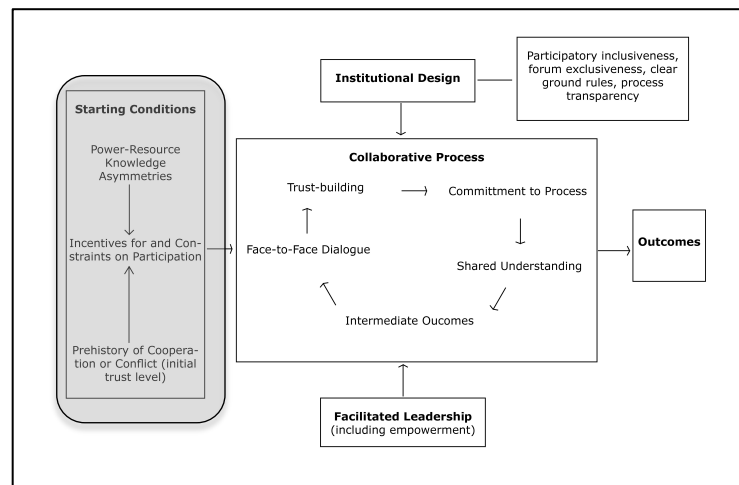
### *5.1 Introduction*

Building on the discussion of the regions and their previous history of collaboration this chapter continues the discussion of the two case regions, specifically focused on the NPRCPI and the SKDP. Each of the governance initiatives is presented based on the collaborative governance model.

The chapter is organized by the five components of Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model: 'Starting Conditions', 'Collaborative Process', 'Institutional Design', 'Facilitated Leadership', and 'Outcomes'. The description of each governance initiative has been constructed based on the key informant interviews conducted in each region and the secondary document review conducted. These descriptions are utilized in Chapter Six to analyze whether the collaborative governance model adequately captures the governance process in the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area.

## 5.2 Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Initiative

### 5.2.1 Starting Conditions



#### 5.2.1.1 Prehistory of Cooperation or Conflict

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Northern Peninsula region has a strong history of inter-community cooperation. This cooperation has manifested itself in cooperatives, regional development agencies, sector-based initiatives (e.g. regional tourism boards), and a joint municipal council (Vodden, Hall, & Freshwater, 2013). With declining population the region has witnessed a shift towards joint community initiatives, such as regional sports teams and shared municipal services (Northern Peninsula Regional Services Board, 2011; Vodden, 2005).

The level of inter-community cooperation has fluctuated over the past fifty years, however, it was noted by respondents that in times of crisis the region rallies together. This was most recently experienced when the provincial government announced the relocation of the St Anthony air ambulance station to Goose Bay (Bartlett, 2010) and the closure of the Flower's Cove medical laboratories (Bartlett, 2009). Municipalities, community organizations, and residents mobilized to advocate for a reversal of provincial government decisions, however, they were unsuccessful in both instances.

#### *5.2.1.2 Power-Resource-Knowledge Asymmetries*

Within the Northern Peninsula region a mixture of formal and informal entities exist, each with unique power, responsibilities, degrees of legitimacy, resources, and knowledge. The symmetry of these resources is far from balanced among actors in the Northern Peninsula region.

As discussed in Chapter Four, not all communities in the Northern Peninsula region share equal local responsibilities. There is a mixture of incorporated municipalities, LSDs, and unincorporated communities. Each of these entities carries different responsibilities, powers, and resources. Incorporated municipalities in the region carry the most legislative powers and responsibilities. These entities also tend to have more financial and human resources than local service districts or unincorporated communities. It should be noted that substantial differences of power, responsibilities, and resources can be witnessed within the same level of entity, such as the difference between an

incorporated municipality with a population of 2,000 and an incorporated municipality with a population of 400.

At the local and regional organization level there is a parallel asymmetry in power, responsibilities, and resources. Many organizations operate based on project funding primarily sourced from provincial and federal government programs. The continued reliance on fiscal year funding programs hampers the ability of these organizations to plan for and implement medium- and long-term initiatives.

Actors in the Northern Peninsula each hold knowledge of their region and the subject matter of their organization/entity, such as economic development, finance, and the fishery. This knowledge is both represented in public information and non-public, or confidential, information. Knowledge held, and the ability to utilize the knowledge, is unequal amongst the actors in the region.

The starting conditions related to power, resource, and knowledge within the Northern Peninsula region is one of asymmetry. All actors possess knowledge, responsibilities, and resources; however, it is far from equal amongst the actors. It should be noted that volunteer burn out, out-migration of youth, and geographical labour mobility exacerbate the power asymmetry in the Northern Peninsula region.



### *5.2.1.3 Incentives for and Constraints on Participation*

In the lead up to the formation of the NPRCPI a series of incentives was offered to the communities and organizations in the Northern Peninsula region to encourage their participation.

One of the biggest incentives was the opportunity to change the status quo on how and where decisions were made for the region. Essentially, the status quo for decision-making and actors was considered less than ideal. This is further elaborated in the next sub-section, Institutional Design. Regional actors viewed the opportunity to work with the provincial government as a vehicle for advancing the increased regional responsibilities for decision-making.

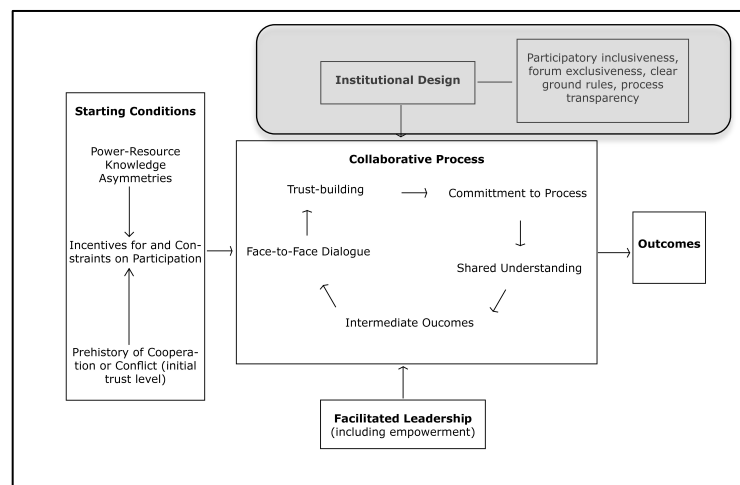
The provincial government also provided financial incentives for the region to participate. The province, through the Department of Municipal Affairs, provided three years of financial support to facilitate the NPRCPI. This funding was to be utilized to bring key actors together, to offset travel costs incurred by organizational members, and to meet administrative costs.

At the same time, however, there were two principal constraints to participation in the NPRCPI. First, the geography of the region meant substantial travel time requirements for people engaged in the initiative, both from within the region and those external to it. The location of meetings often translated into three to five hours of driving

for each meeting for stakeholders within the region. The geography of the region also contributes to the second constraint experienced.

The second constraint was time availability of people involved in the initiative. With a backdrop of volunteer burn out, stakeholders noted it was difficult to engage in a meaningful manner given their other commitments to work, family, and their community. For individuals actively engaged in the workforce finding time to participate in meetings meant taking unpaid time off work or rearranging work commitments to accommodate.

### 5.2.2 Institutional Design



#### 5.2.2.1 Membership

The membership of the NPRCPI consisted representatives from the region appointed by Orders in Council of the provincial government. Twelve regional representatives were identified from three groups: the Joint Mayors' Council, REDBs,

and the St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat. Each of these groups was allowed to select its representatives to the NPRCPI. One stakeholder noted, “someone outside the region essentially carved out a handful of groups, giving each a number of representatives” (KII-NP-01).

The provincial government established the boundary for the NPRCPI. The Initiative’s boundary paralleled the boundary of the St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat. Many regional and provincial government representatives noted the awkwardness of this boundary from two perspectives. First, most representatives noted that the Northern Peninsula is typically defined by people in the region as all communities north of Gros Morne National Park. The NPRCPI does not go this far south, such that communities from Trout River to Daniel’s Harbour are outside the boundary of the Initiative. The second challenge noted regarding the boundary was how it divided the Red Ochre Regional Board, a former REDB. Only one-third of the Red Ochre Regional Board’s area was included in the NPRCPI. The boundary of the NPRCPI was never changed throughout its existence.

In addition to the regional representatives, five provincial government departments/agencies were identified by the provincial government to participate: Innovation, Trade and Rural Development; Municipal Affairs; Rural Secretariat; Tourism, Culture, and Recreation; and Transportation and Government Works. For the majority of

the duration of the NPRCPI the Rural Secretariat was the lead government partner. As lead, the Rural Secretariat provided facilitation, organizational, and secretariat support to the Initiative. The involvement of the four remaining provincial departments was often based on the content of meeting agendas, such that if proposed discussions did not fit within their mandate the department would not attend. A number of stakeholders (KII-NP-02, KII-NP-07, KII-NP-11) described the participation of these four government departments as “sporadic”, “parachuting”, and “distant”. This sentiment contributed to challenges in building trust among stakeholders, which is discussed in more detail in section 5.2.4.1 (Trust Building).

When asked about whether all the key stakeholders from the region were at the table two dominant themes emerged from participants. First, there was a noticeable disconnect between the main economic drivers of the region and the participation from provincial government departments. KII-NP-04 stated, “The Northern Peninsula has three major industries: fishing, forestry, and tourism. Of these sectors only the Department of Tourism participated in the Pilot”. The provincial departments of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Natural Resources were noticeably absent according to a number of respondents. The second concern about membership related to municipal involvement. Two items emerged from these discussions. First, there was concern that the largest community in the region, St Anthony, was not involved in the NPRCPI. It was noted that St Anthony was a member of the Joint Mayors’ Council and received updates on the

Initiative, however, some questioned the absence of a voice from the largest community during the process. The second concern about municipal engagement was the lack of representation from LSDs in the region. LSDs are not members of the Joint Mayors' Council, and had no representation on the NPRCPI.

In terms of inclusive participation, the NPRCPI was restricted to organizations invited by the provincial government, as noted above. On occasion stakeholders discussed whether other organizations or representatives were missing from the table. Stakeholders recalled noting key sectors missing from the group, such as health and natural resources, and that there was no voice for young people. According to KII-NP-03, “the draft terms of reference allowed for a small number of at-large members to be appointed to the pilot initiative, however, I am not really sure what ever happened on this front? We had a few conversations but the entire terms of reference were never ratified if my memory serves me correctly.” The degree to which the NPRCPI was inclusive of organizations not represented through the Order in Council is discussed further in Transparency of the Process (5.2.2.3).

#### *5.2.2.2 Ground Rules*

The Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Initiative does not have a formal document outlining ground rules or processes for decision-making. When the group first

met a draft terms of reference<sup>9</sup> was presented, however, this document was never finalized or adopted. A number of representatives noted the sharing of the terms of reference served as a catalyst for confusion, as many were confused as to what was proposed in the draft document with how the group should move forward. Many stakeholders noted that the key ground rule for the group was respect. One stakeholder suggested that the informal, yet widely accepted, ground rules were “respect each other’s opinions, everybody is entitled to speak, everybody is right, everybody is wrong, and regardless of who is right or wrong they are still allowed to speak” (KII-NP-01). The lack of a guiding document, such as terms of reference, was frequently noted when discussing the NPRCPI’s mandate (discussed in the previous section), decision-making (discussed below), and leadership (discussed later in Section 5.2.3).

Throughout the course of the NPRCPI decisions were made through consensus. One stakeholder questioned whether they were actually a decision-making body: “I guess they are not really decisions. I guess they are more like recommendations” (KII-NP-07). Most individuals noted that Turning Point technology<sup>10</sup> was utilized to facilitate discussion, resulting in consensus decision-making. Through Turning Point technology, a

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<sup>9</sup> The draft terms of reference document was requested by the researcher from representatives of the provincial government; however, this document was never received. The discussion regarding its content is based solely on the descriptions provided from key informant interviews.

<sup>10</sup> This technology involves each participant having a response pad to answer questions posed. The information is sent instantaneously to a central computer, whereby all responses to the question are aggregated and posted through a PowerPoint presentation.

series of closed ended questions with a limited number of responses were presented to participants. Each participant would then be required to select the most appropriate response. Stakeholders enjoyed the use of the technology to facilitate decision-making as it presented an interactive means for discussion and decision-making. A few stakeholders noted the clickers did not always work, particularly in circumstances where a yes/no response did not fit. For example, one stakeholder noted that if you were presented with five options and asked to pick the most important for the region you are selecting the one most important from the list, rather than the one you believe to be the most important for the region. In all instances where Turning Point technology was used it was accompanied with group discussions. Turning Point was used to narrow the range of options for recommendations, with formal decisions being made by consensus.

#### *5.2.2.3 Transparency of the Process*

Ensuring that the process of collaborative governance is transparent is a critical consideration (Ansell & Gash, 2007) and contributes to trust amongst stakeholders. Transparency of process(es) helps to empower local and regional actors, ensuring value to an initiative. Furthermore, transparency serves to address issues of accountability, particularly financial accountability (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2006). Given the current political and financial environment, accountability is tremendously important. In addition to this, accountability has been described as a pre-requisite for effective

regional development strategies and effective governance, as discussed in Chapter Two (Geddes & Newman, 1999; Pike, 2004).

When asked to describe the transparency of the process NPRCPI stakeholders were hesitant. The source of this hesitation was in regard to how much information had been shared with the communities of the Northern Peninsula region. As one member stated, “The communities of the region would be isolated from what the pilot is doing” (KII-NP-01). Since its formation in 2009, the NPRCPI never engaged in communications with the residents, organizations, or businesses of the region beyond those that constituted the Initiative’s board. “Unfortunately, in the two years that this pilot has been going there hasn’t been any public acknowledgment” (KII-NP-04). The limited information sharing took place when stakeholders shared information with their constituents: the Joint Mayors’ Council, the economic development boards, or the Regional Council. The extent to which information about the NPRCPI was transmitted from the constituent groups to the wider community was suggested to be quite limited. Discussions with stakeholders noted concern about transparency given this lack of awareness within the region. “People in this region are not aware of the Pilot” (KII-NP-13).

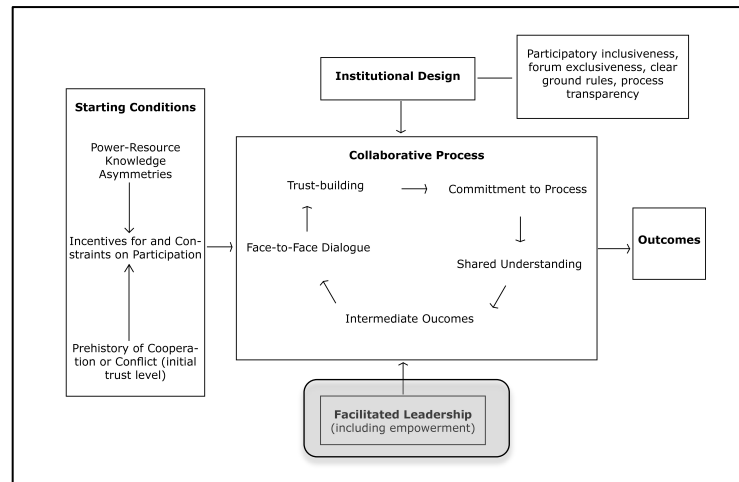
In 2012, stakeholders began exploring how communications could be disseminated within the communities and what messages should be communicated.



Based on stakeholder discussions, ‘point people’ were identified if media asked for comments on the Initiative (KII-NP-03). These ‘point people’ would speak to the media regarding the NPRCPI. No formal communications plan was developed or proactive initiative taken, although many stakeholders noted the need for communications with other stakeholders in the region.

Throughout this research, spring 2010 to summer 2013, no information on the NPRCPI was released to the public by the group. During this time no reports, list of recommendations, or other materials were announced or made available to the public. The process evaluation report commissioned by the provincial government discussed in Chapter Three (Section 3.5.4) was finalized in spring 2013, but this report has not been made available to the public at the time of writing. The lack of materials in the public domain restricted literature reviews related to this research. This lack of transparency of the NPRCPI hindered its ability to achieve legitimacy. The lack of transparency and its influence on collaborative governance is discussed further in Chapter Six.

### 5.2.3 Facilitated Leadership



Ansell and Gash (2007) articulate leadership as a critical ingredient for collaborative governance. Leadership can facilitate clear ground rules, enhance trust, and promote discussion. Key facilitated leadership capacities identified by Ansell and Gash (2007) include mediation, facilitation, the ability to promote participation, and the skills of being an honest broker. In governance initiatives where power, resource, and/or knowledge asymmetry is present, the importance of facilitated leadership is heightened. This section explores the leadership structure and mechanisms for conflict resolution of the NPRCPI.

From day one the NPRCPI lacked a formal leadership structure. The original draft terms of reference, as noted by respondents, outlined a process for selecting an independent chairperson. The stakeholders held discussions on potential roles for the

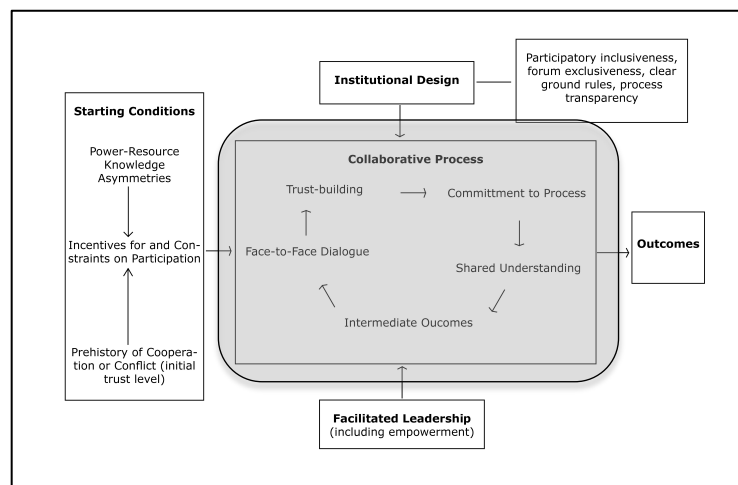
chair and brainstormed names of potential individuals for the position. As the terms of reference were never finalized the discussion of a chairperson faded. As KII-NP-09 described, “there was a period of time when there was discussion of getting a chair; that kind of fell away from the wayside.” The NPRCPI continued without a formal leadership structure with one provincial government agency, the Rural Secretariat, acting in the role of facilitator. As a result, the Rural Secretariat became the “*de facto* leader” for the Initiative (KII-NP-01, KII-NP-03, KII-NP-13). Most stakeholders had no qualms with a government agency acting in the role of facilitator: “they are seen as a neutral body” (KII-NP-01), “I think they have made a difference to the outcomes” (KII-NP-06), “it has worked out real well” (KII-NP-03). Jokingly, one stakeholder described the leadership structure: “I would fondly like to say it was a dictatorship. I will say fondly because nobody has got an issue with it” (KII-NP-01). However, a number of stakeholders noted issues with the *de facto* leadership structure.

A number of stakeholders would have preferred a chair from the region. Two stakeholders expressed their belief that a chair would “hold the group together more than a government leader” (KII-NP-07). It was suggested that a local leader from the region would be able to motivate and maintain momentum in a different and stronger manner than government. Another stakeholder noted, “I would still like to have a chair. At the moment we don’t have a leader. I mean, it is no good to say we are all leaders. We are in

a way but we still need a leader. And if you are facilitating you cannot be our leader”  
(KII-NP-03).

The second reflection on the *de facto* leadership structure identified by stakeholders emerged when submitting resolutions. Two stakeholders pondered if recommendations would have been accepted in a different manner by government if presented by a regional chair, compared to another government department (KII-NP-08, KII-NP-10). It was believed a regional chairperson might have been able to advocate to government more, or in different ways, than a government facilitator.

#### 5.2.4 Collaborative Process



#### *5.2.4.1 Trust Building*

Building trust among regional and government stakeholders is articulated as a key requirement of collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007). At its heart, collaborative governance must be about more than simply negotiation between partners. There needs to be deliberate mechanisms to build and maintain trust among participants. The perils of the absence of trust, or the decline of trust during the relationship, are well documented (Das & Teng, 1998; Mohr & Spekman, 1994). Building and maintaining trust is a time intensive and long-term process that can not be taken lightly (Walsh & Annis, 2004). In the Northern Peninsula trust building was spoken about from two perspectives: before and during the NPRCPI.

Building on the ‘starting conditions’ described in Chapters Three and Five, most stakeholders, both in the region and in government, described the Northern Peninsula region as having good long-term trust between organizations and communities. This is not to say a lack of trust does not exist; rather, trust was not viewed as disruptive to the progress of the NPRCPI. This view of trust between communities and organizations was not unanimous. One respondent noted, “there is not a huge amount of conflict in the region, although from time to time there has been some on an incident basis” (KII-NP-01). Trust among individuals and organizations was described as stronger than inter-community trust. One participant described the sense of regional trust as being fragmented. This was due to “people doing their own thing in their own community and

they are not part of, even though they may seem to be supportive of the next community or community down the road, they probably didn't think about it in the same context as they do now" (KII-NP-02). Another person further described this lack of inter-community trust as being a legacy of the current municipal structure. "Towns are so focused on themselves and their populations. Their mandate is for their community. Most of the time by definition, it is very difficult for them to cooperate" (KII-NP-07). Many stakeholders noted this perception of low inter-community trust in the past but suggested the level of inter-community trust has been increasing in the past decade. The state of trust between the Northern Peninsula region and the provincial government parallels the fluctuations noted in inter-community trust. A number of stakeholders (KII-NP-04, KII-NP-06, KII-NP-3) alluded to recent factors or events that they believed compromised this trust, including the relocation of the St Anthony air ambulance station (Bartlett, 2010) and the close of medical laboratories in the region (Bartlett, 2009).

Since the NPRCPI started in 2009 the general sense among participants is that there has been an increase in trust, which was directly linked to the Initiative. This being said, there was considerable commentary provided indicating strains and limitations to this trust. As one participant explained, "I think there's a fair amount of trust but I think there is also a level, or certain amount of distrust" (KII-NP-02). Strains on trust among participants stem from two sources. First, there was a reported lack of understanding of each organization and their mandates by other organizations. Stakeholders, both

government and regional, noted “people do not necessarily understand each other and their roles” (KII-NP-09). Although everyone knows the names of organizations and agencies involved in the NPRCPI it was questioned whether everyone truly understands the mandates and activities of each organization and agency. This lack of a clear understanding of the organizations represented at the NPRCPI is compounded when representatives try to understand the motives behind discussions. “Sometimes when I am able to understand their [an organization’s or agencies’] motives and figure out where they are coming from on a particular angle it makes it a lot easier in discussion for me to be able to decide whether or not their perspective really isn’t a regional one or not. I don’t necessary always trust their motives” (KII-NP-01). The second source of strain that emerged is a carry over from the long running tensions in the region. Many stakeholders noted the traditional lack of trust and community-specific focus remains. “The sources of the distrust haven’t really changed over the years. It is human nature I think” (KII-NP-04).

Although strain causes challenges for building and maintaining trust, many stakeholders believed progress was being made and that trust was increasing. The mere process of coming together on a regular basis to discuss regional issues and opportunities has encouraged dialogue among stakeholders. From this dialogue comes a better understanding of the organizations and agencies, enhancing the level of trust. This is illustrated in the following two comments from stakeholders: “I think people are more comfortable with each other than they were at the start” (KII-NP-01) and “trust has gone

up - it has improved” (KII-NP-06). Many stakeholders also noted that with more time will come more trust.

One of the largest trust building exercises of the NPRCPI was working with the Department of Transportation and Works in 2010-2011. During discussions with this department stakeholders received confidential information to facilitate their discussions on roads improvements in the region. One stakeholder commented, “the ADM’s [Assistant Deputy Minister] came and were giving us material labeled confidential. I said there is a trust involved here. We were saying we are going to be confidential with regard to the information they were giving us, we are not going to feed it to the media” (KII-NP-03). Most stakeholders singled out this activity as paramount to building trust between stakeholders, particularly between the region and the government.

The momentum towards increasing trust has not been a linear process for the NPRCPI. “For every step forward we make, we seem to take a few steps back the next time we meet” (KII-NP-04). A key illustration of this was the continuation of the narrative between the NPRCPI and the Department of Transportation and Works. After working together to prioritize regional road improvements a recommendation was submitted to the provincial government. “We were riding a high after that process. Spirits were up. The world was our oyster ... until the announcement when the wheels came off” (KII-NP-07). The announcement is a reference to the Department of Transportation and



Works releasing a list of roads scheduled for maintenance and repair in the Northern Peninsula region. The disappointment for stakeholders was associated with two issues. First, there was little similarity between the list of prioritized roads developed by the Initiative to those announced by government. Stakeholders were disappointed and started to question their effectiveness in advocating for regional priorities. Second, there was frustration over the lack of communication after the list of priorities was submitted. After working with the department over a series of meetings to understand the decision-making process regarding roads and building their prioritized list, stakeholders expressed disappointment the government did not attempt to communicate with them regarding their decisions before releasing the information to the public. In the aftermath of the regional road improvement discussions, many questioned the legitimacy of the NPRCPI. This is discussed later in this chapter. Follow up discussions with other government departments assisted to partially rebuild trust among stakeholders.

#### *5.2.4.2 Commitment to Process*

In the collaborative governance model the commitment of each regional organization and government agency to the process of the NPRCPI is directly related to the success of the initiative. The commitment to the process by actors is a critical factor in determining its success or failure (Ansell & Gash, 2007; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2003). Intrinsically tied to the commitment to process is the notion of ownership of the process. At its core, collaborative governance “shifts the ownership of decision-making from

agencies to the stakeholders acting collaboratively” (Ansell & Gash, 2007, p. 559). The ability of stakeholders to abide by the deliberations and decisions is paramount. Given the emphasis on ownership of the process and commitment to process, collaborative governance is well suited for long-term cooperation between multiple stakeholders. The commitment to the process in the NPRCPI is examined from three perspectives: commitment of regional stakeholders, commitment of government stakeholders, and shifts in ownership of the process.

Among regional stakeholders a high sense of commitment to the process was articulated. “Most of them are committed. I think they believe in the process” (KII-NP-08). Stakeholders to the NPRCPI reported that most representatives attended meetings and participated in discussions on a regular basis. For many regional stakeholders, participating in a daylong meeting (or multi-day meetings) is a significant contribution of time due to work and personal schedules. The act of attending meetings for these individuals represents placing a priority on the NPRCPI over other items in their schedule. This being said, two challenges to regional stakeholder commitment were noted.

The commitment to process was hindered by the lack of attendance by some representatives. A number of stakeholders noted the attendance record for a small number of members was much lower than the rest of the group. “At one point every member of the stakeholder group has been out one or two meetings, however some are better at

catching up than others” (KII-NP-04). The act of missing meetings often meant time would need to be devoted at the next meeting to acquaint members with missed discussions<sup>11</sup>.

Second, the commitment to process was challenged by confusion over the mandate of the NPRCPI. Given the multiple parallel events taking place at the time of emergence of the NPRCPI, a number of different misconceptions were held by stakeholders. The NPRCPI’s mandate was never truly resolved according to many stakeholders (KII-NP-02, KII-NP-05, KII-NP-07), which caused a number of misconceptions to persist. These misconceptions were directly related to stakeholders’ commitment to the Initiative. In instances where a stakeholder believed the Initiative was headed in a direction that did not correlate to their understanding of the mandate, their engagement declined. This took place for some stakeholders when the Initiative began delivering specific projects, such as the initiative on network weaving (KII-NP-05).

The commitment of government agencies to the NPRCPI was described as “varied, depending on the government department” (KII-NP-09). This description appeared in discussions with both government and regional stakeholders. Two substantial challenges were encountered, each of which diminished the commitment to the process. These were changes in departmental representatives and departments that “floated in and

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<sup>11</sup> Determining attendance rates is difficult as no minutes were captured of the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative meetings.

floated out of meetings” (KII-NP-01). The changing of a department’s representative to the NPRCPI was problematic as it was difficult to build trust and to convey the content of previous discussions. Although a department provides background notes to a new representative, it was noted the process of preparing a new department representative was difficult due to the nature of this governance initiative. The second, even greater challenge noted, was the inconsistent attendance of some government department representatives. As a result, stakeholders indicated this appeared to compromise the commitment of government stakeholders to the process.

Shifts in ownership of decision making, a key element of the collaborative governance framework, was largely absent in the NPRCPI. This was a result of the NPRCPI’s mandate being one of advance advocacy to government on regional priorities and opportunities rather than decision-making per se. Prior to the implementation of the NPRCPI, discussions took place regarding transferring ownership of the process and decision-making to the Northern Peninsula region, but this did not materialize. Even within the role of advanced advocacy there were concerns about how government departments would response to the new relationships with the NPRCPI. One stakeholder explained, “there was a degree of nervousness on the part of the government along the lines of, you ask them for the advice and input on this and then you don’t agree on any of it and then go off and do something different. How is this going to look?” (KII-NP-20). Given the mandate, the NPRCPI was designed around principles of public engagement

and advocacy, not shifts in ownership or decision-making. One stakeholder noted this eloquently, “we can only make suggestions to government. Don’t get me wrong; this is more than we had before! I would still like to see this move more towards moving power out of the Confederation building” (KII-NP-03).

#### *5.2.4.3 Face-to-Face Dialogue*

The ability and desire to meet face-to-face among all stakeholders is an important condition of collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Meeting together facilitates building trust, eliminates barriers to communication, and re-enforces a shared understanding. The NPRCPI chose to meet five to six times per year in the region. The vast majority of the interactions of the NPRCPI took place face-to-face. In addition to these face-to-face meetings, supplementary meetings were conducted via conference call lines and alternative online communication platforms, such as Skype and Live Meeting. Stakeholders noted an appreciation for the use of online communication platforms as it eliminated the need to travel for a meeting. Depending on the meeting location in the region and the stakeholders’ home/work location, it was noted that one could spend more time traveling to and from the meeting than actually participating in the meeting.

In discussions with stakeholders two things were identified as hampering face-to-face meetings of the NPRCPI. The challenge illustrated in the previous section regarding volunteer burn out hindered participation in face-to-face meetings. The challenge of fitting commitments to the NPRCPI were seen as difficult for many, however, it was

further challenged by the frequent changes to meeting dates and times. Many stakeholders noted great difficulty in making the face-to-face meetings due to “last minute planning of meetings” (KII-NP-21). Dates for meetings were not necessarily set well in advance, and those meeting dates set in advance were often revised. One stakeholder noted, “you are almost forced to find a way to re-jig your schedule and with all the things I am involved that is extremely difficult” (KII-NP-01).

The second theme that emerged influencing face-to-face meetings was the capacity of each organization or agency to participate, discussed earlier as asymmetry. Many stakeholders noted “an imbalance between members of the Pilot” (KII-NP-01, KII-NP-04, KII-NP-06, KII-NP-20). These imbalances were primarily related to financial capacities and human resources capacities. “The groups that are the weakest in financial resources aren’t able to have the human resources and technology for collaboration”, which limits their abilities to participate in the NPRCPI (KII-NP-07). To mitigate financial capacities the NPRCPI, through assistance from the provincial government, provided reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses incurred for all stakeholders but the financial assistance from the provincial government did not address the human resource capacities to facilitate local stakeholders to meaningfully participate.

#### *5.2.4.5 Shared Understanding*

Actors in both the region and provincial government summarized the catalyst for the emergence of the NPRCPI as a desire to do things differently in the region. Although there was a general agreement on where the NPRCPI emerged from, consensus among participants on the initiative's initial mandate differ. The differing perceptions of the mandate appear to be influenced by multiple parallel events and activities that took place in the Northern Peninsula region in the lead up to the creation of the NPRCPI. Three dominant views of the mandate are discussed below: (i) to shift financial decision-making authority to the region, (ii) to enhance collaboration in the region for economic development purposes/strategies, and (iii) to advocate regional priorities to the provincial government.

Throughout the region there was a strong sense among community residents that change was required in the municipal system/structures. Although consensus on the need for changes to the municipal structures appeared, consensus on what specific changes were required seemed absent. The discussions of change among the Joint Mayors' Council were the backdrop to a series of conversations between the Joint Mayors' Council and the Member of the House of Assembly (MHA) for The Straits – White Bay North, Trevor Taylor. Mr. Taylor was a prominent member of the governing political party, holding the portfolios of Fisheries and Aquaculture (2003-2005), Transportation and Works (2005-2006), Innovation, Trade and Rural Development (2006-2007). Mayors

from the region were seeking opportunities to enhance their input into government decisions in the Northern Peninsula region and changes to the current municipal system. KII-NP-01 describes this frustration, “the very origins were from people in this area talking to him [Taylor] and telling him this [the current municipal system] doesn’t work”.

The need for change in the relationship between the region and the provincial government was further fueled by declines in the historical economic sectors: fisheries and forestry. KII-NP-20 states the Joint Mayors’ Council met with Mr. Taylor to “gripe about the demise of the fishery and some decline of the forestry industry – the two main back bones of the economy – and here he was, the minister of the province’s main economic development agency. Mayors did not feel there was enough money or projects being funded to really make a difference in the area.” There was also a perception, widely held by interview participants, “there is not as much activity on the Northern Peninsula [by the provincial government] and attention needed to be paid to regional deficits.” (KII-NP-02). Deficits, in this regard, was a holistic reference to financial, infrastructure, and resource deficits.

The emergence of the NPRCPI, from these discussions between the Joint Mayors’ Council and the local MHA, appeared to be widely accepted by respondents. But differences emerged among regional stakeholders and government officials around the NPRCPI’s original mandate. These differences of perceptions of the NPRCPI’s initial



mandate are important to understanding the confusion stakeholders speak about regarding shared understanding, institutional design, and facilitated leadership.

Initial discussions between the Joint Mayors' Council and Mr. Taylor focused on two key elements: to move financial decision-making from the provincial government to the region and to increase the amount of government funding available to the Northern Peninsula. One member of the Joint Mayors' Council stated, "we were looking for additional funding for the region" (KII-NP-10). Through discussions it was proposed a new entity be created in the region for holistic regional discussions. This new entity's membership would include more than just municipal leaders and they would have decision-making authority for the spending of provincial dollars in the region. One participant described this understanding as "a new group, a pot of money, authority from provincial government, and a mandate to do good things to benefit the region" (KII-NP-13). The transfer of decision-making and authority from the province to the region was seen as advantageous. Regional decision makers were viewed as being better connected to the challenges and opportunities of the region. Mayors were quick to recognize that a transfer of power would also come with a potential for blame. "Right from the beginning, they [government] would put the blame on us [the region] if it went wrong. This was fine. We'll take the blame if it comes around if it means moving power from St John's to the Northern Peninsula" (KII-NP-03). The belief, understanding, or desire to see regional decision-making authority and better access to provincial funds was dismissed at the first

gathering of the NPRCPI participants. One participant recalled, “they [government officials] came out and said ‘no money’. They could not give money to an unincorporated group” (KII-NP-03).

At the same time as members of the Joint Mayors’ Council were advocating for change in the decision-making process, other stakeholders held the view that the NPRCPI was a vehicle for enhancing collaboration in the region for economic development purposes. This mandate perception was very different. Rather than transferring decision-making powers to the region, these stakeholders indicated that they anticipated the NPRCPI would be a forum for discussions on identifying key economic development opportunities and potential economic investment strategies for the region. As one respondent indicated, “I thought it was an opportunity to provide informed advice to government and other regional partners on investments in the Northern Peninsula” (KII-NP-19). Building on this understanding, there was a recognition that the ‘mad dash for cash’ system currently in place for economic development was not working (KII-NP-18, KII-NP-04). “There are too many organizations chasing too few dollars, each trying to do the same thing” (KII-NP-14).

The third perceived mandate of the NPRCPI was that it would be a vehicle to enhance collaboration in the region. Some stakeholders explicitly recognized the need for a regional forum where representatives from municipalities, regional development

associations, REDBs, community-based organizations, industry, and provincial government could come together to discuss the future of the Northern Peninsula region. “My understanding of the whole initiative was to get stakeholders from the area to determine collective goals and priorities” (KII-NP-06).

The NPRCPI began in 2009 from these three perspectives. It is also from these perspectives that confusion of the NPRCPI’s mandate emerged. From day one, a regional participant exclaimed, “there has been confusion since the beginning because people really didn’t know what the role of the pilot was to be or what is actually was!” (KII-NP-04). Over the NPRCPI’s lifespan this view remained (KII-NP-08). Regional and government stakeholders each described related, but somewhat contradictory, mandates for the NPRCPI.

According to a senior official in the Rural Secretariat the mandate of the NPRCPI was to provide advice to senior members of the provincial government with advice advocating regional priorities in government policy and program decisions (Case, 2009). “It was an opportunity to sit down with senior government folks to get them to understand what we are thinking. Feel the emotions, look at us and understand the seriousness of what were are talking about” (KII-NP-06). Another member described the mandate as a forum “to get stakeholders from the area and determine initiatives and priorities for the region and to provide advice to various government departments” (KII-

NP-04). Many stakeholders articulated the mandate in this way; however, there were three additional variations of this mandate.

The first came through a number of participants who described the mandate of the NPRCPI as an attempt to build a new form of governance over the longer term in the region. One participant remarked that the NPRCPI was “an opportunity to get decision-making from the bottom up rather than the top down” (KII-NP-06). A second participant explained that it was “the means through which government and stakeholders could build a new collaborative form of governance to advance regional sustainability” (KII-NP-07).

The second permutation in the mandate related to the emphasis, or lack of emphasis on regional economic development. A number of stakeholders understood that the NPRCPI would discuss, strategize, and facilitate economic development enhancements and opportunities in the region. It was believed that these priorities would be advocated to senior government officials and government ministers to advance economic development in the Northern Peninsula (KII-NP-09, KII-NP-10, KII-NP-03). As one stakeholder noted, “the traditional economic backbone of the Northern Peninsula region, the fisheries and forestry, are in trouble. This region is a relatively depressed region. High unemployment, low gross family incomes. We are hoping to get something going that will drive economic development through the pilot.” (KII-NP-09).

The third variation on the mandate saw the NPRCPI as a deliverer of programs and activities. A small number of representatives wanted like to see the NPRCPI undertake activities, projects, and research to further the understanding of regional priorities. At the same time, there was a number of dissenting voices indicating there is already substantive capacity in the region to undertake programs or activities. As a result, it was suggested the NPRCPI could brainstorm requirements but advocate existing entities in the region to undertake the specific activities. These sentiments, formed from the three variations, shaped and influenced the NPRCPI over the course of its activities.

To ensure an effective relationship, Ansell and Gash (2007) posited that all stakeholders must have a shared understanding of what the stakeholders wish to achieve collectively. A shared understanding of any initiative's mandate, purpose, objectives, goals, and values is required. A lack of a consistent shared understanding is the foundation for challenges related to trust, communications, and outputs. A shared understanding is critical to fostering an environment for shifting ownership.

In the NPRCPI there was no collective, shared understanding of the mandate. For many government and regional stakeholders a sense of confusion emerged, largely influenced by the three dominant views of where the NPRCPI came from. One stakeholder claimed, "there is confusion. I think some people are wondering sometimes, well do we really know what the expected outcomes are" (KII-NP-07). Part of the

confusion was associated with the fact the “overarching goals of the Pilot were mandated by the cabinet terms of reference”, not the stakeholders (KII-NP-01). As a result, stakeholders had a lower commitment to the initiative. Stakeholders also pondered the motives of each government agency involved in the NPRCPI from the perspective of why they were involved and what they hoped to get from the experience. A number of regional stakeholders indicated they “weren’t made aware of the motives” for each government agency to participate (KII-NP-03).

At the same time, there was a shared understanding and commitment from all stakeholders that something has to change in the Northern Peninsula region to facilitate sustainability and revitalization. To that end, there was consensus among everyone sitting around the NPRCPI table that they desired to see improved economic and social conditions for the region. As one individual noted, “you look at the population studies that are enough to scare you - if we don’t do something we’re going downhill” (KII-NP-06). Other stakeholders noted the sense of a shared understanding for the initiative is starting to coalesce: “It has taken almost three years, but I think it is starting to develop” (KII-NP-04). It is not surprising that considerable time was required attempting to achieve a shared understanding, particularly given the challenges noted about face-to-face meetings, volunteer burn out, and the ‘float in/float out’ sense of some participants. By the conclusion of the Initiative, no central mandate was recorded.

#### 5.2.4.5 *Intermediate Outcomes*

During the process of building collaborative governance initiatives Ansell and Gash (2007) highlight the need for ‘small wins’. These small wins can be thought of as achievements or successes attained by the group based on their actions. Small wins are important for continuing the momentum towards bigger goals, projects, and/or processes. Three key intermediate outcomes were identified.

Among stakeholders there was almost consensus on the first outcome of the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Initiative – getting everyone to the table. As one stakeholder stated, “there hasn’t been a lot of history of collaboration here, especially not amongst so many different groups. You might be talking about one, two, or three groups that might collaborate together but to get five groups to collaborate together is a bit unique for there” (KII-NP-01). Further, KII-NP-07 noted, “people have a greater understanding of each other and the needs of the groups that are involved in it is an achievement”. A number of stakeholders remarked the achievement of getting people to return to the table meeting after meeting to continue the regional dialogue was a substantial intermediate outcome.

The second intermediate outcome identified by stakeholders was an enhancement of regional thinking. Many participants in the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Initiative believed they had achieved a “stronger regional thinking and that there is less of that competitive tension that was there originally” (KII-NP-10). The efforts of bringing

people together, discussing regional priorities, and having a facilitated dialogue was generating progress. The regional thinking perspective was stated by stakeholders as “a new way of doing things - getting people to step outside their own little bounds and be helping each other, supporting each other” (KII-NP-13). At the end of the day, one stakeholder noted optimism around the future for the Northern Peninsula region based on the regional thinking outcome. “I guess instilling, it might be a strong word, but hopefully instilling in these people that if you are to move forward you have a spirit of cooperation, you have to work together, you have to get along, you have to support each other and that way you move forward” (KII-NP-08). In general, KII-NP-19 noted “there has been a lot capacity built in people’s understanding about collaborative models and partnerships in a practical sense”.

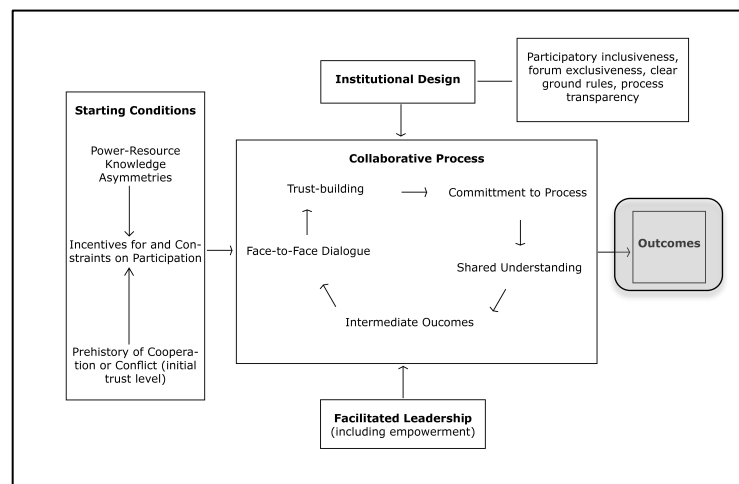
The third intermediate outcome noted by Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Initiative stakeholders was their collective actions and activities in sending recommendations to government departments. The exercise of working with Municipal Affairs on infrastructure and municipal services was described by three stakeholders as being a key achievement. “If we make 10 recommendations to government and they follow-up on six of them and we actually get something in the area that helps us economically, socially, or culturally, that would be success” (KII-NP-11). Most stakeholders, both government and regional, noted the discussions around developing recommendations to government involved a steep learning curve regarding indicators,



data, and the process for decision-making in government (KII-NP-06, KII-NP-21, KII-NP-22).

Each of these intermediate outcomes provided momentum for stakeholders sitting around the NPRCPI table.

### 5.2.5 Outcomes



Outcomes do not emerge quickly. Considerable time is typically required to bring about a change within society. Ansell and Gash (2007) do not provide a concise definition of outcomes in the collaborative governance framework. Given the NPRCPI's tenure was three years at the conclusion of data collection, attempting to identify outcomes is difficult. That being said, stakeholders were asked to identify outcomes emerging from the work of the NPRCPI. From this discussion three outcomes were identified.

First, stakeholders noted the work of the NPRCPI has enhanced the relationships between the regional stakeholders and between the region and the provincial government. Relationships among stakeholders in the region have long been established (among most stakeholders), however, a number of stakeholders indicated that the Initiative has led to a strengthening of these relationships. The relationship between the region and the provincial government has been strained in recent years. Provincial government funding decisions regarding the closure of hospital services and the re-location of the provincial air ambulance service out of the region have served to hinder the relationship. It was suggested, by both regional and government stakeholders, that the NPRCPI is serving to repair and strengthen the relationships between the region and the provincial government.

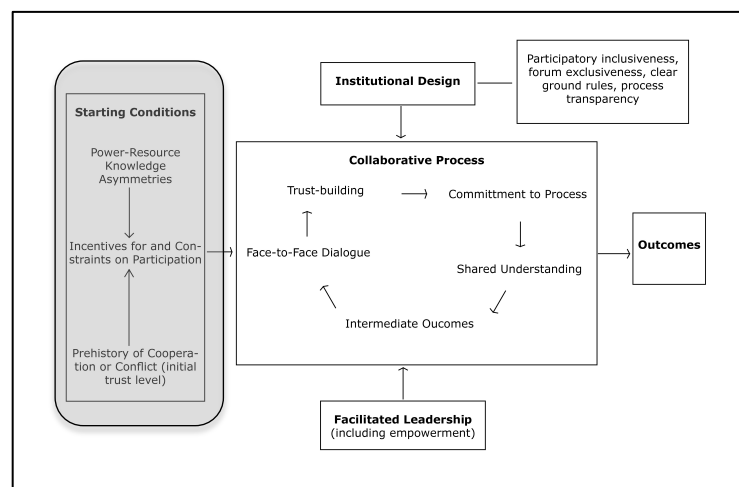
The second outcome identified was increased trust. Trust goes hand in hand with stronger relationships. Stakeholders noted that the opportunity to meet on a regular basis in the region facilitated this new level of trust. Also facilitating this trust was the environment created for the regional discussions at these meetings. Many stakeholders credited the Rural Secretariat for guiding an open and respectful environment for holding the conversations. This being said, there were three stakeholders who noted uncertainty as to whether any new trust has been established. KII-NP-02 stated, “I wonder a lot about the notion of trust, if it has changed since the start of the process. Some just pretend to be working to be cooperative at the table at the time. But when they go out into their own little corner they are not going to change”.

The third outcome noted was an improved understanding of the Northern Peninsula region among policy makers in the provincial government. The improvements to stronger relationships and enhanced trust were seen as positive steps to advocate to the provincial government for more regionally appropriate policy and programs for the Northern Peninsula.

The degree to which these outcomes continue depends on many factors. One specific factor is the continuation of the Initiative. In March 2012, the mandate of the NPRCPI expired. As of June 2013, the provincial government has not provided an indication of whether they will continue their participation in initiative. The future of the NPRCPI appears to be bleak. It has been over 18 months without a decision by the provincial government. The other contributing factor to the bleak future is the fact that one third of the board's membership has no longer exists due to the discontinuance of the REDBs.

## 5.3 South Kerry Development Partnership

### 5.3.1 Starting Conditions



#### 5.3.1.1 Prehistory of Cooperation or Conflict

The history of the SKDP dates back over two decades. During this period four key phases of collective decision-making were established in the region. Each phase was developed for different reasons, each with different mandates, and geographies. Each of these phases contributed to the development of the Partnership as it is today. It is interesting to note the boundary of the region continually expanded with iterations.

In the mid 1970s, community and business leaders throughout Ireland formed area-based responses to economic difficulties occurring in communities. These area-

based responses addressed declines in local industries and decreasing employment opportunities, which in turn addressed increasing levels of financial hardship and poverty experienced in the region. The SWKDO was a voluntary organization established in 1976 as an area-based response (Pozzoli, 2006). The South-West Kerry Development Organization (SWKDO) represented an area west from Kells to Caherdaniels (see Figure 5) (KII-SK-07). The member communities funded the SWKDO from their respective budgets. In the early 1980s, a delegation of four members of SWKDO traveled to Brussels with the aim of submitting requests for funding and support for the area to the European Commission (Pozzoli, 2006). KII-SK-09 noted that the Organization “felt they were being left behind” regarding development and they appealed in Brussels to the European Commission for funds to support rural areas, both in the South Kerry area and in Europe in general. It is difficult to ascertain the successful of this appear, however, a series of EU funded rural and regional development programs were implemented in the following years.

In the mid 1980s the Integrated Resource Development program was implemented by communities in the South Kerry area. The program, driven and funded by rural communities, set out to improve the social and economic wellbeing of their communities. By 1986, four integrated resource development organizations were established in the region: Integrated Resource Development Waterville, Cahersiveen Area Resource Development, Killorglin and District Regional Development Group, and

Kenmare Resource Development (KII-SK-05). These organizations raised funds locally and received some financial support from the Kerry County Council to implement regional development programming.

In 1988, the Government of Ireland created the Pilot Programme for Integrated Rural Development. This program, as noted by Adshead (2002), was the Irish government's first attempt at an integrated approach to rural development. The objectives of this program were to create new employment opportunities, increase take-home income, enhance the quality of life in rural communities, and to build a sense of common identity in rural communities (Adshead, 2002). This program encouraged public and private partnerships at the local level to build a more holistic approach to rural development and to create networks for shared learning in the region (Adshead, 2002; McDonagh, 2001).

A key focus of the program was to look beyond agriculture in the approaches to rural development (McDonagh, 2001). The program was designed to generate improved economic and social well-being through new enterprises. The Irish government provided limited funding to allow each organization to hire a coordinator and deliver some programming activities. However, the program was seen to be hindered by the limited funding from the government, particularly funding for 'pre-development' activities such as process and trust building in the region (Commings & Keane, 1994; McDonagh, 2001).

In 1991, the Irish government established the Programme for Economic and Social Progress, replacing the Pilot Programme for Integrated Rural Development. The program's aim was to build area-based approaches to lowering unemployment in rural areas, particularly long-term unemployment (Adshead, 2002; Pozzoli, 2006). Twelve regions were selected to participate in this program as Local Area Partnerships, including the South Kerry area. A new organization was created in South Kerry to participate in the program: the Community Response for Economic and Social Progress (CRESP). The objectives of this new organization reflected those of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress: principally the need to address long-term unemployment and under-employment and to create job opportunities (Pozzoli, 2006). The board of CRESP was constituted under the program to consist of six members from the local communities, social partners, and state agencies (Adshead, 2002; Cawley, 2009). Respondents KII-SK-05 and KII-SK-08 noted that an important element of the CRESP board was the absence of elected politicians. Both explained that this provided the CRESP board with more independence and offered less interference from potential political grandstanding.

The new CRESP represented a larger region than the integrated rural/resource development units or the SWKDO. As described by KII-SK-05, the boundary included "all communities in the Iveragh Peninsula and Killorglin but excluded the Killarney". KII-SK-07 further explained, "CRESP had a very different geography than what the partnership has today – in fact I think CRESP had a lot more power as well as a different

boundary”. This ‘power’, as alluded to by KII-SK-07, was based on the notion of enhanced local democracy. In particular, KII-SK-09 noted, “the board of CRESP at the time would have more dealings with Europe and you know, to a degree, I thought that was advancing local democracy”.

During the same year, 1991, the European Union launched the *Liaison entre actions de développement de l’économie rurale* (LEADER) program. Local development organizations in the South Kerry area came together to make a single application to the LEADER funding program. The local development organizations made the application under the umbrella of CRESP. The LEADER program was designed by the European Union to create new solutions for rural development, with the anticipation that, if successful, it would be rolled out throughout all of the European Union (Adshead, 2002; Commins & Keane, 1994). The program enshrined local and regional participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of rural development initiatives (B. Kearney, Boyle, & Walsh, 1995; McDonagh, 2001). LEADER strived to build community-based strategies through transferring power and responsibility from the European Union to Local Advisory Groups through an intermediary (McDonagh, 2001). To facilitate participation in LEADER, the Irish government designated South Kerry as “disadvantaged” in relation to chronic un- and under-employment, income levels, and enterprise development (KII-SK-09); similar to the designation it received in the 1980s (Cawley, 1986).



McDonagh (2001, p. 183) noted LEADER left a remarkable outcome in Ireland, it has “been very influential in Irish rural development policy, indeed Ireland is believed to be the best example of local community participation in local development”. CRESP was unique in that it was both a Local Advisory Group under LEADER and an area-based management group under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. Over the years, this dual role between enterprise development and social inclusion has generated tension for the elected board members and constituents (KII-SK-04, KII-SK-06, KII-SK-08).

In 1994, the LEADER program was renewed as LEADER II for a five-year period. LEADER II was a continuation of the earlier program, however, the program was expanded to additional community groups from across the European Union. The second iteration of the LEADER program placed an enhanced emphasis on innovation and performance indicators for measuring outputs and outcomes (McDonagh, 2001). Changes in the requirements participation in LEADER II meant the CRESP needed to increase its population to approximately 75,000 (KII-SK-09). To reach this population count, CRESP expanded its boundaries to include the Town of Killarney. The inclusion of Killarney posed some apprehension for the CRESP board given its focus on rural development issues. Including Killarney posed the challenge of how to balance CRESP’s rural focus with the new, urban constituents of Killarney. One stakeholder noted, “Whichever way cut the deck, the engine here [South Kerry] is Killarney. Economically, socially, from a

county perspective, from a regional perspective, you know it just makes no sense to exclude them” (KII-SK-04). In LEADER II not only did the boundary change, the name of the organization changed to the SKDP .

In 1999 the LEADER II program was renewed for a second five-year extension, known as LEADER +. The LEADER + program focused on “encouraging and helping rural actors to think about the longer-term potential of their area” (McDonagh, 2001, p. 187). The SKDP also participated in the fourth iteration of LEADER, Rural Development Policy 2007-2013. The latest iteration of the EU program focuses on three axes: competitiveness of forestry and agricultural sectors, environment in the countryside, and quality of life in rural areas (European Union, 2008). One stakeholder noted the degree of local or regional empowerment to make decisions based on regional priorities and opportunities has diminished in the past ten years, with power being re-assumed by the central government. “The rules and regulations are very much set down by central government and that’s very different you know” (KII-SK-05).

The SKDP is a nongovernmental, community led development agency. The Partnership is legally registered as a company limited by guarantee<sup>12</sup> with registered

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<sup>12</sup> Company limited by guarantee in Ireland “is a public company, there must be a minimum of seven members. The members' liability is limited to the amount they have undertaken to contribute to the assets of the company, in the event it is wound up, not exceeding the amount specified in the memorandum. If a guarantee company does not have a share capital, the members are not required to buy any shares in the company” (Companies Registration Office/an Oifig um Chlárú Cuideachtaí, 2012).

charitable status in Ireland. Since its creation in 1991, the SKDP has designed and delivered multiple programs, funded through the European Union and the Irish government. The mandate of the Partnership is to “promote and assist the development of sustainable, vibrant communities in South Kerry, and to improve the quality of life of people living there through the provision of social and economic opportunities” (SKDP , 2012). In delivering this mandate, the Partnership’s activities fall under one of three strategic pillars: (i) enterprise and development, (ii) community development, and (iii) education and training.

As of 2012, the SKDP administered four European Union funded programs (Collabor8, LEADER, Natural Energy Efficiency and Sustainability, and Rural Alliances) and six Irish government programs (Local & Community Development Programme, Local Employment Service, Jobs Club, Rural Social Scheme, TÚS, and Rural Recreation Officer and Walks Scheme).

#### *5.3.1.2 Power-Resource-Knowledge Asymmetries*

The South Kerry area experiences a series of asymmetries regarding power and knowledge. These asymmetries are similar to the situation described in the Northern Peninsula region in section 5.2.1.2.

Within the South Kerry area there is only one local legislated or statutory authority, the Killarney Town Council. All other communities are without a local council;

rather, each belongs to the Kerry County Council. As noted in Chapter Three, local authorities in Ireland are relatively weak in comparison to their European and OECD counterparts. As a result, town councils have limited power and responsibilities. All other communities in the South Kerry area had no formal responsibilities.

Amongst non-governmental organizations in the region there are considerable differences regarding financial and human capacity resources. Many organizations rely on single year program funding to deliver initiatives to their constituents. Given the recent financial difficulties in Ireland, many organizations noted challenges in securing program funding, which in turn, may increase the power, resources, and knowledge asymmetry in the region.

Amongst members of the SKDP, which are further discussed in section 5.3.2.1, a wide degree of asymmetry is evident. On the one hand community members elected to the board often lack organizational supports, such as human or financial resources, to assist them in the performance of their duties. On the other hand, board members elected from national social partners, the statutory sector, and local government sectors usually have access to such supports.

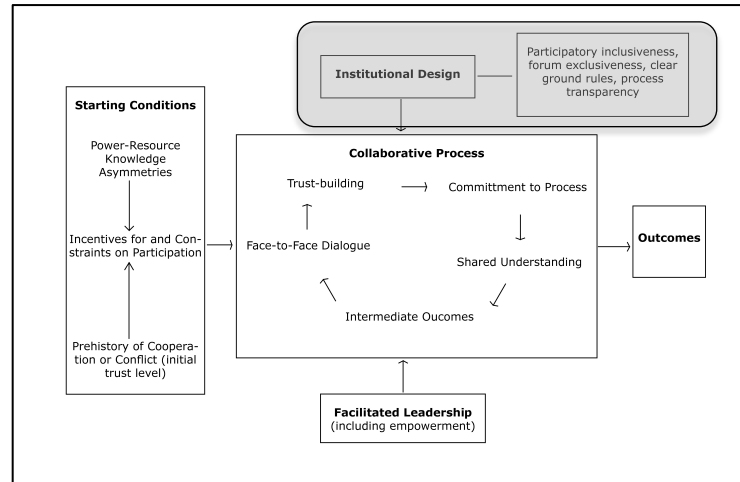
#### *5.3.1.3 Incentives for and Constraints on Participation*

In the South Kerry area participants noted a series of both incentives and constraints to participating in the governance initiative and a number of similarities can be seen with the Northern Peninsula region.

The largest incentive for participating in a governance initiative is the availability of funding for regional development, entrepreneurship development, and social development. This funding is arranged through both the European Union and the Irish national government. The most recent suite of programs for rural development groups in Ireland provides access to €90 million (Irish Government News Service, 2013). The other key incentive raised by participants in South Kerry was the desire to bring more democratic power and responsibility to the regional level. The platform provided by the SKDP facilitates shifting power and responsibilities away from the traditional centres of power (i.e. Dublin and Brussels) to the region.

In terms of constraints to participation two key factors were identified. First, almost all participants noted that the communities of the South Kerry area are struggling with recruiting and keeping volunteers. As a result, volunteer burn out is occurring, which in turn reduces the participation and engagement of residents in the region. The second constraint noted was the time commitment required for participating on the board of the SKDP, which relates directly to both recruitment and volunteer burn out.

### 5.3.2 Institutional Design



#### 5.3.2.1 Membership

A voluntary board of 22 members oversees the operation of the SKDP (SKDP , 2012). The board’s composition is determined by the funding regulations stipulated by the Irish government (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007, 2009). These regulations state that the board will be constituted from five broad stakeholder groups: the community and voluntary sector (eight members), national social partners (four members), the statutory sector (four members), the environmental sector (one member), and the local government sector (five members).

Residents of the region, through community fora, elect community and voluntary sector members to the SKDP. The community fora are an opportunity for community residents to become actively engaged in decision-making bodies of the region. The Kerry County Council organizes the fora, inviting all registered community and voluntary

organizations to public meetings. Eight board members are elected from the community fora to the SKDP board, two from each of the four sub-regions. The community fora are a vehicle for enhancing participation of residents in the SKDP .

The board composition regulations stipulate that one seat must be reserved for each of four national social partners: the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, the Irish Farmers Association, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, and the Irish Business and Employers Confederation. Each of the four organizations names its representative to the Partnership.

Similar to the national social partners, the four statutory sectors are specified in the board composition regulations. One seat is to be reserved for each of Teagasc, Enterprise Ireland, the local county education service, and the local county enterprise board. Each of these statutory authorities also names their representative to the to Partnership board.

In April 2009, the Irish government announced that each partnership company in the country would have representation from an environmental group (An Taisce, 2009; Department of the Taoiseach, 2009). One additional seat on the Partnership was thus created to meet the new regulation for environmental groups. The Ireland Environmental Network nominates their representative, in a similar fashion to the national social partners and the statutory agencies, to the South Kerry Development Board. The five

remaining board positions are filled from representatives of local government. Three seats are reserved for elected members of the Kerry County Council, one for the Killarney Town Council, and one seat for the County Manager.

A number of board members noted two challenges with the current composition. First, a board of 22 members plus ex-officio members is very large. KII-SK-04 noted, "... it's a very big board – too big in some regards. It is difficult to get everyone to meetings and time consuming for discussion when everyone shows up!" A second respondent explained, "under the umbrella of inclusion, perhaps we have gone too far" (KII-SK-07).

The second challenge raised by board members related to the degree of participation in both meetings and work outside the regularly scheduled meetings. "Big boards means people can get away with just showing up to meetings. They do not take on any further responsibilities, it is frustrating for those board members who are more committed" (KII-SK-04).

There was also a divide noticed among board members who volunteered versus board members prescribed by their agency to be involved. It can be difficult for some agencies to leave their proverbial 'hat' at the door to advance regional priorities that extend beyond the mandate of their respective agencies. KII-SK-03 explained, "agencies mandated to be on the board can not always see beyond their mandate, they are too



focused on defending their constituents to see the big picture for South Kerry”. The difference between volunteers and prescribed agencies regarding commitment to the process was also noticed, which is discussed in Section 5.3.4.2.

During the interviews a number of stakeholders raised concern about the lack of certainty of the future relationship between the SKDP and the Kerry County Council. KII-SK-05 noted, “it is expected that the company will come under the ambit of the local authority – the County Council.” During 2011-2013, the Irish government pursued a process of merging statutory agencies and state bodies in search of financial efficiency. In addition to merging the statutory agencies and state bodies the government would amalgamate partnerships to match county boundaries. For the SKDP this would mean an amalgamation with the North and East Kerry Development organization. The potential for the SKDP to move under the auspices of the County Council generated a range of reactions from it would be a “continuation of the status quo”, to “who knows how it will work out”, to “it will pose challenges”. Most board members agreed that the context, opportunities, and challenges encountered in South Kerry are dramatically different than North Kerry. Attempting to merge the two partnerships (SKDP and North and East Kerry Development) would be problematic. At the time of writing no formal decision regarding cohesion of statutory bodies and boards had been announced by the Irish government. In March 2013, the SKDP board released a public response opposing the potential re-orientation of regional development programs in Ireland.

#### 5.3.2.2 Ground Rules

The ground rules the SKDP operates within are clearly defined by the Irish government in the publication *Guidelines on the Governance of Integrated Local Development Companies and Urban Based Partnerships* (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007, 2009). The SKDP must adhere to these national guidelines, which also apply to other partnership companies across Ireland.

The Guidelines, published in 2007 and revised in 2009, are a “holistic guidance for the entire process” of local development partnerships (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007, p. 2). Adherence to these guidelines is a prerequisite for any local development partnership to receive funding from the Irish government. The guidelines outline the ground rules for the company, directors, and the selection/nomination of board members. Specifically, the guidelines set out processes for composition of the board of directors, selecting a chairperson, quorum, and conflict of interest. The guidelines also outline processes and responsibilities for creating committee and sub-committee structures.

Further, the guidelines also summarize the corporate governance of the local development companies. In doing so, the guidelines state the minimum number of meetings held per year (eight meetings) and expectation of annual reviews of effectiveness of the company’s system of internal controls (such as audits). The procedures for selecting nominees from each of the categories (community and voluntary

sector, national social partners, statutory sector, environmental sector, and local government sector) are outlined.

The guidelines provided by the Irish government were generally interpreted as useful by stakeholders. “They provide a clear roadmap of how we operate” (KII-SK-03). Further, “the guidelines eliminated the need for this board to spend lots of time debating and crafting our own guidelines” (KII-SK-06). Most board members indicated that adequate “wiggle room” existed for the guidelines to be modified to fit the local context . The most substantial concern expressed about the guidelines is the ability of the Irish government to unilaterally revise them without consultation with local development partnerships. In this sense, the SKDP is at the mercy of the Irish government regarding their ‘ground rules’.

The potential role, influence, and power of the chairperson in the SKDP was described as substantial. The chairperson was described as having “a huge potential to influence, either influence negatively or positively” (KII-SK-09) the direction of the Partnership through the timing and control of discussion, and the mitigation of conflict. Five stakeholders noted that the role and influence of the Chairperson has fluctuated throughout the Partnership’s history, the importance of which was seen in terms of relationships between the SKDP , the Irish government, and other funding agencies.

### *5.3.2.3 Transparency of the Process*

When asked about the transparency of the processes of the SKDP board members suggested that there is a high degree of transparency, however, they are not certain to what degree community members make themselves aware of this transparency. Board members provided details about how the SKDP is mandated to be transparent, how the Partnership shares information with constituent groups in the region, and identifies two challenges to enhancing transparency and general knowledge of the Partnership.

Board members outlined that the Partnership is mandated, through the guidelines provided by the Irish government, to conduct annual reviews and audits. These reviews, which are available to the public, provide an inside look into the financial, human, and organizational capacity of the Partnership. These documents provide assurance that the Partnership is not mismanaging funds. In addition, the Partnership generates an annual report to highlight its work and accomplishments during the past year. The annual report is also available to members of the public. In addition to these two processes, board members illustrated further methods of communication employed by the Partnership to share information and heighten the transparency. Throughout the year, a series of community fora are organized in South Kerry. The community fora are an opportunity for the Partnership to connect to community and voluntary organizations in the region. The SKDP also uses local newspapers and radio stations to broadcast messages regarding upcoming programs, activities, and information sharing sessions.

The sharing of information through the channels listed above are not without challenges. As KII-SK-05 stated, “people are aware it’s [the SKDP ] there but I’m not sure that they’re fully aware of the Partnership or what all it does.” Three other stakeholders interviewed also expressed this notion of a limited understanding of the Partnership by community residents, voluntary groups, and elected bodies. Many board members noted that even groups with a long history of cooperating with the Partnership might not truly understand the complexity and diversity of the Partnership. In most instances, people are only familiar with the elements of the Partnership they participate in - “the partnership is only relevant to somebody if they need it” (KII-SK-07).

Board members suggested that the knowledge of the SKDP has a geographic pattern. The strongest concentration of knowledge centres in and around Cahersiveen, the location of the Partnership’s head office. The weakest concentration of knowledge was suggested to be in the peripheral communities of the Partnership. It was also suggested that the concentration of knowledge of the Partnership in Killarney was not high, a quality attributed to the fact Killarney is ineligible for many of the Partnership’s funding initiatives for rural areas.<sup>13</sup> One of the challenges regarding knowledge of the SKDP is how to package the message. KII-SK-04 explained, “I’m not sure that it’s [SKDP ] being sold the right way.” KII-SK-02 further stated, “the multitude of programs and funding

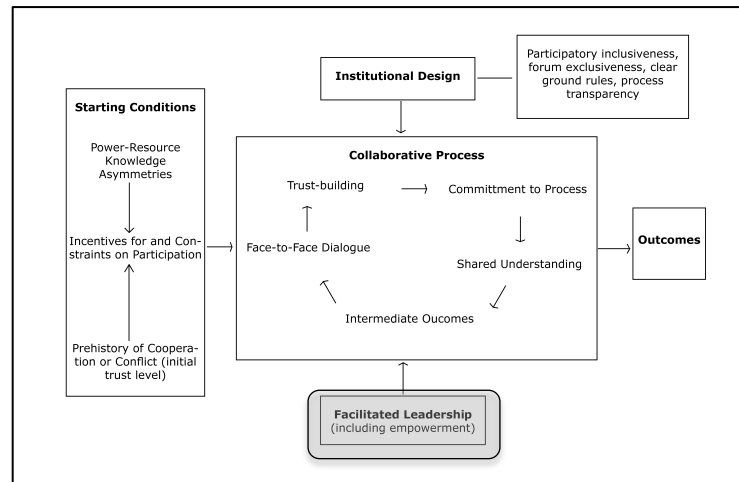
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<sup>13</sup> The LEADER program provides funding for rural development. Based on the definition of ‘rural’ the Town of Killarney is ineligible to receive EU funds.

programs we [the SKDP ] offer makes it very difficult to describe to people what we do. Add to this that our suite of programs can change [at] the drop of a hat makes the challenge that much harder.”

A second challenge to the transparency of the SKDP relates to the participation in the community fora. Board members indicated that the attendance at the community fora meetings over the past five years has been dwindling. This is a concern for the SKDP because the community fora are the primary mechanisms for connecting to community and voluntary agencies in the region. KII-SK-08 noted that “participation in the community fora in my area is getting smaller and smaller, even though we are bringing more brochures and handouts to provide people.” To compound the low attendance, two board members specifically noted the difficulty in attracting marginalized groups in the region to the community fora, groups that could directly benefit from SKDP programs. KII-SK-05 explains, “for single parents, people with physical mobility limitations, and seniors living alone attending the community fora is difficult. These are some of our key target groups to work with. We need to find a way to get their input, particularly if they can’t attend the fora.”

### 5.3.3 Facilitated Leadership



The SKDP has a clearly defined leadership structure. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (2007, 2009) articulates the structure of the SKDP's leadership. The leadership of the SKDP is a chairperson, who must be elected from among the boards' directors. The chairperson, elected for a three year term, serves four principal roles: (i) oversees the governance of the partnership, (ii) works with board members and staff to generate and implement strategic plans, (iii) chairs meetings, and (iv) provides an annual report to the Irish government on progress, achievements, and accountability (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007, 2009). The chairperson only votes at board meetings in the event of a tie vote on a motion, serving to break the tie.

Under the guidelines from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the SKDP board has the discretion to delegate responsibilities to committees and subcommittees. The membership of board committees is typically constituted of board members. Decision-making by the board (and committees) is conducted by voting, with a simple majority required for approval. Board members noted that voting is typically done through a show of hands, however, it was also noted that voting can be done through a poll (KII-SK-05, KII-SK-07).

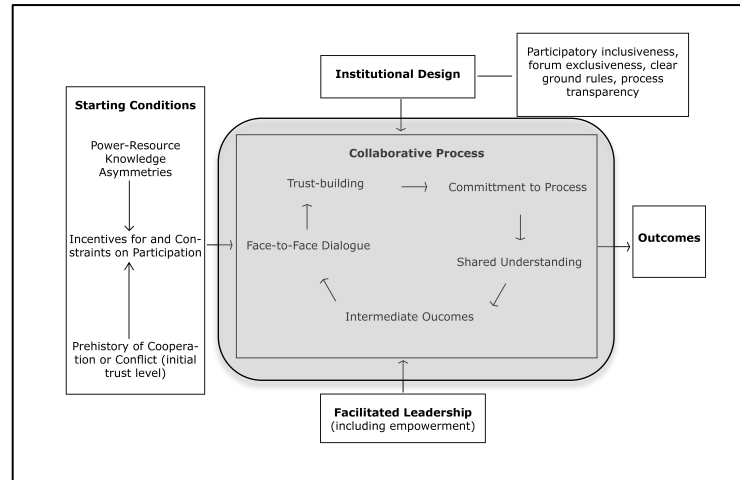
The SKDP board is supported by staff members, and of particular importance for the board is the role of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). In accordance with the Guidelines (2007, 2009), the board may delegate day-to-day responsibilities to the CEO. Although responsibilities are delegated, the board is ultimately responsible for actions or inactions of the CEO and/or other staff. The CEO cannot be a member of the board, although they attend board meetings and assist the Chairperson in facilitating discussions and decision-making (Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2007, 2009). Most respondents identified the CEO as having a pivotal role in the Partnership. KII-SK-03 noted, “the CEO has a great influence on the board – we rely on this position for guidance, communicating to partners, and advocating to government.” Further, KII-SK-09 suggested the CEO “is key for resolving uncertainties, conflict, and confusion among board members – and there can be lots of this!”



In discussions with board members and stakeholders two concerns regarding the facilitated leadership were identified. The first concern related to the sheer size of the SKDP board. A full complement of board members is 22 people. As KII-SK-06 indicated, “to be perfectly honest I think we have a mad number of representatives - it is difficult to get everyone together at the same time.” Further, KII-SK-08 noted, “The board by this stage has got to stratospheric numbers.” The size of the board was mentioned as a concern due to implications related to organizing meetings, varied commitment by board members, and challenges in facilitation. During discussions of board size concerns, the role and value of the chairperson was articulated as pivotal. The position serves as the “lynch pin” for the board (KII-SK-02).

The second concern raised was the fact that the Irish government has dictated the rules of engagement. Three stakeholders pondered what, if any, changes the SKDP would make to the guidelines if allowed. The immediate concern is that the guidelines are a “cookie cutter approach”, and as such the unique challenges and/or opportunities of a region are not necessarily recognized.

### 5.3.4 Collaborative Process



#### 5.3.4.1 Trust Building

Two principal factors emerged from discussions with stakeholders in South Kerry regarding trust. First, the South Kerry area has a solid history of community development amongst groups, which has led to trust building among actors. Second, the level of trust among board members and staff of the Partnerships is directly related to the frequency of board members' attendance. Each of these factors has influenced the trust experienced in the activities and policies of the SKDP. Although the level of trust was noted as fluctuating over the past twenty years, the consensus among stakeholders is that the Partnership has substantial trust among board members, staff, and the communities of the region.

Individuals and communities throughout the South Kerry area have been cooperating and collaborating, both formally and informally, for decades. As KII-SK-09

explains, “since the 1930s we have strong models of community development in the region focused on group water schemes, rural electrification, and so on”. This spirit of cooperation has continued throughout the region over time. Many stakeholders (KII-SK-03, KII-SK-05, KII-SK-10) noted that the small size of the South Kerry area and the multitude of interconnections through family, business, and sport has created a solid foundation from which the Partnership emerged and continues to operate. All stakeholders interviewed indicated that they wear many ‘hats’ that facilitate relationships and which helps to build trust in the region. Stakeholders (KII-SK-04, KII-SK07) also explained that the level of trust directly correlates to board member attendance at meetings. The more board members interact through discussion the greater the level of trust.

Throughout the discussion one potential challenge to trust was clearly articulated, although how, when, and if it might influence the SKDP was unknown. This challenge was the discussion of potential cohesion of local development companies in Ireland. Among stakeholders there was considerable discussion about how a cohesion strategy may be devised and its potential influence, both positive and negative, on the South Kerry area. Concerns raised centered on three issues: loss of identity, loss of local control, and a movement away from social inclusion. The largest concern, voiced by over 70% of stakeholders, was the concern that the uniqueness of the South Kerry area would be lost or drowned in a new, geographically larger region. Stakeholders feared the attention to

the unique circumstances in each of the communities would be diminished regardless of how a cohesion strategy was rolled out. The second concern surrounding cohesion was a perceived loss of democratic local control. It was largely anticipated the proposed cohesion strategy would decrease the number of local development partnerships, thus amalgamating two or three partnerships together aligning to county boundaries. Stakeholders in the region expressed concern that there would be less opportunity for local voices to be heard in the larger boards.

The third concern surrounding the cohesion strategy, albeit expressed by fewer than half of the stakeholders, was a perceived movement away from social inclusion strategies. Recent media reports and speculation lead some stakeholders to believe the Irish government may move towards more programs focused on enterprise development, at the expense of social inclusion programs. Concern about this potential shift away from social inclusion programming was raised by board members and staff in both discussions of the anticipated cohesion strategy and independent of the cohesion discussions.

#### *5.3.4.2 Commitment to Process*

As noted in the discussion in the NPRCPI sub-section, the level of commitment by individuals and organizations directly impacts the success of an initiative. The multi-year history of the SKDP illustrates a strong degree of commitment to the process. Stakeholders described the commitment to process as having been quite strong, which has enabled the Partnership to record many achievements. This being said, stakeholders

noted two reflections on the commitment to process based on their participation with the Partnership.

As noted in the previous section, regular attendance at board meetings was considered a factor in building trust. Similarly, stakeholders indicated that regular attendance, coupled with meaningful engagement at board meetings, was an important consideration in evaluating individuals' and organizations' commitment to the process. Many stakeholders noted that attendance fluctuated, compromising the commitment to the process. Further to simply attending meetings, stakeholders stated that active participation is required. KII-SK-05 explained, "although some organizations come to all our meetings, they do not actually contribute, they simply listen and perhaps take information back to their organizations". The respondent suggested a large portion of the 'doing', or 'rowing' as described in Chapter Two, is left to a small group of people, most of whom are elected through the community fora.

The second reflection from stakeholders centered on the differences in the level of commitment of board members. It was suggested by a number of stakeholders (KII-SK-04, KII-SK-03, KII-SK-06, KII-SK-9) that the participation varied between board members appointed and members elected through community fora. Other stakeholders (KII-SK-02, KII-SK-05) noted a distinction between board members who are volunteering their time versus board members who attend meetings as part of their

regular employment. In both instances, all stakeholders agreed the level of commitment could change dramatically when representatives change. The difference in level of commitment to process is particularly evident when active board members step off the board or step out of leadership roles (KII-SK-03, KII-SK-04).

#### *5.3.4.3 Face-to-Face Dialogue*

The meetings of the Partnership are typically conducted in-person on a monthly basis. Committees of the board meet in addition to the full board meetings on a regular basis, largely depending on their mandate and activities. The full board meetings have rotated throughout the South Kerry area, as illustrated by KII-SK-08, “there have been meetings in Sneem, Cahersiveen, Kenmare, and Killarney”. Most recently, however, the board meetings have taken place in Killarney (KII-SK-08, KII-SK-09). Stakeholders noted that telephone discussions may be held for brief meetings involving a small number of people, however, this communication platform is not typically utilized.

Stakeholders in South Kerry paralleled Ansell and Gash’s (2007) understanding that face to face meetings are important to facilitate governance. KII-SK-02 stated that, “coming together for meetings is paramount – the smallest item on the agenda can generate lots of discussion and maybe disagreement. If everyone is not in the same room these disagreements are difficult to resolve”. Further, KII-SK-05 noted, “one of the most important items at our meetings is not the board agenda, but rather the opportunities during breaks to chat. These small conversations over tea help me to understand where

other board members are coming from on their opinions.” This understanding developed through face-to-face meetings is hindered by infrequent attendance at meetings.

One of the other challenges associated with the face-to-face meetings relates to thinking at the regional level. Every board member brings a set of unique experiences to board meetings, however, a number of stakeholders noted that the challenge can be how to ensure everyone is speaking and thinking with the region’s best interest in mind rather than simply that of their specific community or interest group. As KII-SK-04 noted, “it’s difficult to get them to give up their own organizational hat to think about the region. Everyone does this from time to time – it is a constant challenge.”

#### *5.3.4.4 Shared Understanding*

According to stakeholders the existence of the operating guidelines from the Irish government and a long history of operation, albeit under a number of different iterations, has positioned the SKDP well to have a collective shared understanding. Although well established, stakeholders noted two elements that strain the shared understanding from time to time.

First, stakeholders noted that one strain was the dichotomy between social inclusion and enterprise development. Given the Partnerships’ unique history as both a LEADER company and a local development partnership, the organization has had to balance these two critical components of programming. At times stakeholders noted one

taking more prominence (KII-SK-03, KII-SK-05, KII-SK-09). The composition of the board is such that a number of members align themselves more to either social inclusion or enterprise development.

Second, over the past years one of the challenges the SKDP has encountered regarding a shared understanding is capturing the organization's corporate memory. KII-SK-09 noted, "I do think an awful lot of the corporate memory is gone from the partnership in terms of where it came from and how it was owned by the community." As board members and senior staff members come and go the organization loses substantial amounts of the knowledge and history. This can be reflected in new board members and staff have differing understandings or interpretations of the Partnership's history, achievements, and processes.

#### *5.3.4.5 Intermediate Outcomes*

Stakeholders reflected on the intermediate outcomes and unintended outcomes of the SKDP. The responses generally fell into three categories.

First, given the challenge of un- and under-employment in the South Kerry area many stakeholders noted that the Partnership's work with the Rural Social Scheme as a clear outcome (KII-SK-04, KII-SK-07, KII-SK-01). The Rural Social Scheme provides low-income workers in natural resource industries who receive social assistance, with the opportunity to increase in their financial support by providing services for rural



communities. These services may include maintaining walking trails, community enhancement projects, or supporting nonprofit organizations (Citizens Information, 2013).

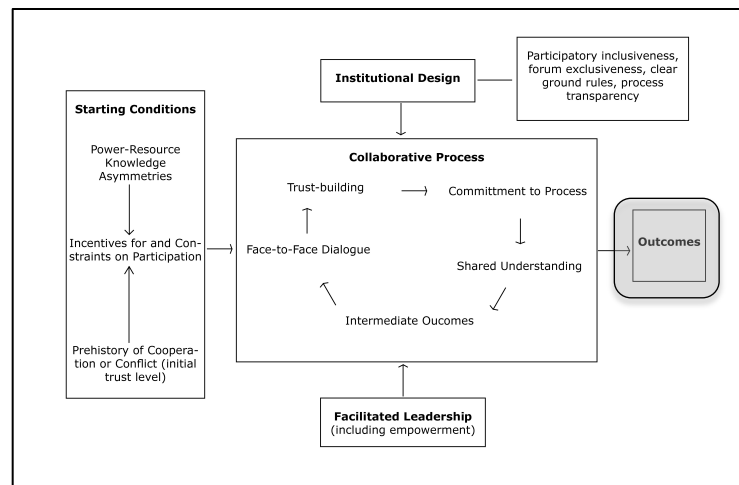
A second intermediate outcome noted by stakeholders were programs aimed at diversifying the regional economy. These programs included activities to introduce diversification into the agricultural industries and the introduction, and enhancement, of the tourism sector. KII-SK-09 explains, “There have been very positive economic benefits from developing tourism products”.

The third area of intermediate outcomes has been through the social inclusion side of the SKDP. KII-SK-08 identifies, “the biggest change was through not LEADER but the other side of the house – it would have been the growth of child care, women’s groups and you know interest groups.” Initiatives for enhancing social inclusion have resulted in new day cares, programs for single senior men, family centres, and womens’ support organizations.

In addition to these three groups of intermediate outcomes stakeholders identified one unintended outcome from the work of the Partnership. Three individuals noted that a number of former Partnership board members choose to run for elected office at the conclusion of their terms. It was noted that the Partnership provided transferable skills and capacities to people wishing to run for elected office. KII-SK-06 acknowledges, “we

can't take full credit for people running for elected office but we shouldn't sell ourselves short of the skills gained through being a board member on the Partnership.”

### 5.3.5 Outcomes



The Partnership has achieved a number of economic, social, and environmental outcomes throughout its history. The economic outcomes of the Partnership can be seen in terms of financial investments, job diversification training, and labour force training programs. In 2010-2011, the Partnership invested almost €250,000<sup>14</sup> in rural infrastructure, including community centres and heritage preservation initiatives. This funding indirectly sustained and created employment in construction and service industries in the region.

<sup>14</sup> Approximately value in Canadian dollars is \$348,000.

In addition to direct investments in the region the Partnership conducted a series of employment diversification sessions with existing business owners and self-employed residents. The sessions examined opportunities in wood manufacturing, value added to existing agricultural products, and tourism opportunities. The Partnership provided over €80,000 to assist small business owners update their operations. Training sessions for residents to facilitate matching their skills with labour market demands were organized by the Partnership. Over 180 individuals participated in training programs in areas such as entrepreneurship.

Social outcomes achieved by the Partnership focused on enhancing the quality of life for marginalized segments of the region's population. Initiatives funded by the Partnership include support programs for older citizens, support for international asylum seekers in Killarney, and parental support programs. The Partnership also supported the Rural Men's Project in communities throughout the South Kerry area. The project addresses social isolation of elderly single men in the region through the organizing of activities in communities. Over 250 people participated in the Rural Men's Project.

The Partnership also delivered the Rural Social Scheme initiative on behalf of the Irish government. This program provides recipients of long-term social assistance additional financial support through their participation in community-based initiatives. In 2010-2011, over 130 individuals in the South Kerry area participated in this program that

provided additional funds for work completed and developed new skills in people receiving social assistance.

In addition to the economic and social outcomes the SKDP has achieved a number of environmentally-focused outcomes. Two key recent initiatives are the organic gardening and the Walking Scheme. The Partnership facilitated the creation of three community organic gardens, which demonstrated the value of organic produce and gardening skills. Enhanced gardening knowledge and skills among participants was reported as an outcome.

The Partnership was responsible for administering the Rural Walk Scheme, on behalf of the Irish Department of Community, Equality, and Gaeltacht Affairs. The Rural Walk Scheme works with landowners and landholders to provide access on their properties for the development and maintenance of walkways. Part of the program provides environmental awareness and education to landowners and trail users. Over €149,000 was invested in this scheme, which was equally matched by regional contributions. Nine trails were developed and maintained in South Kerry: two in Ballinskelligs, three in Bonane, three in Cahesiveen, and one in Valentia.

It is clear from these illustrations from 2010 to 2011 that the SKDP has generated economic outcomes, social outcomes, and environmental outcomes for the region.

## 5.4 *Summary*

It is clear from the descriptions in this chapter that both the NPRCPI and the SKDP are complex and dynamic development arrangements. The key informant interviews and secondary literature review provide detailed descriptions on the five components of the collaborative governance model. In the next chapter an assessment of Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model is conducted based on the cases of the NPRCPI and the SKDP. Chapter Six examines whether the cases meet the definition of collaborative governance and whether the collaborative governance model accurately represents each governance initiative. The chapter also revisits the three other research questions.

## Chapter 6

### Returning to the Research Questions

#### *6.1 Introduction*

This research was constructed to directly address Ansell and Gash's (2007) call to arms – promoting the examination of their collaborative governance model. In undertaking this examination, the research findings also addressed the void of rural regional governance research articulated by Douglas (1998), Reimer (2004), and Woods (2005). As noted in Chapter One, this research posed four questions to enhance the understanding of regional governance in peripheral regions:

1. Is collaborative governance theory, as proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007), appropriate for understanding rural regional governance?

2. How do individuals, community-based organizations, and other key stakeholders influence rural regional governance process(es)?
3. How do regional boundaries influence the formation and operation of rural regional governance models?
4. What is the relationship between government(s) and rural regional governance initiatives?

A discussion of each of these questions is outlined below. The implications of these findings for research, policy makers, and regional development practitioners are taken up in Chapter 7.

## *6.2 Assessment of Collaborative Governance Model*

This section assesses the processes of the two cases with the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) to determine if it accurately represents the phenomena that took place. This assessment is conducted by examining each case to determine if it met the key components of the collaborative governance model: starting conditions, institutional design, facilitated leadership, and collaborative process. Second, the collaborative governance model is assessed for key elements missing based on the experiences in both the Northern Peninsula and South Kerry.

### *6.2.1 Are the Cases Collaborative Governance?*

Before examining the collaborative governance model it is worth revisiting Ansell and Gash's six collaborative governance criteria. These six criteria were presented in Chapter Three with preliminary information gleaned from secondary data.



**Table 12. Assessment of Case Regions by Collaborative Governance Criteria**

Criteria of Collaborative Governance		NPRCPI		South Kerry Development Partnership
Collaborative governance forum is initiated by public agencies or institutions	✓	Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, through 2009 Speech from the Throne, initiated the Northern Peninsula Pilot Initiative. The announcement was the culmination of discussions between the local MHA and the Joint Mayors' Council.	✓	SKDP was initiated through policy from the European Union and the Irish government, principally LEADER.
Participants in the governance forum include non-government actors	✓	NPRCPI's members consisted of four members from each of the Joint Mayors' Council, the REDBs, and the St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat. Each member was officially appointed as an Order in Council by the provincial government.	✓	Board members include representation from voluntary organizations in the region, unions, environmental organizations, local government representatives, and statutory bodies.
Participants engage directly in the decision making process, not just consulted	✓	NPRCPI enabled in decision-making on road priorities. Unfortunately their decisions were not adopted by the provincial ministry.	✓	The SKDP board is active in decision-making.
The governance forum is formally organized and meets collectively	✓	Although NPRCPI is not incorporated the initiative is formally organized by government and met on a regular schedule.	✓	SKDP is incorporated under Irish law with the appropriate bylaws and constitution. The board meets monthly.
The governance forum aims to make decisions by consensus	✓	Yes	✓	Yes

Adapted from Ansell and Gash (2007)

Based on the information in Table 12 it can be concluded that both NPRCPI and SKDP meet Ansell and Gash's six criteria for collaborative governance. The following subsections discuss the effectiveness of the collaborative governance model and the identification of gaps in the model.

### *6.2.2 Starting Condition*

The collaborative governance model outlines three specific areas in the starting conditions component: (i) power-resource-knowledge asymmetries, (ii) incentives/constraints to participation, and (iii) history of collaboration and/or conflict. The examination of these three areas proved useful to understanding the current collaborative governance initiatives. Although useful, these three areas did not explain all key elements to the starting conditions.

The NPRCPI and the SKDP both emerged in response to policy directions by central governments. In Newfoundland the provincial government announced the pilot initiative through a Speech from the Throne after dialogue between the local MHA and the joint municipal council, while in Ireland LEADER policies of the European Union and the Irish government facilitated the emergence. The development and implementation of each initiative was supported by a history of collaboration amongst regional and government actors.

Power-knowledge-resources distribution and symmetry, or lack of symmetry, is an important component of the starting conditions. Ansell and Gash suggest power, knowledge, and resource distribution needs to be examined and addressed, however, this area is only presented in the starting conditions. The inclusion of this element is further discussed in section 6.2.4.

In assessing the two cases the collaborative governance model did not provide a platform for examining what or who constitutes the region. Paasi (2001), as noted in Chapter Two, noted a similar lack of understanding of region. As a result, the model implicitly makes the assumption that the boundaries of the region are static and definite. In both cases the boundaries of the initiatives were not static. In the Northern Peninsula, the definition of the region persisted as an issue over the course of the initiative. Although the boundary of the Northern Peninsula region did not change during the initiative, the boundary served as a source of confusion. The southern boundary was established by government to parallel the Rural Secretariat Rural Regional Council's boundary and did not concur with the vernacular boundary of the region. This confusion served as a distraction. In South Kerry, the regional boundary was modified. The expansion of the area was driven by program funding opportunities. The new regional boundary does not parallel existing boundaries within the area. With each expansion of the boundary confusion emerged and the sense of collective identity dissipated. The

starting conditions did not provide an opportunity to capture this dynamic, which hindered each initiative's ability to achieve its desired outputs and outcomes.

### *6.2.3 Institutional Design*

The institutional design component of the collaborative governance model focused on the inclusiveness of the initiative, clear ground rules, and transparency. These elements were important factors in both the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area. They did not, however, constitute the only important elements of institutional design. Based on the experiences of the NPRCPI and the SKDP another key element emerged requiring attention in the institutional design component of the model – the role and engagement of multi-level actors.

The design of the two governance initiatives was largely directed by central governments, meeting Ansell and Gash's first criterion: the collaborative governance forum is initiated by public agencies or public institutions. In both cases the central government determined the constituents of each board of directors. Robertson (2011), however, contests whether a public agency should assume and maintain the lead role in a collaborative governance initiative. Similar to the fourth criticism of New Public Management, Robertson suggests collaborative governance requires collaborative

leadership. Further, MacKinnon (2002) notes that rural governance initiatives, inspired by bottom up and empowerment, are byproducts of government intervention.

In the Northern Peninsula region clear ground rules and transparency were largely absent, both hindering processes and outcomes. Recent research by Cohen et al. (2011) on collaborative governance and health care note the importance of transparency. In their study the role of local media outlets, particularly print media in the form of newspapers, was pivotal to enhancing the collaborative governance initiative's transparency by increasing the knowledge among the general public. This, in turn, enhanced the collaborative governance initiative's legitimacy and accountability.

At no point in the collaborative governance model do Ansell and Gash distinguish between the different levels of actors, nor the relationships between these different levels of actors. In both cases multiple levels of actors are engaged in the collaborative governance initiatives, each bringing different resources, capacities, and responsibilities.

In both instances, which actors are missing from the multiple levels of actors is interesting and deserves consideration. In the Northern Peninsula, the Canadian federal government was absent, even though the largest economic sector of the region falls within the purview of a federal government agency, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Likewise, in South Kerry, there is no formal role for the European Union, other than as a funder. This recognition of multi-level actors has emerged in a number of other

collaborative governance studies. Sorensen and Torfing (2011) noted similar findings in their study examining collaborative governance in the public sector. Emphasis needs to be placed on examining collaborative governance at both the micro- and macro-level to ensure a comprehensive understanding. May (2013), in an examination of non-participation of key actors in fisheries collaborative governance, came to a similar conclusion. In particular, May (2013) highlights the need to understand the extent to which power is shared across the multiple levels.

In addition to these recent studies, the collaborative governance model would benefit from integrating the work of multi-level governance scholars. The issues of multi-level actors could fit under 'inclusiveness', however, it is an important element that deserves its own attention. Multi-level governance focuses on the dispersion of governance across multiple jurisdictions, such that decision-making is shared among multiple actors at different levels (Hooghe & Marks, 2002; Marks, Hooghe, & Blank, 1996). Bache & Flinders (2005, p. 4) note a key feature of multi-level governance is the "dispersion of central government authority both vertically to actors located at other territorial levels, and horizontally, to non state-actors". The horizontal and vertical interactions are not constrained by traditional jurisdictional boundaries (Bevir, 2009). This notion of authority as being polycentric is critical (Benz & Eberlein, 1999; Conzelmann, 1998). The addition of a multi-level perspective would strengthen the collaborative governance model.

#### *6.2.4 Facilitated Leadership*

The importance of leadership in collaborative governance cannot be understated. The collaborative governance model outlined three key elements of facilitated leadership: conflict resolution, facilitation, and mediation. In the Northern Peninsula few stakeholders spoke of conflict resolution and mediation. In instances where disagreements were encountered, respondents noted the facilitator was able to resolve the situations through dialogue. In South Kerry, the role of both the chairperson and the CEO were pivotal in facilitation and conflict resolution.

The two cases highlighted the importance of leadership through their two different approaches. These two approaches guide questions regarding leadership transition within the facilitated leadership component, which is not currently captured in the collaborative governance model.

In the Northern Peninsula the provincial government assumed the role of facilitator, convener, and secretariat for the initiative. Respondents raised a number of concerns regarding government serving the role of facilitator, particularly on reflection after the second and third year of the initiative. This concern parallels findings in Robertson's (2011) study. Respondents in the Northern Peninsula noted an appreciation for the provincial government taking on this role at the beginning, but over time, expressed a desire to have a local champion in that leadership position. This discussion

suggests there may be a need for a leadership transition role in the collaborative governance model. This transition could see government lead at the beginning of the initiative but as capacity develops in other partners this leadership role would be transferred. This approach of transitional leadership and facilitation was successfully utilized in multi-community collaboration initiatives in western and northern Canada regions (Walsh & Annis, 2004).

#### *6.2.5 Collaborative Process*

The collaborative process component of the collaborative governance model provides a robust examination of the key processes: trust, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue. In both the Northern Peninsula and South Kerry cases each of the components was present and each component generated considerable conversation regarding its influence on the model. Although the elements of the collaborative process are far reaching, two elements appear to require attention.

As noted earlier in 6.2.1, Ansell and Gash include an element on the distribution of power, knowledge, and resources in the starting conditions component. This examination of the distribution is required at the beginning. Their collaborative governance model, however, does not return to this dynamic at later stages in the process.



Instead the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge among the actors should be continually assessed as the collaborative process unfolds. Power, resources and knowledge are not static features of any organization. As the collaborative process unfolds this dynamic may change, altering the collaborative governance model. In an examination of the shifts within the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency towards collaborative governance, Conteh (2013) emphasizes that the inequality of resources has to be continually re-examined. It should be noted that organizations may enhance or develop new resources, power, and/or knowledge through collaborative governance.

Through the examination of the collaborative process in the two case studies, the requirement of sharing power and/or responsibilities is shown to be missing from the Ansell and Gash model. Governance scholars (cf. Stoker, 1998; Woods, 2005), including Ansell and Gash themselves, stipulate that a transfer or shifting of power is required, as noted in Chapter Two. The collaborative governance model does not make this requirement explicit in the model. Although the NPRCPI largely met the components of the collaborative governance model the questions left unanswered were: “Was any power actually shifted or shared?” and “Is there any evidence of polycentricism taking place regarding decision-making?” The evidence suggests no ‘blurring of boundaries’, as Stoker (1998) refers to, took place over the three year existence. The original holders reserved power, interpreted as responsibility and decision-making: principally the provincial government. Municipalities, regional development representatives, businesses,

and residents did not inherit any new powers through the Initiative. The Initiative did provide a new forum for regional actors to gather and meet with high-level government officials; however, the shifting of power did not take place. Based on this experience, the collaborative governance model needs to incorporate an explicit element of power transfer and/or sharing.

### 6.2.6 Outcomes

In the collaborative governance model Ansell and Gash do not provide clear articulation of what is meant by outcomes nor how to measure outcomes in collaborative governance arrangements. The discussion regarding outcomes within their work is quite limited. There is, however, a growing demand on collaborative governance scholars to provide better understanding of outcomes and their influences on the process (Emerson, 2009; Innes & Booher, 1999; Rogers & Weber, 2010).

Rogers and Weber (2010), in *Thinking Harder about Outcomes for Collaborative Governance Arrangements*, suggest outcomes are of fundamental importance to be able to determine if collaborative governance is working effectively. In building an enhanced understanding of outcomes for collaborative governance Weber et al. (Weber, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2007) suggest traditional methods of measuring outcomes may no longer be valid as they are rooted in statutory, goal-based compliance. To supplement these

traditional approaches to outcomes Rogers and Weber (2010, p. 548) suggest

collaborative scholars need to focus on three outcome categories:

1. enhancing public agencies' programmatic effectiveness for existing mandates
2. building new systemic collaborative capacity
3. improving public problem-solving capacity

The experiences in both the Northern Peninsula and South Kerry illustrate the need for a better understanding of collaborative governance outcomes. In the Northern Peninsula region both regional stakeholders and the provincial government officials searched for methods to evaluate their outcomes along the lines of Rogers and White's (2010) second and third categories, particularly to advocate for continuing the pilot initiative. In South Kerry, SKDP is engaged in all three categories of outcomes suggested by Rogers and White (2010). Stakeholders noted that the ability to continue their funding arrangements with the central state is dependent on being able to measure outcomes.

Attention to these categories would provide clarity and depth to the examination of outcomes within the Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model.

### *6.2.7 Proposed Modifications to the Collaborative Governance*

#### *Model*

Ansell and Gash's model of collaborative governance is helpful for describing the processes that took place in both the Northern Peninsula region and the South Kerry area. In both cases, the governance initiatives generally exhibit the key criteria of the collaborative governance model. This general support would validate the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) (see Figure 7). Upon closer investigation, however, only one of the two cases embodies all aspects of the collaborative governance model. As noted in the past five sub-sections, the collaborative governance model did not represent the entire phenomena.

**Figure 7. Adherence to Collaborative Governance Model, by Case**

Components of Collaborative Governance Model		Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative	South Kerry Development Partnership
Starting Conditions	Power, resource, knowledge asymmetries	✓	✓
	Incentives for participation	✓	✓
	Prehistory of cooperation	✓	✓
Institutional Design	Emergence	✓	✓
	Membership	✓	✓
	Ground rules	†	✓
	Transparency	‡	✓
Facilitated Leadership		✓	✓
Collaborative Process	Trust building	✓	✓
	Commitment to process	✓	✓
	Face-to-face dialogue	✓	✓
	Shared understanding	✓	✓
	Outcomes	Δ	✓

† The Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative has an informal set of ground rules/rules of engagement.

‡ Although many stakeholders questioned the degree of transparency, the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative has undertaken conversations regarding responding to the media.

Δ In the Newfoundland case the outcomes are actually outputs. Given the Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative's short tenure, measuring outcomes is difficult.

The collaborative governance model is not an 'all or nothing' proposition. Given the general adherence to the collaborative governance model it is useful to point out that an initiative can have degrees of compliance and these may vary over time. Both internal

and external forces can re-shape a collaborative governance initiative and its adherence to the model. The proposed cohesion of partnerships in Ireland is one such external force that could alter the degrees of compliance. Likewise, in the Northern Peninsula, a decision to continue the initiative among partners would adjust the degrees of compliance.

The experiences of the NPRCPI and the SKDP suggest five modifications to the collaborative governance model.

1. **Defining the region:** The collaborative governance model does not explicitly take into account what the ‘region’ is, and, consequently, who are the appropriate actors. In both Newfoundland and Ireland substantial effort and energy was devoted to discussions of questions such as: What constitutes the region? Where are the boundaries of the region? Is the region homogenous in its understanding of the initiative? How does the current ‘region’ match/not match the vernacular region of local people?
2. **Distinguishing the Role of Multi-Level Actors:** A further deliberation that emerged from this research is the role and influence of multiple levels of actors involved in collaborative governance. The role of multiple levels of governance was quite prominent in the South Kerry area, but not so prominent in the Northern Peninsula region. The collaborative governance model does not differentiate the levels each actor represents. There is no

differentiation for local actors, sub-national actors, national actors, or supra-national actors. In the case of the SKDP the European Union, a supra-national entity, played a substantial role in facilitating regional governance through the provision of policy and financial resources. The influence of the European Union was noted by a number of participants in South Kerry. Many participants argued that the European Union had a greater influence on governance than the Irish government. A supra-national entity was not present in the NPRCPI. In fact, the nation-state level was absent from the Newfoundland case all together. Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model needs to be enhanced to incorporate scholarly work on multi-level governance, such as that of Marks and Hooghe (2001), Horak and Young (2012), and Peters and Pierre (2004). As it is, the model of collaborative governance does not have a mechanism to identify different levels or identify the influence of these multiple levels.

### **3. Power-Knowledge-Resource Distribution in Collaborative Process:**

The collaborative governance model identifies power-knowledge-resource distribution in the starting conditions component. However, it neglects this element once the governance initiative is operational. Given the tendency

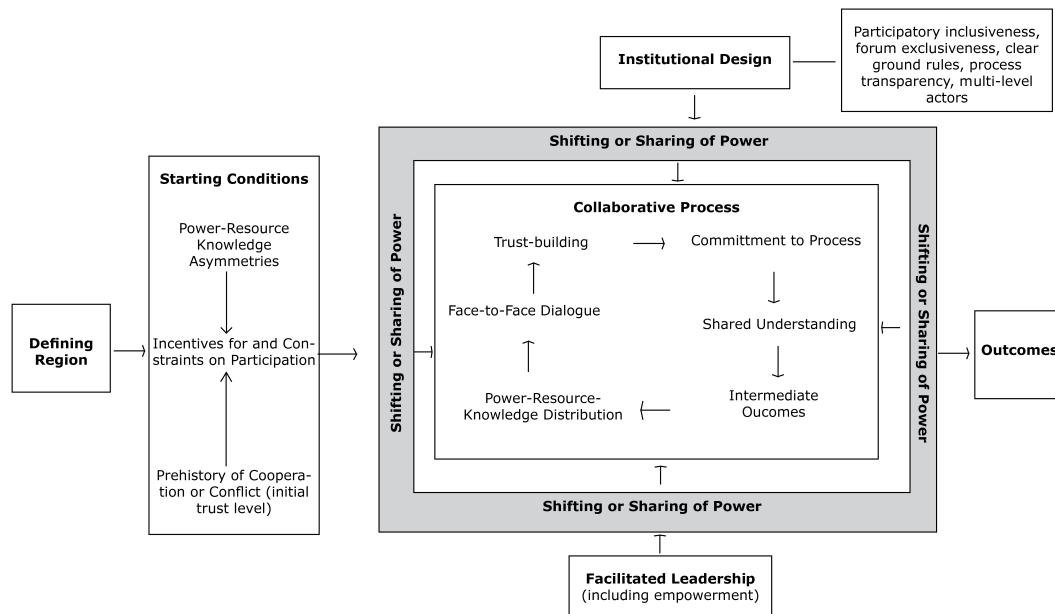
of power, knowledge, and resources to fluctuate, it is proposed that this element be added to the collaborative process.

4. **Shifting and/or Sharing of Power:** A new component needs to be added to the model to address the shifting or sharing of power between actors. Collaborative governance requires either a shift in or sharing of power and/or responsibilities to regional actors. The shifting and sharing of power can take place at multiple stages of the collaborative governance model and there could be more than one transfer or shift in power. Had this component been included in the model, the NPRCPI would not have been considered as collaborative governance.
5. **Richer Description of Outcomes:** Ansell and Gash's model does not provide an adequate description, nor definition, of outcomes. The collaborative governance model should be supplemented with the work of Rogers and Weber (2010) who suggest further work is required to strengthen the description of outcomes.

Based on these amendments a revised model of collaborative governance is illustrated in Figure 8.



**Figure 8. Revised Model of Collaborative Governance for Rural Regions**



Adapted from Ansell and Gash (2007)

### 6.3 Influence of People on Governance in the Periphery

In the re-orientation from government to governance there is an inherent recognition, and requirement, for local leadership (Goodwin, 1998b; Jessop, 1998; Stoker, 1998). The role of local and regional leadership is paramount for the hegemonic role of government to be dispersed. For governance to achieve its desired outputs and outcomes, local and regional actors need to be able to actively participate, influence, and manage the

processes and activities. Governance is not simply an amalgam of actors, it is the process of creating and maintaining new networks of actors (Stark, 2002). The experiences of the NPRCPI and the SKDP exemplified the critical role of local actors.

In the Northern Peninsula region, the role of local actors was demonstrated at two levels. First, the role of leaders was clearly evident in the formation of the Initiative. Stakeholders noted the role of the Trevor Taylor, local Member of the House of Assembly from 2003-2007, as being critical in the development of the Initiative. Mr Taylor had engaged in conversations with key representatives from the Northern Peninsula region and within provincial government departments and agencies. The discussions focused on devising a new method of engagement, addressing local and regional concerns about decision-making for the region taking place external to the regions and often with limited consultation. In moving the dialogue and implementation of the NPRCPI it was noted, by both regional and government actors, that Mr Taylor took substantial risk in the political arena. As one government representative noted, “everyone knows the current system in the province for rural communities does not work but nobody wants to admit it or take the risk to change it” (KII-NP-21). This leadership was key in the formation of the initiative.

The second influence of local actors on the NPRCPI was granting it legitimacy. As the Initiative started, and throughout its early stages, the presence of key local actors

provided a sense of legitimacy to the Initiative's work. A number of local participants indicated the engagement of local leaders, such as mayors and regional development organizations, provided assurance of the potential value of the Initiative. Without the involvement of these key individuals early in the process, a number of local actors indicated they would probably have not continued in the same manner.

In the SKDP, board members illustrated two key local leadership roles in the delivery of governance in the region. First, the role of the Partnership's chairperson is pivotal. As KII-SK-09 indicated, "I think why the partnership was so successful in the early years was we had a wonderful chairperson." The position of chair was described as being critical for ensuring meaningful engagement among board members, building and sustaining relationships with partners external to the region, and diffusing conflicts. It was noted that the strength of a chairperson is often unnoticed by board members until a change in leadership, if the incoming chairperson lacks some of the capacities of their predecessor. The second illustration of the influence of individuals from South Kerry was the role of the Chief Executive Officer. Working in conjunction with the chairperson and the board of directors, the Chief Executive Officer plays an important role facilitating relationships with funding partners, government policy makers, and the communities of the region.

Based on the NPRCPI and the SKDP experiences two key questions emerged for consideration. First, given that leadership capacities are integral to regional governance, how can opportunities to build and enhance these capacities be addressed? One suggestion is for collaborative governance initiatives to actively design and participate in leadership capacity sessions. This would enable an enhancement of skills for current board members. It would be remiss to limit leadership capacity building to only internal members and senior staff. Governance initiatives need to consider enhancing leadership capacity among local actors beyond their boards and senior staff. This is increasingly important as volunteer burn out increases in the regions.

Second, leadership capacities can take many forms and may be tailor made to the region. Given this understanding, to what extent do partners external to the region recognize and acknowledge a leadership role for local actors? This question becomes particularly important when new collaborative governance initiatives are being proposed. Does government believe there is adequate and appropriate leadership to sustain governance? Many stakeholders noted that actors external to the region often dismissed capacities related to regional appropriateness or regional sensitivities. The lack of acknowledgement for locally important capacities, often tacit knowledge, hinders collaborative governance initiatives.

In both the NPRCPI and the SKDP concerns were raised regarding the influence of people on governance initiatives. In both initiatives participants noted that absenteeism of members at meetings causes substantial barriers to progress. Intermittent attendance often slowed down processes, generated and sustained misinformation, and was the catalyst for frustration amongst other board members.

It is clear from both the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area that individuals possess the potential to substantially influence governance initiatives. This result parallels other research on the role of leadership in governance (Folke, Hahn, Olsson, & Norberg, 2005; Vodden et al., 2006).

## *6.4 Influence of Regional Boundaries on Governance:*

### *Geography Matters*

If collaborative governance is focused on decentralizing decision-making to the region, what influence do the regional boundaries of the region have on governance? Are the benefits promised through collaborative governance compromised by space? As noted in section 6.2.2 perspectives from both the NPRCPI and the SKDP illustrated that the regional boundaries matter when it comes to governance.

In the Northern Peninsula region, the influence of physical geography has brought about a way of life. Stakeholders noted that driving distances hinder the ability to participate in regional meetings. As KII-NP-01 indicated, “it is possible for people in the periphery to spend more time traveling than at the meeting.” But at the end of the day, regional actors indicated the “geography simply is what it is” (KII-NP-08) and it is “the reality of the region” (KII-NP-06). Regional actors noted that although geography can be a hindrance, most people accept it and do not notice. The distances traveled for regional events, such as the NPRCPI, have become part of peoples’ lives.

The rural location also created an informal cohesion among communities of the Northern Peninsula region. What became evident through this research is that the geography of this cohesion, or sense of identity, did not match that of the NPRCPI. This raised concerns with whether the collaborative governance model adequately addressed the issue of region and geography, as was discussed in the previous section of this chapter, justifying the amendment of the collaborative governance model. The other concern regarding boundaries that was raised from the experience in the NPRCPI was how the region was constructed. Government representatives, located outside the region, determined the regional boundaries of the initiative. It could be argued that the region did not feel they shaped the membership of the NPRCPI. This sense of external construction of the region was compounded through the lack of terms of reference for adding

additional members/organizations and the lack of transparency regarding the Initiative's activities.

In the South Kerry area, a similar notion was echoed. The geography of the region can hinder participation, especially from actors located in the peripheral areas of the region. In South Kerry, the physical geography exerted a substantial influence on keeping people apart. As KII-SK-08 noted, "the topography pushes people apart in South Kerry and, as a result, we have never been a harmonious unit ... it is a bunch of settlements, many of which are isolated." At the same time, board members in South Kerry indicate that although they have been isolated, there is a shared sense of general identity and common values.

The experience of the SKDP indicated that physical geography influenced the level of understanding and participation by communities and organizations. The highest level of participation and knowledge in Cahersiveen, the location of the main office. As distance from the Partnership's head office increases, the level of participation and knowledge about the Partnership decreases. This finding parallels the distance decay phenomenon of spatial theory and analysis (Fotheringham, 1981).

Like the Northern Peninsula, the South Kerry area noted the regional boundary for the Partnership was not a natural boundary. In fact, the SKDP boundary does not parallel existing boundaries in the region. Many stakeholders noted the current boundary

does not necessarily represent a coherent and self-described region. The current boundary of the Partnership was a by-product of programming regulations of the European Union, such that to participate in the LEADER II program the Partnership needed to represent a population of approximately 75,000. In expanding the region the Partnership entered into the urban centre of Killarney, expanding the organization's historic rural development mandate. Participants noted that had LEADER II not required a larger population base the geographic boundary would not have changed, thereby maintaining a closer representation to existing boundaries in the region.

These illustrations by no means argue environmental determinism; rather, they suggest physical geography and the boundaries of the region are important for understanding governance. The key messages this research provides regarding the influence of geography on governance in peripheral areas are:

- geography matters;
- the influence of geography is not well articulated in Ansell and Gash's (2007) collaborative governance model;
- the boundaries of the region need to be, at a minimum, co-constructed with regional actors and built on local knowledge of what constitutes the region;



- historic and current perceptions of region are critical elements for building regional boundaries, particularly cultural landscapes and functional economic spaces, and
- knowledge, participation, and engagement dissipates with distance from key physical centres (e.g. office buildings) of governance initiatives.

## *6.5 Examining Government-Governance Relationships*

Collaborative governance is characterized by polycentrism. Moving decision-making powers closer to the people being influenced is a key component. Collaborative governance is not about making government irrelevant; rather, it is about redefining the role of government and regional actors. In the process of redefining the role of government, Bevir (2011) suggests governance is like opening the ‘black box’ of government. Part of this research was to explore the relationship between government and new forms of governance.

A key question emerging from this research is whether governance was viewed as legitimate by government departments and agencies. Legitimacy, the perception that the actions of an entity are desirable or appropriate (Suchman, 1995), was viewed at three

levels in both cases: legitimacy among community residents, legitimacy among regional actors, and legitimacy with senior government actors.

The stakeholders with the NPRCPI indicated there was legitimacy among the regional actors. The continual meeting and desire for moving regional interests forward were cited as evidence. When it came to the communities of the Northern Peninsula, stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed they lacked legitimacy. This was directly attributed to the fact the NPRCPI had not communicated with residents about their mandate, activities, or recommendations. As KII-NP-01 expressed, “if you are not aware of its existence, it is hard not to question its legitimacy.” When it came to describing if the government viewed the NPRCPI as legitimate there was mixed opinions. The continued engagement of government departments in the process led many stakeholders to believe there was a degree of legitimacy among government. This level of legitimacy was believed to be more embedded in the government representative, than it was the government department or the government in general. KII-NP-06 explained, “I still need assurance – I am still not sure the government sees us as a legitimate body.”

In the SKDP board members had a more positive view of the organization’s legitimacy on each of the three levels. Among board members and organizations constituting the board everyone believed there was legitimacy. At the community level, board members concurred that the Partnership was viewed as legitimate. They suggested

the level of legitimacy could vary from community to community, being highest in areas closest to the Partnership's offices in Cahersiveen and Kilorglin. Among government and statutory agencies board members indicated they were viewed as legitimate. The policy guidelines from the Irish government enshrined legitimacy in the SKDP. Many board members noted an influence of the European Union in enhancing the Partnership's legitimacy among the Irish government. Through the delivery of pan-European programs and initiatives, such as LEADER, the European Union advanced the legitimacy of the Partnership.

Changing political representation influenced both cases. In the Northern Peninsula, the provincial political representation changed on three occasions from 2009 – 2012. In the lead up and at the beginning of the NPRCPI the governing political party held the provincial riding. The representation changed twice, a 2009 by-election and the 2011 general election. In both instances the government party did not get returned in the provincial riding. Regional actors indicated this change in political representation also caused a change in the government's response and relationship with the NPRCPI. KII-NP-11 noted, "the change in political colour of the district absolutely changed the government's commitment to the process." The implications of the changing political representation in the riding were perceived to have substantial influence on the NPRCPI. The resignation of Mr Taylor meant the Initiative needed to find a new champion within government and the government needed to appoint a new minister responsible for the

department handling the Initiative. In the South Kerry area, the 2011 general election changed a long-standing political representation in the region. The change in representation, at both the local and national levels, was perceived to not favour the South Kerry area. Prior to the 2011 election, the local Teachta Dála in the region was a prominent senior member of the governing party and minister in the national cabinet.

The degree to which governments were willing to share or transfer power was starkly different in the two cases. In South Kerry, over a two-decade period, the Irish government was willing to transfer power and responsibilities. This transfer of power was not devolution; the central government still oversees the transfer agreements and determines the rules of engagement. In the Northern Peninsula region, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador did not transfer or share any power or responsibilities. Many stakeholders in the Northern Peninsula region indicated they did not believe the government was prepared to shift power or responsibility. Although the NPRCPI provided advice to government departments there was no obligation of the government to accept or integrate the advice. This perception was compounded by the changes in political representations.

Bevir (2011) noted governance practices open the internal workings of government, or the ‘black box of the state’, for re-organization. The evidence collected from the two cases appears to indicate that government, and government actors, would

prefer to keep the lid on the proverbial ‘black box of the state’, hence limiting collaborative governance, particularly in Newfoundland. Since the conclusion of data collection for this research a series of events support this evidence of keeping the lid on the black box: the lack of decision regarding the continuation of the NPRCPI in Newfoundland and the cohesion plan to amalgamate governance organizations like the SKDP in Ireland and re-shift power and responsibilities are two examples.

The key messages this research provides regarding the influence of government to governance relationships in peripheral areas are:

- polycentrism is critical for collaborative governance, such that hesitations of shifting or sharing power hinder the success of these initiatives;
- the engagement and relationships of governance initiatives to multi-level actors can enhance legitimacy;
- interference to trust building and relationships between government and governance (e.g. changes in personnel), whether elected officials or bureaucrats, can hinder collaborative governance initiatives; and
- a sense of legitimacy towards governance by government actors is not guaranteed, and takes considerable time to build.

## 6.6 Summary

This research directly answers Ansell and Gash's call to test their collaborative governance model. Beyond addressing this call, the research also addressed three additional pertinent questions.

The NPRCPI and the SKDP provided rich experiences to facilitate advancing the collaborative governance model. Although the findings from the two cases demonstrate a general adherence to the collaborative governance model, five modifications are suggested to strengthen the model. Given the general adherence to the collaborative governance model, it is further suggested that such an initiative can have *degrees* of compliance.

This chapter revisited and responded to the original four research questions posed in Chapter One. Using the findings from the NPRCPI and the SKDP cases each of the questions have been addressed. In addressing these questions a revised collaborative governance model for rural regions has been proposed, one that captures the nuances from both cases.

Chapter Seven examines how to move the findings from these four research questions into a wider audience. The chapter examines the implications of this research for research/theory, policy, and regional development practitioners. This chapter also identifies subsequent research initiatives that could further advance theory and practice of collaborative governance in rural regions.

## Chapter 7. Summary

### *7.1 Introduction*

This chapter connects the research findings to wider audiences by discussing the implications of the findings to academia, policy makers, and regional development practitioners. The chapter also identifies future research questions. These questions were beyond the scope of this research, but they are natural next steps in continuing to advance collaborative governance studies.

### *7.2 Contributions of the Research*

This research set out to make contributions to three realms: theory, policy, and practice. The potential influence of these research findings are discussed in the following



three sub-sections under these headings, recognizing these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

### *7.2.1 Academia*

The first research question of this dissertation focused on whether the collaborative governance model was appropriate for understanding rural regional governance. Ansell and Gash's collaborative governance model offered a suitable platform for examining changes in planning and decision-making in rural regions. Ansell and Gash (2007) developed a collaborative governance model based on a synthesis of literature. To advance collaborative governance from case studies to theory Ansell and Gash invited researchers to assess and critique the model, with an ultimate goal of advancing governance theory building. This research responded to this invitation by examining the collaborative governance model in regions of both Newfoundland and Ireland. The research findings make four contributions to the collaborative governance model.

Based on the narratives of the NPRCPI and the SKDP the current collaborative governance model did not fully capture all of the key elements. To strengthen the collaborative governance model four additional components are required: definition of

the region, differentiation of multi-level actors, inclusion of power-knowledge-resources in the collaborative process, and the addition of a more detailed perspective on outcomes.

With these amendments the revised collaborative governance model is more appropriate and useful for understanding governance in rural regions. The revised collaborative governance model needs to be examined and tested in other rural regions to determine its generalizability. A further discussion of this takes place later in this chapter.

### *7.2.2 Policy*

Research findings from the NPRCPI and the SKDP bring to light five potential contributions to policy makers at various levels: (i) financial and human resources are required to ensure active and continued participation by local and regional actors, (ii) new mechanisms are required within government to work with communities and regions as partners, (iii) collaborative governance is a long-term initiative built on trust and relationships, (iv) legislating government department participation does not ensure active participation, and (v) new measures are required to evaluate collaborative governance processes. Each of these contributions is further outlined below.

Collaborative governance initiatives are developed through linking existing local and regional actors, including government. These actors, through a shifting of power, can become engaged and empowered decision-makers. This process is premised on the notion

that local and regional actors have both the human and financial capacities to participate in collaborative governance. Given the emphasis on process, collaborative governance is time consuming for all actors. Many local and regional actors face challenges with volunteer burn out, which compromises their ability to deliver their core mandate. Collaborative governance becomes an additional responsibility to already taxed actors. Collaborative governance initiatives rely on the strength of regional actors and regional institutions. Policy makers need to ensure adequate and appropriate supports are provided to ensure local and regional actors can become actively engaged. These supports may take the form of financial assistance to enable enhanced capacities, or in-kind supports for mentorship.

Historically, governments have worked with communities and regions. This relationship typically is viewed as government as service provider and communities/regions as client. Collaborative governance initiatives require new mechanisms within government for working with communities and regions as partners, not as clients. The shifting of power and responsibilities from government to the region necessitates new relationships, new methods for decision-making, and new skills and capacities. To fully participate in collaborative governance, government departments need to recognize that time and resources are required to build, enhance, and maintain relationships with regional actors. Given the value of face-to-face dialogue demonstrated by these cases and the collaborative governance literature, relationships cannot be based

solely on electronic means. Under a collaborative governance approach, no longer are governments the sole decision-makers; instead governments need to develop methods for co-decision-making.

The findings further suggest that government policy makers and front line staff need to recognize that collaborative governance is not a short-term initiative. Trust and relationships required to ensure an effective collaborative governance initiative take time to develop. It is important to recognize that each change of government personnel challenges the stability of the collaborative governance initiative. Relationships developed through collaborative governance are typically between regional actors and individuals from government; not necessarily the government department. The cases demonstrate that when the government representative changes, the relationships change as well, unless the transition is carefully managed. New representations mean new relationships must be developed, often setting collaborative governance back. Therefore, attention to transition is needed.

Legislating government departments to participate in collaborative governance does not ensure active participation. This can be seen from the experiences of the SKDP. Within the board structure of the Partnership four seats are reserved for statutory agencies. Board members noted the level of participation from the statutory agencies varied greatly; the legislative requirement for participation did not necessarily work in practice.

For the change to governance to be effective, senior officials in government departments need to understand the value of their participation. Government representatives need to be given appropriate time to participate, acknowledgement for their commitment, and possibly incentives to engage with collaborative governance initiatives.

The final contribution to policy makers realized through this research is the need for appropriate measures to evaluate collaborative governance processes. Standard measures used in program evaluations, largely focused on compliance, are not appropriate for collaborative governance given the shift to shared power and responsibilities. Government departments need to determine, together with other stakeholders, what the measures of ‘good’ investments in collaborative governance are. A number of scholars have initiated this dialogue (cf. Abrams et al., 2003; High & Nemes, 2007; Taylor et al., 2012); this research supports a continuation of the development of governance evaluation mechanisms, ensuring it is useful for rural regions.

### *7.2.3 Regional Development Practice*

This research brings to light four potential contributions to regional development practice at the local level: identifying who speaks for the region, addressing issues of legitimacy and accountability, recognizing the challenge for government to operate in

collaborative governance initiatives, and the need for leadership training. Each of these contributions is described below.

Regional development practitioners need to purposefully discuss the question of who speaks for the region. Historically, municipalities have spoken for their constituents, but municipalities may no longer be the natural voice. Elected officials have traditionally only represented their local interests. As the transition from competition to collaboration unfolds the appropriateness of municipalities being the voice wanes. Regions need to engage in discussions regarding how to select the appropriate voice to represent their opportunities and challenges to government. Given the climate of competition between communities that has been fostered through multiple government programs of the past, facilitation may be required in some regions. This facilitation needs to ensure that all key stakeholders are at the table for the discussion. The question of who speaks for the region needs to be regularly re-visited to ensure legitimacy and accountability.

The findings further show that legitimacy and accounting are critical concerns for regional development practice. Collaborative governance does not draw its legitimacy or accountability from popular elections. This places collaborative governance at odds with how accountability and legitimacy are usually measured in government. The breadth of support and incremental participation of actors is a key measure of legitimacy for collaborative governance. Evaluating and demonstrating outcomes from collaborative

governance is also important in building legitimacy and accountability to both government and the region. Conveying the legitimacy and accountability of collaborative governance can be difficult and time consuming. Ensuring the proper measures are in place facilitates the move from competition to collaboration and the recognition of the difference between government and governance.

Regional development practitioners need to recognize that collaborative governance is not the status quo for how government has responded to and participated with communities and regions in the past. As result, practitioners need to understand and remind government that the precedence of previous activities and arrangements is not the path for moving forward. Collaborative governance requires new relationships, new dynamics of power, new decision-making actors. All of these take considerable time to design and accomplish. Government departments are not used to working in collaborative governance arrangements. Communities, regions, and practitioners need to realize the new territory and have patience with government as it discovers its new role. Regional development practitioners and actors need to realize the challenges for government officials who do “get it” and figure out how government operates in collaborative governance. These officials are committed to these governance initiatives. Regional actors need to assist these bureaucrats as they navigate integrating new processes and activities associated with collaborative governance in their departments.

Finally, leadership capacities were identified as a key component in collaborative governance. Regional development practitioners need to be aware of this and explore opportunities to develop leadership skills in new leaders and enhance the leadership skills of current leaders. Simply focusing on enhancing the leadership skills of the current collaborative governance partners serves well in the short-term, but it does not facilitate succession planning in the long-term. Regional development practitioners need to explore opportunities for building leaderships skills through both formal and informal opportunities in the communities and region. These opportunities could take the form of tool kits, manuals, online learning, or more traditional learning sessions/classes.

### *7.3 Future Research*

This research successfully answered the four original questions. In the process of conducting this research and analyzing the findings two questions emerged for future research. Although related, these questions were beyond the scope of this research. It would behoove future collaborative governance research to address these questions.

This research concluded that the collaborative governance model proposed by Ansell and Gash (2007) required amendments to accurately describe the governance phenomenon taking place in the Northern Peninsula region and South Kerry area.



Empirical research needs to be conducted with the revised collaborative governance model for rural regions to ensure its validity. Ideally, a multi-year, multiple site research initiative would be developed highlighting different power/responsibility sharing and differing definitions of region. Conducting this research initiative in multiple jurisdictions with differing policy environments would substantially advance the revised collaborative governance model for rural regions. A multi-year study would allow for observation as governance processes evolve.

Through this research it also became apparent there is a need to conduct applied research on how to measure and evaluate collaborative governance initiatives. This need is supported by the emerging research on collaborative governance evaluation. The current matrices of evaluation used by government are inappropriate for collaborative governance. The application of a participatory evaluation process would facilitate regional and government partners discussing and collaboratively building a meaningful framework for evaluating collaborative governance. Ensuring an appropriate evaluation framework is required to advance regional development practice and demonstrate the benefits of collaborative governance to current government decision-makers, local residents, and regional stakeholders.

Further research is needed to address Ansell and Gash's (2007, p. 549) question: "Is collaborative governance more effective than adversarial or managerial governance?"

This research did not examine the outcomes of collaborative governance initiatives in detail to address this important question. Research needs to be conducted focusing on collaborative governance outcomes to address this question. The research suggested in the previous paragraph would directly contribute to this assessment of benefits between collaborative governance versus adversarial and/or managerial strategies.

## *7.4 Summary*

This dissertation responded to two ‘calls to arms’ from leading scholars in governance and rural regional development. First from Ansell and Gash (2007) there was a call to evaluate their collaborative governance model. Second, a call from Reimer (2004) to take notice to the phenomenon of governance taking place in rural regions. In addressing these calls this dissertation has answered the four research questions posed and, in doing so, generated a revised collaborative governance model.

The search for new forms of governance is partly fueled by frustrations in rural regions at the lack of central governments’ abilities to respond to regional priorities, challenges, and opportunities. At the same time, the move towards governance, or at least an openness to experimenting has occurred, through the principles pushed forward by theories of New Public Management whereby government seeks partnerships and a

decentralized method(s) of service delivery. The increasing presence of collaborative governance initiatives requires a better understanding of the processes to optimize benefits. This research advances this understanding.

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