

THE STRATEGIC SOCIAL PLAN IN LABRADOR:  
A CASE STUDY IN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

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**The Strategic Social Plan in Labrador:  
A Case Study in Collaborative Governance**

**By**

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All the opinions expressed in this thesis are the sole responsibility of the researcher and do not in any way reflect the opinions held by anybody mentioned at any point in this thesis or anyone consulted during the research process. I apologize for any misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations evident in this thesis, and I invite feedback so that I may learn from any mistakes I may have made and apply the lessons in my future undertakings.

Allison Catmur  
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## **2. Prologue**

The research project that I chose to undertake as part of the requirements for my Master's degree underwent several changes during the initial stages of development. The process of refining and adapting the research topic to suit not only my interests and motivations, but also the requirements of the University and the funding bodies, and most importantly, the needs and concerns of the research subjects, was a fascinating journey of discovery in and of itself. I feel it is important to describe my experiences and observations here, and to mention some of the factors that led to the evolution of the project to the final result that is presented in this paper.

I entered the department of sociology after completing an undergraduate degree in socio-cultural anthropology which exposed me to several interesting people, many of whom have had a great influence on the development of the research project presented here.

During my studies in anthropology, I had been particularly interested in issues of social justice - in work related to marginalized or disfranchised populations and the social and cultural ramifications of poverty. At that time, I had the unique experience of participating in a study tour in Central and Eastern Europe led by Dr. David Scheffel of Thomson Rivers University (then University College of the Cariboo) which placed great emphasis on a participant-observation experience with the Roma people of Svinia in eastern Slovakia. This experience opened my eyes to the realities facing a marginalized minority group in that part of the world, and also raised my awareness of the realities facing other marginalized peoples both at home and abroad. It also nurtured my interest in the dynamics of community social and economic development, and upon returning to Newfoundland and Labrador, I pursued this burgeoning interest in the local context.

Under the guidance of Dr. Doug House of the sociology department, I began to learn about the social and economic development challenges facing the province. In particular, my studies focussed on the period following the closure of the cod fishery in 1992, a vital industry from an economic and cultural standpoint. I researched the provincial government's integrated approach to social and economic development through its system of twenty Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) and was introduced to a process called the Strategic Social Plan (SSP). The SSP built on some of the same notions that underpinned the integrated approach, stressing for instance the importance of balance, collaboration, sustainability, community empowerment, local involvement, diversification, and the linking of social and economic development. It also incorporated a focus on the voluntary sector as an important local partner in developing communities and regions. The SSP had begun implementation in 1998 and was facing the possibility of program cuts and adjustments that came along with the transition to a new provincial government. All my research interests converged as I envisioned designing a thesis proposal based on an examination of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador's social and economic development initiatives from the perspective of a historically marginalized Aboriginal population in the province – the Innu people of Labrador.

Dr. House agreed to become my principal thesis supervisor when I entered the graduate studies program in the sociology department. Shortly thereafter, he went on to accept the position of deputy minister of the provincial Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. Fortunately, he agreed to maintain his role as my supervisor, and through



him I gained a unique insight into the inner workings of government and the ways in which government policies and programs are developed and administered.

As my research interests began to take shape, Dr. House introduced me to Penny Rowe of the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) who was looking for graduate students to participate in the project for which she was principal investigator - the Values Added Community University Research Alliance (Values Added CURA). The CURA program is an initiative of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council that provides funding to research projects that are led by a team composed of both academics from a University and community-based partners. The CURA program promotes social innovation and development by bridging the gap between universities and local partners and enhancing collaboration and knowledge-sharing. The Values Added CURA was conceived of and is led by the CSC, and includes academic partners from Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN), as well as representatives from the provincial and federal governments. The purpose of the Values Added CURA is, in part, to examine themes emanating from the provincial SSP, including the notion of collaborative governance and the role of the Voluntary, Community-Based Sector (VCBS). I was fortunate to receive a stipend from the Values Added CURA, and as a result, my project became increasingly focussed on the SSP.

Through my participation in the Values Added CURA, I encountered individuals with varied backgrounds – academics from different departments at the University (including anthropology and political science), and individuals working in the government or in the

community-based sector. This experience further influenced the direction of my research, particularly my interactions with researcher Patti Powers.

In my initial exploration of the research needs and possibilities in Labrador, I was surprised by many of the feelings and reactions expressed by many people I spoke to. Having been raised in a relatively privileged environment for most of my life on the “mainland” of Canada (Ottawa Valley), with some experience living overseas as a child and adolescent which had awakened within me a great passion for travel and cultural immersion, I was perceived as being somewhat naïve and over-confident about my research intentions in Labrador. First of all, I was unfamiliar with the reality of life in a Northern jurisdiction such as Labrador. My very first visit to Labrador to attend the Pan-Labrador meeting of the five Regional Economic Development Boards that was taking place in Mary’s Harbour was an eye-opener. After hopping over the Strait of Belle Isle from St. Anthony to Mary’s Harbour on a rugged Air Labrador Twin Otter aircraft that landed on a gravel runway outside of a tiny airport, I immediately turned on my cell phone to make a call and was surprised to find it without reception. On that same visit, having arrived in clothes fit for spring weather, I found myself snowbound and unable to make the three-hour drive over the snow-blocked gravel road between Lodge Bay and Red Bay enroute to Blanc Sablon airport to catch a flight to my next destination. The Labradorians present at the meeting were the only ones who saw no need to become agitated, and the fiercely dedicated and resourceful coordinator of the conference we had all just attended proceeded to place calls in to Air Labrador and was ultimately successful in securing a new charter flight out of Mary’s Harbour for the entire group. That weekend I had a crash-course in some of the realities of life in Labrador – not only by

participating in a fascinating conference and listening to the various talks and presentations, but also by being there to experience the realities of life in the North firsthand. I came away with a new appreciation for the qualities of innovation, flexibility, patience, hospitality and perseverance.

Secondly, I was also inexperienced in terms of the protocol involved in conducting academic research in an Aboriginal community in Canada. I was somewhat disheartened to discover that many individuals I spoke to felt that the research I was suggesting was untimely and fell towards the bottom of the list of priorities for the Aboriginal community that I wished to collaborate with. I found out that there were far more pressing issues to be tackled in the community; issues requiring the undivided attention and careful consideration of an experienced researcher, one who preferably had established relationships within the community and whom local people knew they could trust. Furthermore, I encountered some suspicion and scepticism regarding the conduct and purpose of academic research pursuits in general.

A common reaction that I encountered towards academic research was for people to put their guards up. Labrador has attracted and continues to attract a great number of researchers from various disciplines, and the experience of locals with research and researchers has not always been positive. The local perception is that researchers from outside Labrador have for decades parachuted into the region, conducted research often considered by Labradorians to be irrelevant or obscure, rarely seeking local input, and sharing little, if any, of the research findings or results. They would depart as quickly as they came, often never to be heard from again. This historical experience as described by



many Labradorians makes them weary of acquiescing to or participating in further research projects. Many feel that they exist in a fish-bowl, the subjects of studies that are completely disconnected from the realities and the needs of Labrador communities and conducted by individuals who are alienated from the people who live there. To make matters worse, the perception is that these studies sometimes draw erroneous conclusions due to a lack of cultural sensitivity or understanding on the part of the researchers as well as the general lack of local input and feedback. There is also the concern that researchers have and will continue to take advantage of or exploit the knowledge of Labradorians, and that research results may be used in ways that locals would not consent and that, ultimately, may have negative impacts on the people of Labrador.

All of these perceptions, some of them well-founded and justified, make the process or methodology of conducting research in Labrador an extremely important stage of the research project, one which requires a real commitment on behalf of the researcher. The complexity of the situation vis-à-vis research in Labrador due to the history of negative experiences that have fuelled feelings of resentment towards researchers and a suspicion about the research objectives makes this terrain challenging to navigate - particularly for newcomers. Mending the relationship is extremely important, and the onus is on all researchers to contribute to this process of renewal. The experience can, at first, be confusing, distressing and sometimes frustrating, but ultimately, a successful venture can be highly rewarding for both the researcher and the local people whose remarkable hospitality and vital contributions should never be taken for granted, left unacknowledged, misused or abused.

In my quest to refine a research topic that would bridge my own personal interests, the research agenda of the Values Added CURA, and the needs of the people of Labrador, I proposed examining the SSP as a process of collaborative governance through an exploration of the Innu perspective and an investigation of to what extent the Innu people in Labrador had been meaningfully engaged in this process. I set out to learn more about the procedures and protocol involved in securing ethics approval for the conduct of research in an Aboriginal community. Making those initial contacts and finding out information was challenging, but with the help of some well-informed and well-connected individuals, I was able to find my way. Ultimately, my initial proposal did not receive the required approval of the Innu Nation who not only had different research priorities, but were also dealing at the time with crises in their communities (a divisive band council election and subsequent riot in the community of Sheshatshiu, and the aftermath of a series of traumatic events in Davis Inlet followed by a complete relocation to the new community of Natuashish). Furthermore, the registration of the Mushuau and Sheshatshiu Innu Bands under the Indian Act in November of 2002 changed the relationship between the Innu of Labrador and the provincial government. It implied, for example, the transfer from the provincial to the federal government not only of land for reserves in Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, but also the transfer of “financial responsibility for education, income support, most primary health care, economic development and municipal services” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2000: 27). These changes were critical steps within the *Labrador Innu Comprehensive Healing Strategy*, a strategy ultimately aimed at building capacity for self-governance among the Labrador Innu and offering in the interim stronger support from the federal government (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2002). This move away from a

historically troubled relationship with the provincial government to a direct relationship with the federal government logically implied that any research focussed on a provincial government process was for the most part irrelevant to the Innu people and this further contributed to their decision not to grant approval for my research proposal.

I found myself in a position of having to implement some changes to the initial vision of my project. I wanted to maintain the original aim of the study as an examination of the SSP as a process of collaborative governance using Labrador as a case study region, but decided to shift my focus away from the engagement of Aboriginal groups specifically to the engagement of the community-based sector more generally. The SSP document, *People, Partners and Prosperity* places a great emphasis on the engagement of this sector, which it also refers to as the “third sector” or “voluntary sector” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10). I decided that I would examine the evolution and implementation of the SSP process, paying particular attention to the status of and attitude towards *intra*-sectoral partnerships (among organizations or entities belonging to the same sector) and *inter*-sectoral partnerships (between organizations or entities belonging to different sectors) in the unique environment created by the SSP. I chose to focus on communities in the Central, South Coast and Straits regions of Labrador. This new focus was an important and logical extension of the research that was already being conducted by individuals involved with the Values Added CURA, with whom I had been working closely. Furthermore, as I would begin to discover, it was and still remains a very relevant and timely research topic. Most importantly, it was a research topic that was of great interest to community groups in the region and I was able to secure local support as well as the involvement of many enthusiastic research participants.

The process of refining my research topic, of familiarizing myself with the ethical considerations and realities of conducting research in Aboriginal communities, of negotiating an acceptable project that takes into account the needs and interests of all the parties involved, and of heading out into the field for data collection was an incredibly enriching educational experience that could not have been acquired in any other way than through trial and error and direct lived experience. The taste of life in Labrador that I acquired through my visits there, and the interactions I had with the people who inhabit this “land of mountains, woods and snow” have left a strong impression that I will always carry with me.<sup>1</sup> Thank you to the people of Labrador for sharing their experiences and for their hospitality and support.

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<sup>1</sup> This description is taken from the lyrics to the “Ode to Labrador” written by Dr Harry L. Paddon, a doctor with the International Grenfell Association, in 1927.

### **3. Introduction**

#### ***3.1 Collaborative Governance: A Case Study Analysis***

Sociologists often draw a distinction between macro-sociological theories, which concern themselves with the analysis of the overarching structures, systems and processes of social life (such as Marxist theory); and micro-sociological theories, which focus their analysis on the social experiences of the individual (such as symbolic interactionism). Some sociologists find this dichotomy inadequate, pointing to the existence of a meso-level or “mesodomain” of social life – an “interactional region between the face-to-face encounter and the wider social structure” that can offer insight into the relationship of the macro and micro levels (Gordon 1998: 410). If I were to locate this work within this system of classification, I would suggest that it offers an analysis of particular meso-structures within social life and the changing role of these structures vis-à-vis the macro-structures of society and the implications for the micro-level of individual experience. In other words, it examines the transformations occurring within the “meso-level” of political life; specifically, the changing relationship between civil society and the state that is evident in contemporary approaches to governance. It seeks to examine the blurring of boundaries between the public and private spheres, the changing dynamic between the individual and the social, and how to strive for social harmony in the face of post-modern diversity, complexity and an emphasis on the relative nature of culture, morality and truth (Van Ham 2001). In essence, this research addresses the age-old issue of how to best reconcile private interests with the public good, with a particular emphasis on the importance of accounting for the needs and concerns of minorities.

In practical terms, this thesis presents a case study of collaborative governance undertaken in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The collaborative governance process in question was the Strategic Social Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador (SSP), which operated between 1998 and 2004. When the SSP was first released, it was hailed as a “ground-breaking” social initiative, embodying an “innovative” and “bold” approach to social policy development (Williams 2000; Porter 2003; Rowe and Randell 1999). Many praised the provincial government for taking the lead and setting an example for others in the country to follow. In particular, the emphasis that the SSP placed on supporting and partnering with the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) was seen as original and forward-looking. According to the SSP document, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, involving the VCBS in government-led initiatives would help to ensure that these initiatives “better respond to local and regional needs” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10). Central to the SSP strategy was the maintenance of “ongoing collaboration with the public” and the building of “strong partnerships with community groups” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 13). The SSP identified a need for government departments to “cooperate not only with one another, but also with community groups” in both the “design and delivery” of programs and services (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 12). It stressed not only providing increased support to community groups to help them carry out their more traditional roles as implementation partners on-the-ground in communities, but also highlighted the importance of engaging these groups and harnessing their expertise to enhance policy and inform decision-making processes.

The research can be said to consist of two case studies, one nested within the other. The first is the examination of the phenomenon of collaborative governance using the SSP as a case study, while the second analyzes the process of implementation as it occurred in the Labrador region. The thesis has several key objectives. For starters, it locates the SSP process within a body of theoretical literature on governance and civil society, seeking to inform and enhance the analysis of the process through a deeper understanding of different theoretical perspectives and notions. Secondly, it aims to trace the roots of the SSP process by examining the history of governance in the province and by looking at the evolution of provincial government policies and practices that ultimately resulted in the release of the Plan. Thirdly, this thesis offers an in-depth analysis of the SSP from a social policy perspective and describes its major features. Finally, it details the implementation of the SSP in one of its six regions, Labrador. Each objective of the thesis is guided by a more specific goal; that is, to determine what role was envisioned for the voluntary, community-based sector in the SSP process of collaborative governance, and to assess the provincial government's real commitment to engaging the VCBS as a full partner in the process by examining how groups within the sector in Labrador were impacted by the implementation of the SSP process in that region. The research asks the following questions: was the actual intention of the SSP to engage the VCBS as an equal partner in government processes, including the policy and decision-making process? In the implementation of the SSP, to what extent was the VCBS engaged as a partner? What was the mechanism of engagement and how did this partnership evolve? What were the barriers to and bridges for the collaboration? In practice, what were the strengths and weaknesses of the SSP process?



The examination of the voluntary, community-based sector in the context of the SSP in Labrador revealed interesting findings that prompted the inclusion in the thesis of a secondary theme. This secondary theme concentrates on the status of and attitudes towards collaboration within the VCBS. Rather than explicitly guiding the research, this secondary theme was revealed through the research process and became a key finding as well as the subject of further inquiry. This is an area in need of more research, and this thesis offers a starting point for researchers looking for pursue further studies on the topic.

Labrador was chosen as a case study region for the implementation of the SSP because of the overall governance dynamics in that region. Labrador boasts several unique governance structures that make the region stand out from the other SSP regions in the province. For instance, Labrador is the only region that has a dedicated government line department, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, which is overseen by two ministers. It also has the distinction of being the first region in the province to witness the conclusion of an Aboriginal treaty negotiation. The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, signed in 2005, has paved the way for the emergence of a new Aboriginal government structure for Northern Labrador, the Nunatsiavut Government. The presence of three Aboriginal groups in the region (the Inuit, the Innu and the Metis), also make Labrador an ideal choice for an examination of the engagement of traditionally marginalized minority groups in a collaborative governance process. While all these features contribute to making the Labrador region a fascinating choice for a case study in the implementation of the SSP process, it is important to note up front that all of

Labrador's unique features also make it unlikely that research findings could be generalized to other regions or to the province as a whole. It is unlikely, however, that the selection of any other SSP region would have overcome this issue, given the diversity across the province and the unique circumstances evident in each region.

The SSP is viewed in this research as a model of “new,” “horizontal,” or “collaborative” governance, in keeping with the language used by those actually involved in some stage of the process. According to Susan Philips, the concept of “new” governance entails “working through networks rather than hierarchies” and “embodies a variety of cooperative arrangements involving both state and non-state actors” (2004: 1). In this model, the boundaries between government and non-government, or between state and civil society, become blurred. The vision is that non-governmental or civil society actors – including the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) – become involved in the development of policy and decision-making, while the role of the government or state shifts away from management and moves towards *enablement* (Salamon, quoted in Philips 2004: 1). The challenge for the state becomes seeking out ways in which to enable the networks to function effectively and to develop new forms of cooperation and collaboration (Rhodes 1996: 666). In order to be successful, this new form of governance requires not only greater collaboration *between* sectors (inter-sectoral), but also greater collaboration *within* the sectors themselves (intra-sectoral).

Given this interpretation of the SSP process as a model of collaborative governance that seeks to incorporate civil society actors into a process of decision-making traditionally seen as the exclusive domain of the state, the literature review presented in Chapter 4

focuses on the theoretical evolution of the two related concepts that are central to this analysis: *civil society* and *governance*. The theoretical analysis culminates with the convergence of these concepts in contemporary notions of “new,” “horizontal” or “collaborative” governance, such as that espoused by the SSP. In a practical application of some key theoretical notions, the chapter proposes first of all that by drawing on the ideas of Jürgen Habermas, the SSP process can be conceived of as an exercise in communicative and deliberative rationality. In this conception, the competing publics or groups within civil society (i.e. the different voluntary, community-based organizations) are envisioned as capable of “bracketing” their differences in order to participate equally and freely in rational debate (such as that which is expected to transpire around the SSP table) aimed at building consensus to inform decision-makers and ensure political legitimacy and democracy (the ultimate goal of a governance process such as that the SSP). Chapter 4 then proceeds to criticize the assumptions contained within this theoretical perspective, the same assumptions that underpinned the SSP process. This critique is supported using the counter-arguments presented by feminist theorists such as Nancy Fraser, who view consensus as a mask for domination; and thinkers such as Michel Foucault, who suggest that conflict, rather than consensus, often plays an important role in ensuring representation and achieving positive social change.

The historical overview of governance in Newfoundland and Labrador, as presented in Chapter 5, is also a critical component of this thesis. In this chapter, special attention is paid to Labrador as the main region of focus for the purposes of the research. The chapter provides critical information pertaining to historical events, political and economic realities and socio-cultural aspects of life that set the stage for a deeper

understanding of the circumstances that led up to the emergence of a Strategic Social Plan for the province.

Chapter 6 describes the research methodology, and includes an overview of the different conceptual categories used to define the various organizations that are described in the research, including the categories that informed the research. The methodology chapter also offers an explanation of the approach to data collection, which included: an in-depth analysis of the SSP document; interviews with key informants who were involved in various stages of the development and high-level implementation of the SSP (based in the capital of St. John's); involvement as a participant observer in a key meeting of the SSP Regional Steering Committee in Labrador; and interviews with various informants from the Labrador region who were directly involved in the implementation of the Plan on the ground, including members of the SSP committee (interviews conducted as a research assistant with the Values Added Community University Research Alliance), and representatives of the VCBS in Labrador (interviews conducted independently).

Chapter 7 addresses one of the key objectives of the thesis; that is, to trace the origins and evolution of the SSP as a case study in governance. The chapter delves into the specific political context including key events and individuals that contributed to the emergence of the SSP. It describes the political foundations and history of the SSP, and outlines the evolution of the process from its inception to its official release in 1998. This chapter also presents an analysis of the SSP process, examining the SSP document, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, and detailing the SSP strategy and vision, as well as its various structures and components. The analysis of the SSP presented in this chapter begins to

reveal answers to the key questions that drive the research presented in this thesis. It does this by looking at the role that was envisioned for the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) by the various players involved in developing the Plan, and how this vision found expression in the SSP document and in the structures and components associated with the Plan.

Chapter 8 describes and analyzes in some detail the implementation of the SSP in the Labrador region, according to the research findings. This chapter presents an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, outcomes and implications of the new approach, paying particular attention to the barriers to and bridges for collaboration that were encountered in the region. The chapter addresses the central objective of the research, responding to the key questions posed earlier in this chapter. It identifies what organizations belonging to the voluntary, community-based sector were actually engaged as partners in various aspects of the SSP implementation (including involvement in decision-making processes in the Labrador SSP region). It queries the actual lived experience of the various regional players – particularly those players that represent organizations that are part of the VCBS – in the new approach to governance promoted by the SSP.

A critical finding of this thesis is that the SSP was only *partially* implemented in the Labrador region. The research demonstrates that while *intra-sectoral* collaboration was enhanced among regional government and quasi-government officials, the level of *inter-sectoral* collaboration between government and the VCBS was not greatly enhanced. Very few VCBOs were engaged as full partners in the process. Others were involved only peripherally or as an after-thought. The research reveals that, although the Strategic

Social Plan stressed the importance of partnering with the VCBS, it does not give any indication of *how* this was to be achieved. The process failed to identify or institutionalize specific mechanisms that could have been used to achieve the high-level goals and realize the vision of forging partnerships for integrated social and economic development. Without any guidance about how to go about meaningfully engaging the VCBS in the SSP process, the Regional Steering Committee members took it upon themselves to determine how best to proceed.

These findings do not, however, imply that the SSP undertaking was unsuccessful. Rather, certain critical successes were evident, such as the enhanced mutual understanding, sharing and trust that were achieved among regional government and quasi-government officials in Labrador. The Regional Steering Committee enabled these officials to take the first essential steps towards breaking down the barriers that often separate their organizations and their work, and paved the way for deeper, more effective and sustained intra-sectoral collaboration.

In the examination of the barriers for and bridges to *inter-sectoral* collaboration between government and the VCBS, the research revealed some important findings that are included as a secondary theme also explored in Chapter 8. These findings point to the nature of the VCBS in Labrador as consisting for the most part of a “diverse and amorphous” group of organizations that possessed only a very loose sense of belonging to a “sector” as such. Although individual organizations sometimes came together to share information and resources, or to collaborate on specific projects or initiatives, for the most part they worked independently in order to achieve their own specific goals and

objectives aimed at their particular issue or client-group. Although a fledgling sense of identity as a sector was evident in some cases collaboration initiated in order to achieve certain ends (e.g. volunteer appreciation and recruitment exercises), the SSP had mistakenly implicitly assumed that there was a natural cohesiveness to the sector, as well as a capacity and willingness, not only for community groups to collaborate among themselves, but also with the newly-formed Regional Steering Committee of the SSP. This assumption neglected to account for the diversity present within the community-based sector itself, which represents the interests of a pluralistic public sphere. The conflicts and debates that are inherent to the public sphere and permeate civil society are also present within the community-based sector. The SSP did not sufficiently account for the need to build bridges and negotiate consensus and representation within the VCBS in order to achieve some level of sectoral unity so that it could be forcefully represented in the inter-sectoral collaboration. A full implementation of the SSP would have required additional research into the nature of the VCBS in each region of the province, a greater understanding regarding the existing levels of collaboration and cohesiveness within the sector, and exploration into the appropriate ways to build capacity and facilitate collaboration within this diverse and often conflicted sector. This would have been a pre-condition for effective inter-sectoral collaboration in which the VCBS could have been appropriately represented and meaningfully engaged in government policy and decision-making processes.

Chapter 8 elaborates on this secondary theme revealed through the course of the analysis, presenting a closer examination of the status of and attitudes towards collaboration amongst VCBOs in Labrador. Overall, the findings indicate that the experience of



VCBOs in the region in terms of their relationship with government was not significantly changed due to the presence of the SSP. A greater focus on building capacity for collaborative and other undertakings within the voluntary sector would have likely resulted in a more thorough implementation of the original SSP vision.

Overall, by examining the implementation of the SSP in the Labrador region, this research reveals that the transformative ideals that had been envisioned at the outset of the SSP were never fully realized across every region.<sup>2</sup> The system was resistant to change; those in control were reluctant to share authority and were protective of their turf. Also, it was unclear who would be accountable given a new approach. The established way of conducting business within government was too solidly entrenched, and real change would have required substantially more than the small SSP office could manage. Although commitment to the process blossomed at the regional level, high-level commitment within the provincial bureaucracy was lacking.

The SSP continued operating until 2004, when, after a change in government, and in keeping with the familiar pattern when governments change in Newfoundland and Labrador, it was dismantled. Nevertheless, regional support for the process made it politically difficult for the new Government to do away with the SSP completely, and so aspects of it became incorporated into a different but related approach adopted by a new Rural Secretariat, an entity that continues to operate to the present day.

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<sup>2</sup> Since Labrador was generally seen as one of the more successful regions for the implementation of the SSP, it is likely that this finding can be generalized to apply to other regions as well. Further research would be needed to investigate this hypothesis.

This examination of the SSP experiment with partnerships and collaboration reveals vital lessons that are communicated in Chapter 9, and which should inform similar efforts in the future. Without a considered reflection on the successes and shortcomings of the SSP experience, no real progress can be made to further efforts at deepening the democratic process by means of collaborative governance and the integration of civil society players (especially the VCBS) into the process of decision-making in Newfoundland and Labrador. Lessons drawn from the Labrador experience inform the conclusions and recommendations presented in this final chapter that are intended to help inform similar processes that are currently underway or may be adopted in the future. This thesis draws the broad conclusion that the SSP was *partially* implemented in the sense that it did lead to more effective collaboration within the regional government sector itself. However, its success was limited in that it was unable to meaningfully engage the VCBS. The process neglected to focus on laying the foundations and setting out the essential building blocks that would have facilitated an effective collaboration both within the VCBS itself, and between the VCBS and government. The conclusion will also offer a brief overview of the new Rural Secretariat, pointing to the ways in which it builds on certain aspects of the SSP as well as ways in which it diverges from the SSP. Overall, the SSP was a positive experience in Labrador, despite the room for improvement in terms of actively engaging the VCBS as equal partners for social and economic development in the region.

## **4. Theoretical Grounding**

### ***4.1 Transformations in Governance: A Post-Modern Phenomenon***

Around the world, the concept of governance has received significant attention in recent years, and Canada is no exception. Increasingly, people are questioning the ability of traditional political institutions to adequately represent the interests of the diverse publics that characterize modern pluralistic societies such as Canada. Demands for greater accountability, legitimacy, transparency, inclusiveness and fairness in the political system have led to calls for democratic renewal or reform. In Canada, several have stressed the need to address the “democratic deficit” – a concept illustrated by low voter turn out, a lack of citizen engagement in decision-making processes, and high levels of public distrust and general dissatisfaction with the existing system and its leadership (Institute On Governance 2005). In a slightly different articulation, others have focussed on the need to close the “participation gap” that exists between citizens and decision-makers and that results in a disconnect between the “beliefs, perceptions and actions” of the former, and the “institutions/structures” of the latter (Institute On Governance 2004: 2-4). Still others have framed the call for reform in terms of a shift away from representative democracy towards a form of direct or participatory democracy. As the academic and politician J. Patrick Bower points out, there is a growing belief amongst Canadians that “a new theory of representation in a modern democracy is overdue” (2004: 5).

Regardless of the way in which individuals articulate their dissatisfaction with the current system, there is a general consensus that the government is “not in synch” with its citizens (Institute on Governance 1998: 5). Former clerk of the Privy Council, Jocelyn Bourdon, captured the prevailing public opinion when she asserted that government

needs to “modernize [its] relationship with the public” by creating more “innovative, transparent and inclusive processes” (Institute On Governance 1998: 5). Devolution, collaboration, and democratization are central aspects of these new processes. There is increasing pressure for government to adopt the role of “enabler” or “facilitator” – that is, to offer guidance and support (rather than direction and regulation) to autonomous yet inter-dependent networks of actors drawn from the different sectors in society (Jessop 1998; Stoker 1998). This is what Jessop refers to as the “rise of the governance paradigm” (1998: 29). Support for such a new paradigm prompted the development of the Strategic Social Plan (SSP) in Newfoundland and Labrador.

When conceived of in terms of overarching societal transformations, these new socio-political imperatives can be explained in terms of a shift to what may be interpreted as a post-modern worldview. Citizens have become estranged from outdated institutions that emerged out of Weberian notions of the bureaucratic ideal type, and there is increasing pressure to break out of this “iron cage” society. As Ronald Inglehard observes, the modernist values of “hierarchy and conformity” that gave rise to a centralist, rule-oriented, vertically-structured, and efficiency-driven government founded on Weber’s “instrumental and bureaucratic rationality” have fallen to the way-side (1997; quoted in Van Ham 2001: 136). In their place, a more post-modern value set has emerged that emphasizes “autonomy and diversity” (Inglehard 1997; quoted in Van Ham 2001: 136). Post-modernism rejects the notion of universal, objective truths in favour of subjective truths relevant to particular contexts and situations. Democratization<sup>3</sup> becomes a

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<sup>3</sup> Democratization here refers not simply to the narrow institutional sense which emphasizes the political equality of individuals, but rather, to a broader notion of democratization that takes into account “social and economic equality and the distribution of power in society” (Waylen 1994: 349). In other words, “social

pervasive theme for post-modernity, in which the decentralization of power to local actors is preferred to the modernist view of the centralization of power within the nation-state (Powell & Moody 2003). As Van Ham states, for post-modernism “the living community is the *locus* of any knowledge and should decide for itself what is important, good and relevant” (2001: 9, 10; italics his).

These new post-modern principles promote a distributed and interactive process of governance that seeks to accommodate pluralism within an over-arching system of co-ordination or *steering* that emphasizes consensus. The philosophical grounding for these new approaches is expressed in Jürgen Habermas’s theory of communicative and reflexive rationality. Habermas’s theoretical claims bridge the academic realms of modernity and post-modernity by attempting to reconcile the post-modern realities of diverging interests and the fragmentation of truth with the modernist quest for social integration and objective universality. As Peter Van Ham states:

Valuing diversity does not necessarily presume incommensurability among discourses or a denial of the possibility of intersubjective understandings. Rather, it calls for increased and intensified dialogue that does not aim at eliminating differences but leads to further understanding, co-operation and accommodations that can sustain differences within a broader context of tolerance and respect  
2001: 9-10

In the same way that Habermas aimed to achieve collective harmony by building “mutual understanding and social cooperation” through rational dialogue, public deliberation, and accommodation, new governance processes employ similar mechanisms and approaches in order to coordinate and achieve consensus among increasingly complex and

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citizenship” becomes the crux of a project of democratization, and the emphasis shifts from political representation to participation, inclusion and the “politics of presence” (Grugel 2003: 248; Phillips 1994). In this sense, democratization also includes a gendered analysis of the distribution of power (Waylen 1994).

differentiated social worlds. These post-modern approaches to governance value flexibility and utilize “reflexive rationality” in the Habermasian sense, as opposed to the “bounded rationality” of Weberian modernism. They are de-centred and horizontally-structured, seeking to incorporate various actors from beyond government – *civil society* actors – into the task of “steering” society. Like post-modernism itself, governance can be said to consist of a process of “de-differentiation” in which boundaries become blurred, traditional hierarchies and divisions disintegrate, and there is a “fusion of spheres, domains and practices” (Wexler 1990:168).

In response to these ideological and paradigmatic shifts, expressed through the criticisms and demands of the “diffused and fragmented” post-modern public, politicians and academics alike are exploring ways in which to apply new governance processes by adapting or transforming current governing structures and systems (Wexler 1990: 169). The new processes usually focus on creating opportunities for greater and more meaningful citizen engagement, and civil society is seen as an effective and appropriate “instrument of engagement” (Institute on Governance 2005: 15). Strengthening and enhancing the role of civil society has therefore become a key factor in discussions about how to implement the new governance processes – not only is it seen as an essential sphere of “nongovernmental discursive opinion” capable of mobilizing local political forms, but also as a potential source of partnerships given the emergence of new governance arrangements.

The SSP offers a good example of the new role for civil society envisioned as part of a new approach to governance in Newfoundland and Labrador. In this case, a particular

notion of governance has been put to the test with the creation of a multi-sectoral approach to social policy and programming, which can be understood as an experiment in what may be termed *collaborative governance* (see Vodden: forthcoming). The process focussed on forging partnerships and achieving consensus between government and civil society actors - the *community*, the *voluntary sector*, and *citizens*.

As the Newfoundland and Labrador case illustrates, the concepts of civil society and governance are inextricably linked. First of all, a strong and diversified civil society is portrayed by many as a key ingredient for a healthy and viable democracy. Others view civil society as providing vital checks and balances on the activities of the state.

Furthermore, the notion of governance – which itself is part of a new trajectory in the alternative discourses of democratization – stresses the important role to be played by civil society actors in stimulating public policy debates, advocating for social change and contributing to better informed decisions. Because of the important relationship between the two concepts, this chapter will begin with an exploration of the concept of civil society, which is a central concept in an extensive body of literature within political theory. The chapter will present various interpretations drawn from this literature, and trace the evolution of the concept to its present-day usage by highlighting the contributions of key thinkers over the years. It will then offer an overview of contemporary thinking about civil society.

The discussion of civil society, as well as of the public sphere, consensus-building and democratization will provide the background necessary for a discussion of the new paradigm of governance. This will include an examination of the various propositions



associated with the concept and the different models or types of governance that have been envisioned. The chapter will conclude with some theoretically grounded observations about the nature of the SSP process in terms of its underlying assumptions concerning civil society, and attempt to describe the process in terms of governance and the democratic process in the region.

## ***4.2 Civil Society: The Evolution of a Concept***

### **4.2.1 Classical Conceptions**

Civil society is a concept that has been around for centuries and yet it continues to elude a precise definition. In classical conceptions, such as those put forth by Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, the term was generally used to refer to the state (Finlay 2004; Seligman 2002). It was not until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that civil society was unambiguously juxtaposed against the state as a separate sphere of human activity – Georg Hegel and Karl Marx both described it as a realm of commercial transactions and economic relationships independent from – even standing in opposition to – the state. In recent times, many theorists speak of a “re-birth” or “reconstruction” of the concept (Cohen and Arato 1994: 29). Contemporary conceptions of civil society generally distinguish it from both the state and the economy – characterizing it as a “third sector” in society (Palmer 2002). Lomansky describes civil society as a “realm of voluntary association that stands between individuals (and, perhaps their families) and the state” (2002: 50). In other words, it refers to “nongovernmental forms of organization through which a community’s members relate to each other” (Scalet and Schmidt 2002: 27). Below, I will offer an overview of the evolution of the term civil society, before focussing on contemporary uses and propositions.

Several authors propose that the term *civil society* traces its origins back to Aristotle (Cahoone 2002; Foley and Edwards 1998). In *Politics*, Aristotle described the city as “the political community or partnership” in his words; “*koinōnia hē politikē*” which was eventually translated into the Latin “*societas civilis*” (Aristotle 1984; Cahoone 2002). In this rendition, the concept referred to “the association of citizens,” but did not include “special institutions” such as the army or the church (Cahoone 2002: 212). While the term civil was linked to the state, it did not imply the state “as *government*,” but rather, “it referred to the state as governed citizens, sometimes emphasizing their place under government, sometimes emphasizing their status independent of government” (Cahoone 2002: 212; italics his).

Later, Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers including Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) revisited the notion of civil society, seeing it as emerging in response to the problem of disorder among free individuals existing in the state of nature. Hobbes proposed that in a natural state, men would live in “continual fear, and danger of violent death” due to a condition of “war of every man, against every man” (1972: 145; 143). Without a common power to enforce laws, there would be no justice, and life, according to Hobbes, would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short” (1972: 143). However, the instinct of self-preservation and the “desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living,” were understood to result in a natural human inclination towards peace, which would be assured through individuals entering into mutual agreements or “contracts” (Hobbes 1972: 145). These voluntary contracts bound them to abide by certain articles – which Hobbes referred to as the *Laws of Nature*. By setting out the

provisions for a peaceful society, the laws provided “a means of the conservation of men in multitudes,” making up the “doctrine of civil society” (Hobbes 1972: 166). The *commonwealth* emerged from this coming together of individuals, a process which Hobbes described as “more than consent, or concord” but “a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man” (1972: 176). The members of the commonwealth then authorized a representative or “common power” to “bear their person” and to “direct their actions to the common benefit” (Hobbes 1972: 176). The individuals thereby willingly sacrificed their right to self-govern by submitting their particular wills and judgements to that of the “sovereign power,” or *Leviathan*, that came to embody the “*strengths and means of them all*” (Hobbes 1972: 177; italics his).

Building on the ideas of Hobbes, Locke saw civil society as the site where men agree to “join and unite into a community,” entering into “social contracts” that bond them to each other and alleviate the problems associated with the state of nature (Locke 1962: 141).

According to Locke, however, these problems did not stem from a situation of war between all individuals. While he saw humans as being “by nature all free, equal, and independent,” he argued that this liberty did not exist as “a state of licence” (Locke 1962: 102). Rather, Locke insisted that “the state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions” (1962: 102). Nevertheless, he acknowledged that there are those individuals who transgress the law of nature, and they must be subjected to appropriate punishment. The problem that Locke identified stemmed from the fact that “in the state of nature every one has the executive power,” however, “it is unreasonable

for men to be judges in their own cases” (1962: 105). Hence, for Locke, civil society stood in stark contrast to the state of nature – it existed as a realm of “government-ordered society” which aimed to “avoid and remedy those inconveniences of the state of nature which necessarily follow from every man being the judge in his own case” (Scalet and Schmidtz 2002: 27; Locke 1962: 138). Civil society was therefore inseparable from government, or “political authority,” which emerged as “the product of agreement or convention” among citizens (Cahoone 2002: 213).

#### **4.2.2 The Scottish Enlightenment**

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and into the years leading up to the early phase of the industrial revolution, the developing market economy was redefining social life. The social structures and relations that characterized the feudal system were giving way to a new set of social arrangements associated with commercial society including the rise of individualism, the division of labour and the pursuit of material wealth (Cahoone 2002; Baker 2002). The individual was no longer viewed as “bounded by and validated within a network of social relations” but rather, as an “autonomous social actor pursuing his [...] individual interests in the public realm” (Seligman 2002: 17). The traditional understanding of a moral order arising from a “shared vision of the cosmic order” had to be re-worked to accommodate the new understanding in which individuals were seen as being motivated by “rational self-interest” (Seligman 2002: 17). As Seligman notes, for the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, the idea of civil society represented

[...]an attempt to find or, rather, posit a synthesis between a number of developing oppositions that were increasingly being felt in social life. These oppositions - between the individual and the social, the private and the public, egotism and altruism, as well as between a life governed by reason and one governed by the passions – have in fact become constitutive of our existence in the modern world.

Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), an important figure of the Scottish Enlightenment whose work is considered by some to be “proto-sociology,” further contributed to the development of the idea of civil society, particularly through his exploration of the relationship between the public (society) and the private (individual) spheres (Brewer 2007). Ferguson was concerned about the potential negative effects of the rise of commercial society and the related transformations that were taking place in the public sphere. According to Brewer (2007), Ferguson highlighted two areas of concern. First of all, he worried about the impact that the new social structure and relations that were increasingly coming to define the public sphere would have on the private sphere; that is, on individuals. In a departure from the notions put forth by Hobbes and Locke, Ferguson saw humans as essentially social creatures – “by nature, the member of a community” (Ferguson 1782: §9, p 95). He cautioned that unbridled individualism, the accumulation of private wealth and the division of labour could result in “systemic inequality” and a “weakening of the social bond” (Brewer 2007: 107). The social bond, for Ferguson, was civil society, and it was through participation in this collective public sphere that individuals derived their “civic virtue” which was the source of their social solidarity, and, ultimately, their happiness (Brewer 2007: 109). Ferguson proposed that, when viewed as a social being:

[...] the individual appears to be no longer made for himself. He must forego his happiness and his freedom, where these interfere with the good of society [...] He is only part of the whole [...] and if the public good be the principal object with individuals, it is likewise true, that the happiness of individuals is the great end of civil society.

1782: §9, p 95

Divested of the social bond, individuals would suffer: “send him to a desert alone, he is a plant torn from his roots: the form indeed may remain, but every faculty droops and withers; the human personage and the human character cease to exist” (Ferguson: 1782: §3, p 30). This analogy illustrates what Brewer describes as the “disintegrative effects” of modernity on the individual (2007: 110). This is where Ferguson is credited with foreshadowing some of the central problematics that would preoccupy early sociologists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: those social ills associated with modernity including “alienation, anomie, exploitation, social conflict, [and] class divisions” (Brewer 2007: 107).

Ferguson’s second concern also arose from modernity’s focus on the individual and the associated decline in civic virtue. As people became “consumed with private interests,” Ferguson worried that they would turn away from public affairs of the state (Brewer 2007: 108). As Cahoon observes, Ferguson “insisted that a public spirited citizenry was essential to maintaining a good society” (2002: 214). As Brewer asserts, civil society was seen as being imbued with a normative system – sustained by those norms now associated with Robert Putnam’s vision of “social capital”: “trust, duty, benevolence, loyalty, altruism and sociability” (2007: 109). Without the active citizenship of a healthy civil society, the affairs of the state would be robbed of their source of virtue and democratic legitimacy, and would run the risk of “corruption and decline” (Brewer 2007: 109). Ferguson anticipated de Tocqueville in his warning that “neither the ascendancy of the multitude, nor that of the tyrant, will secure the administration of justice” (Ferguson 1782: §10, p 121). To avoid this, he insisted that the institutional mechanisms conducive to good governance should include “mixed government and *voluntary associations*” – the

former “avoids the centralization of power in the control of any one group” and the latter “*encourages active citizenship which sponsors benevolence*” (Brewer 110; italics added).

Adam Smith (1723-1790) also dismissed the notion of a natural state of war of all against all, insisting that sociability was an innate human quality. Individuals, he claimed, are bound together by feelings of sympathy and by “the need for the love and approbation of other men” (Cropsey 1963: 552). In keeping with the Scottish Enlightenment idea of civil society as “a realm of solidarity held together by the force of moral sentiments and natural affections,” Smith characterized civil society as an “ethically validated and validating social space” (Seligman 2002: 18). This vision did not, however, imply that the forces that drew individuals together in civil society were powered solely by human passions and devoid of reason. Rather, Smith insisted that just as “the individual self could never [...] be totally disengaged from society, nor could reasoned self-interest be abstracted from those passions which, through the moral sentiment, rooted man in society” (2002: 19). Smith posited an encompassing unity in civil society and theorized that individuals, acting in their own self-interest (determined by both reason and emotion combined) would ultimately contribute to advancing the common good (Seligman 2002). In this way, he was able to resolve many of the tensions described above: between human passions and reason, between the individual and the social, and between the particular and the universal.

The important contributions made by Ferguson and Smith to the developing notion of civil society remain within the classical genre in that they did not draw the clear distinction between civil society and the state that is evident in modern conceptions.



Later notions, such as those put forward by Marxist theorists, would emphasize the separation between civil society and the state.

#### **4.2.3 Where Civil Society and the State Diverge**

Several authors suggest that the German philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Georg Hegel (1770-1831) were among the first to posit a separation between civil society and the state. In this way they can be said to have contributed to laying the foundations for the modern understanding of the state and civil society (see Finlay 2004 and Seligman 2002). According to Seligman:

[...] with Kant a new, more rigorous vision of social differentiation began to develop. The State is no longer viewed as coterminus with civil society because the publicness of rational debate and critique is seen (and indeed emphasized) as the province of civil society in its distinction from the State.

2002: 23

In a departure from early Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, Kant challenged the idea of civil society as an “ethical model or ideal” (Seligman 2002: 20). He proposed a separation between reason and the passions, linking morality with the latter and relegating it to the private sphere. Reason, meanwhile, was understood by Kant to have both private and public uses. First of all, individuals employed “private reason” as passive members of a “civil society,” which Kant characterized as a sphere of “antagonisms and tensions” between individuals who remain motivated not only by subjective emotional needs and desires, but also by rational self-interest (Schmidt 1998: 425). By employing public reason, individuals become actively engaged in “cosmopolitan society” in which they transcend their “particular desiderata,” and collectively determine more “abstract and general rules of justice” – or a universal right (Schmidt 1998: 424; Seligman 2002: 22). For Kant, this movement towards universality

is the “crowning achievement of human freedom in the modern world” (Seligman 2002: 22). In distinguishing between civil and cosmopolitan society, Kant foreshadowed the notion of different spheres of “publicness” that would increasingly come to characterize the evolving notion of a civil society as a public sphere separate from the state.

Hegel described civil society as an independent sphere of human activity, located in between the family and the state. Whereas the family was said to have a “substantial unity” derived from the individual’s natural and emotional sense of belonging to a unit that is “an end in itself,” civil society represented an “association of independent members” who came together rationally and establish a unity based on “mutual dependence” derived from relations of reciprocity (Hassner 1963: 639). In this way, particularity and universality were seen as co-existing in civil society. As Foley and Edwards observe:

Civil society is, on one hand, the expression of alienation, of the separation of individuals from one another into competing firms, religious sects, clubs and institutions. On the other hand, it is where the mores and morals of a society are grounded, where the interests and views of individuals take shape and gain expression, and where, anticipating Tocqueville, individuals are socialized as citizens.

1998: 6-7

Hegel’s conception of civil society was not limited to economic institutions and interactions, but also concerned other aspects of “social, religious, professional and recreational life” (Kumar 1993: 379). He saw it as a pluralistic domain, characterized by conflict and contradiction, and no longer posited civil society as a moral or ethical ideal. As Hassner suggests, the individual was seen as the “first principle” of civil society, and “the will and interest of individuals are the springs of action of civil society” (1963: 640).

Yet, the “reciprocal dependency” of relations between individuals in civil society bound people together, transforming individuality and producing the second principle: a “formal universality,” albeit one that was “external and not willed by the individuals” (Hassner 1963: 639). Civil society became the site of the contestation between the particular and the universal, and the state is posited as the solution to their reconciliation. According to Hegel: “the essence of the modern state binds together the universal and the full freedom of particularity, including the welfare of individuals” (trans. by Dyde 2001: 198). The state provided an external set of institutions that sought to maintain a balance between the “mass of ends and interests” present in civil society – it reduced the “danger of upheavals” that arose from these “clashing interests” by focussing on the universal (Hassner 1963: 640).

Following Hegel, Karl Marx (1818-1883) also emphasized the conflictive nature of civil society, although he did not conceive of the state as the solution. For Marx, “the State was itself subservient to the conflicting forces of civil society” (Seligman 2002: 27). Relations of production dominated all interactions in the sphere of civil society, which was organized according to the capitalist economic order and became the site in which the class struggle unfolded. As such, it was a far cry from the public sphere of equals proposed by earlier theorists. Rather, Marx’s civil society was a realm of “alienation and oppression” plagued by “inequalities and exploitation” (Cahoone 2002: 215; Howell and Pearce 2001: 33).<sup>4</sup> It was within civil society that the bourgeoisie exerted their economic

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of civil society as a realm of conflict and inequality began with Jean-Jacques Rousseau. For Rousseau, when man entered civil society, he left behind his freedom and equal standing with other men (Bloom 1963: 518). Rousseau argued that “civil society enchains man and makes him a slave to law or other men” (Bloom 1963: 514). Furthermore, the realm of civil society was seen as “unjust” – it represented “a state of mutual interdependence among men, but the men are bad and the majority are forced

power and influence over the working class. Whereas Hegel saw the state as the “true realm of liberty” in that it transcended the “mere egoistic interest,” Marx portrayed it as “the political and legal organ of the dominant class employed to control the subordinate classes and to legitimate the former’s rule” (Fontana 2006: 53). In the Marxist conception, the state created “an artificial unity” – it was an instrument of coercion employed by a powerful minority (the bourgeoisie) in order to maintain order in an otherwise fragmented society (Howell and Pearce 2001: 33; Cropsey 1963: 703).

#### **4.2.4 Civil Society as an Instrument of the State**

The process by which the state (or political society) secures the consent of the governed through the use of “coercion and persuasion, domination and leadership” became a dominant theme in the more recent work of the post-Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) (Fontana 2006: 58). Civil society was seen as playing a critical role in this process. Not only was civil society a realm of “political conflict and socio-economic struggle” between different groups, but it was also the site in which the ruling class achieves hegemonic power through the “generation and manufacture of consent” (Fontana 2006: 55). Civil society was no longer viewed in purely economic terms reducible to material relations. Rather, it was also understood to be a realm of cultural production in which “ideas, values, ideologies” and various types of material and non-material interests (e.g. political interests) were shaped, re-shaped, and disseminated (Chambers 2002: 91). In the Gramscian reading, civil society comprised institutions capable of moulding public opinion including “churches, clubs, universities, associations,

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to give up their own wills to work for the satisfaction of the few” (Bloom 1963: 514, 515). Finally, it is these “few” who control the formulation of laws in society, and therefore the majority “do not even enjoy the protection for which they are supposed to have entered into society” (Bloom 1963: 515).

unions, cultural institutions, political parties, social movements, and so on” (Chambers 2002: 91).<sup>5</sup>

As an instrument of political society that served to legitimate and consolidate its power, the institutions of civil society became closely associated with the state apparatus. In this way, Gramsci’s portrayal blurred the boundaries between the state and civil society. On the one hand, Gramsci denied a sharp division between the state and civil society. He argued that the distinction between the two was “purely methodological” and that “in actual reality civil society and the state are one and the same” (Gramsci, quoted in Hoffman 1986: 63). This theoretical unity can be understood if we consider that both were seen as playing a role in shaping public opinion in support of the ruling class. According to Gramsci: “one might say that State = political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion” (Gramsci, quoted in Buttigieg 2005: 38). Nevertheless, Gramsci maintained the dichotomy between civil society and the state by emphasizing the different tactics employed by each sphere, or the “‘two ways’ in which the supremacy of a class manifests itself” (Hoffman 1986: 69). Political society “rules by coercion and direct domination” – it was “a sphere of ‘domination’, the organ or instrument of oppression of one class by another” (Forgacs 1988: 420; Gramsci, quoted in Forgacs 1988: 429). As such, it was “separate from civil society” – the sphere “in which a dominant social group organizes consent and hegemony” through “intellectual and moral leadership” (Forgacs 1988: 430, 420; Gramsci quoted in Hoffman 1986: 69). Furthermore, Gramsci also saw civil society as having “emancipatory potential” – it was a sphere in which the “subaltern” (or the

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<sup>5</sup> Gramsci also included the family in the domain of civil society, emphasizing its role in “shaping the general political dispositions of citizens” (Chambers 2002: 90-91).

subordinated social groups) could “organize their opposition” and “fundamentally challenge the hegemony” (Howell and Pearce 2002: 78).

Overall, Gramsci conceived of the relationship between the state and civil society as a dynamic interplay. As Fontana states: “[...] state and civil society, while distinguished from each other, are not simply opposed in a static and mechanical relation. Rather, they mutually presuppose and reinforce each other” (2006: 53). One could not be understood in isolation from the other, as “each is informed by the other, in the same way that the value of each is determined by that of the other” (Fontana 2006: 53). It is important to understand both the positive and negative ramifications of this relationship in order to ensure a just and equitable state that is responsive to the diversity of publics (including the subaltern) in civil society and that does not stifle autonomous expression and counter-hegemonic movements contained therein.

#### **4.2.4 Civil Society and Democratic Governance**

Other more contemporary strains of thought about the concept of civil society have been heavily influenced by the contributions of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805 - 1859) and, more recently, by Jürgen Habermas. Tocqueville is the forerunner of the school of thought that emphasizes the important role that civil society plays in supporting democratic governance by fostering trust and civic engagement through associational activity. In essence, this account attributes a “socialization function” to civil society, which is seen as building those citizenship skills that are necessary for the maintenance of a democratic system of government (Foley & Edwards 1998: 12). Michael Foley and Bob Edwards (1996) label this version of the civil society argument under the broad category of “Civil Society I,” and trace its genealogical roots to the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Meanwhile, “Civil Society II” stresses the autonomy of civil society vis-à-vis the state (and in most cases, the economy), emphasizing its role as a “counterweight to the state” (Foley & Edwards 1996: 45). In this reading, the organizations and associations of civil society represent a source of social and political change in that they “challenge governing institutions to meet particular needs, aspirations, and conceptions of the common good” (Foley and Edwards 1996: 46). In a more extreme reading, this vision also opens up the possibility of a “conflictive and combative” view of civil society (Foley & Edwards 1998: 16). Whether change occurs as a result of a more Habermasian consensus-driven approach, or via a more Foucauldian vision of “oppositional advocacy” involving struggle and conflict, the “Civil Society II” version does discern a democratizing role for civil society – albeit one that Foley and Edwards say is very distinct from that articulated by the proponents of Civil Society I (Foley & Edwards 1996: 46; Flyvbjerg 1998). The stress is placed on the “representative function” of civil society – the way it “gives identity and voice to the distinct interests and diverse points of view characteristic of a modern society; stimulates public debate and presses government for action on a thousand and one matters of public interest” (Foley & Edwards 1998: 12). Below we will begin by examining some propositions associated with the “Civil Society I” argument, before presenting alternative views that can be subsumed under the “Civil Society II” school.

#### **4.2.4.1 “Civil Society I”**

In his 1835 study *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville noticed a strong tendency towards civic associationalism among the American people. According to Tocqueville, “Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions, constantly form associations”

resulting in an “immense assemblage” of these collectives dedicated to a vast range of pursuits (1956 [1835]: 198). These social forms served two important functions. First of all, in an interpretation reminiscent of Émile Durkheim’s theory of the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity in modernity, Tocqueville saw these voluntary associations as serving to protect people from the tendency towards individualism that resulted from the disintegration of traditional forms of social solidarity (Cahoone 2002: 216). Secondly, he theorized that the presence of this strong and diversified civil society in the United States contributed greatly to the maintenance of a healthy and vibrant democracy. For Tocqueville, America’s civil society organizations – not only those of a political nature, but the whole array of “religious, moral, serious, futile, general or restricted, enormous or diminutive” associations – were seen as playing a vital role in “nurturing democratic culture” (Tocqueville 1956 [1835]: 198; Howell and Pearce 2001: 43). Not only did he see them as fostering active citizenship, but they also served to protect individuality and social pluralism against the threat of despotism and the *tyranny of the majority* (Howell and Pearce 2001: 43).

Tocqueville’s concern regarding the tyranny of the majority flowed from a similar line of thinking that led Jean-Jacques Rousseau to make his famous assertion that “man is born free; and he is everywhere in chains” (1968 [1762]). Rousseau’s statement was made in reference to the notion of popular sovereignty, whereby free individuals submitted their particular wills to the *general will* due to the nature of the social contract. In this way, individuals sacrificed some of their freedom, becoming “slaves” to a united or collective will that emerged as a power greater than the sum of its parts (Rousseau 1964 [1750; 1753]). “The very essence of democratic government,” wrote Tocqueville, “consists in



the absolute sovereignty of the majority” (1956 [1835]: 112). The problem that arose was that the particular concerns, values or needs of the minorities ended up being neglected. Toqueville’s primary concern, like Rousseau before him, was to what extent this emphasis on the majority was at odds with individual liberties. Tocqueville rejected “Americans’ [...] equation of equality with freedom, of democracy with liberty” insisting that “as conditions become more equal, Americans seemed more and more to take pride not in their individuality, in their personal liberties, in their freedom, but rather in their sameness” (Heffner 1956: 11). Thus we uncover a conundrum: the opinion of the minority becomes suppressed and the consensus that is achieved is in reality a “like-minded” consensus secured from among a “limited network of relatively like-minded actors” who constitute the majority and therefore are able to control the overall direction of society (Van Ham 2001: 158).

Because it contributes to the discussion of governance that will follow, I will here mention briefly one aspect of Tocqueville’s proposed solution to the dilemma presented by the tyranny of the majority in a democracy. Tocqueville insisted that while “all communities are obliged to secure their existence by submitting to a certain amount of authority, without which they fall into anarchy,” individual freedoms and minority rights were seen as being better protected by diminishing the concentration of power within this authority and by “distributing the exercise of its powers among various hands” (1956: 62). Tocqueville differentiated between two possible forms of centralization. First, there was the centralized government, which he saw as desirable in that it maintained order and attended to those general interests which were common to the society as a whole. Secondly, there was the centralized administration, which he claimed was undesirable, as

it attended to those interests which were particular to certain segments of the society. Thus, Tocqueville identified the importance of an intermediate level of governance that would more appropriately attend to the needs of individuals, advocating that the administrative authority should exist “within the reach of the citizens” (1956: 70). He further insisted that the “duties of private citizens are not supposed to have lapsed because the state has come into action,” but rather, citizens are meant to “guide and support” a decentralized administration, as “this action of individuals, joined to that of the public authorities, frequently accomplishes what the most energetic centralized administration would be unable to do” (1956: 70). Here we come back to Tocqueville’s insistence on the vital importance of civil society associations in maintaining a healthy democracy. He recognized that within a democracy, the individual acting alone would have a difficult time influencing the administration, let alone the government. Individuals, he wrote, “become powerless, if they do not learn voluntarily to help each other” (1956: 199). Tocqueville insisted that “[t]here are no countries in which associations are more needed, to prevent the despotism of faction or the arbitrary power of a prince, than those which are democratically constituted” (1956: 98). Associations of individuals become a “powerful means of action,” and in democratic countries, “the science of association is the mother of all science; the progress of all the rest depends upon the progress it has made” (Tocqueville 1956: 202).

The “neo-Tocquevillian” contemporary thinker Robert Putnam focuses on *social capital* as a specific output of civil society that contributes to “*Making Democracy Work*” (Putnam et al 1994). Civil society, for Putnam, comprises such groups as “sports clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and voluntary unions” (Putnam;

quoted in Foley & Edwards 1996: 41). These community-oriented associations help to generate social capital, which Putnam describes as “the commodity that emanates from norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement,” building trust between individuals, fostering civic and political participation, and ultimately, strengthening democracy.<sup>6</sup> In Putnam’s understanding, social capital (of which there are two types – “bridging social capital” which consists of the “bonds of connectedness that are formed across diverse social groups”, and “bonding social capital” which “cements [...] homogenous groups”) facilitates the development or strengthening of civil society, and civil society in turn contributes to the development of social capital (Beugelsdijk and Smulders 2003).

Putnam’s work is often criticized for glossing over the many rifts and conflicts that are inherent to civil society, as well as the potential for the evolution of anti-democratic movements therein (Foley & Edwards 1996). As Carothers points out, civil society is often perceived as being “warm and fuzzy,” consisting of “noble causes and earnest, well-intentioned actors” (1999: 20). It is seen by many as being the “synthesis of public and private good and of individual and social desiderata” (Seligman, quoted in Foley and Edwards 1998: 6). Modern communitarians, for example, interpret civil society as “socially and morally thick” (Cahoone 2002: 218). They stress the importance of “pluralism and localism” and advocate for the support of the “mediating institutions” of civil society including the “family, neighbourhood, church, and voluntary organizations,”

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<sup>6</sup> Other Values Added CURA research, undertaken by Monique Campbell, has noted the importance of social capital in local economic development initiatives and, ultimately, in enhancing community well-being (see Campbell 2006).

which they believe play a critical role in engendering civic responsibility and other social virtues in individuals (Cahoone 2002: 218).

Within the communitarian line of thinking the propositions put forth by Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus also build on the ideas of Tocqueville. For them, civil society consists of “those institutions standing between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life” including the neighbourhood, the family, the church and voluntary associations (Berger & Neuhaus 2000: 146). They propose that these “mediating structures” of civil society “are essential for a vital democratic society” and that public policy should, at the very least, “protect and foster these structures,” and where possible, utilize these structures as the “implementing agencies of policy goals” which are often inadequately tackled by the modern welfare state (Berger & Neuhaus 2000: 147; 171). Like Tocqueville, they recognize the advantages of devolving certain administrative functions of the state to institutions within civil society, creating a more “people-sized society” (Berger & Neuhaus 2000: 158). These ideas support the observation by some proponents of the Civil Society I argument that in addition to a “socialization function,” civil society also serves a “public and quasi-public function” by filling the gaps left by government in the provision of services or by addressing various social, economic or other issues often with the “encouragement and support of government” (Foley & Edwards 1998: 12).

#### ***4.2.4.2 “Civil Society II”***

The proponents of Civil Society II would disagree with the maximalist propositions (i.e. the state utilizing the mediating structures of civil society) offered by Berger and Neuhaus. By emphasizing the role of civil society in checking the power of the state and

ensuring full representation, the supporters of this second position stress the importance of the autonomy of this sphere. It is generally seen as a realm of social interaction and deliberation that needs to be protected from interference or infiltration by the agents or values of the state and the economy. As Foley and Edwards note, the Civil Society II argument has been “articulated most forcibly” by revolutionaries in the former Soviet satellite states of Eastern Europe (e.g. Adam Michnik and the Solidarity movement in Poland) as well as Latin American protesters who stood up against the authoritarian regimes in countries such as Argentina and Chile (Foley & Edwards 1996: 39). The ideas of the “critical theorists” (a category which includes such diverse thinkers as Habermas, Michel Foucault and Nancy Fraser) are also consistent with this Civil Society II perspective. These theorists have been influenced by Marxist and post-Marxist notions of civil society.

According to the Civil Society II argument, the process of democratization does not occur through the socialization of individuals and the fostering of civic participation in order to “[bolster] the performance of the polity and the economy” (Foley & Edwards 1996: 40). Rather, as Simone Chambers suggests; “[v]oice, rather than votes, is the vehicle of empowerment” (2002: 99). Civil society plays a democratizing role in that it exists as an arena of diversity, and ideally, a means by which all members of society – including marginalized groups – can “participate in shaping, influencing, and criticizing public opinion” (Chambers 2002: 99). As Chambers observes, “diversity is the watchdog of democracy” in that it ensures that “outcomes are viewed and tested from many different perspectives” (2002: 100). However, Civil Society II also distances itself from the normative ideals of the Civil Society I argument by acknowledging that while civil

society can, either directly or indirectly, enhance democracy, it can also pose a danger to democracy. For instance, Michael Walzer reminds us that the level of heterogeneity within civil society makes it a “realm of difference and fragmentation,” with great potential for conflict between different interest groups that compete for power and influence (2002: 38). While it may be an arena wherein these opposing interests can learn “competitive coexistence and toleration,” it can also breed “hostility and zeal” (Walzer: 2002: 38). Seligman insists, for example, that “voluntary organizations can be of a particularly nasty nature and based on primordial or ascriptive principles of membership and participation that put to shame the very foundations of civil society” (2002: 13). As Chambers suggests:

Civil society can be a place where citizens retreat into insular and defensive groups. It can be a place where particularism and difference define participation and where the self-organization of citizens contributes to a general atmosphere of distrust and misunderstanding. It is not the case, as is sometimes implied by communitarians, that active associational life is a good in and of itself. Associations, clubs, churches, and, of course, families, can and do promote antidemocratic illiberal ideas and when they do, bad civil society emerges.

2002: 101

#### ***4.2.4.3 Discourse, Power and Exclusion in the Public Sphere***

Building on the Civil Society II school of thought, the public sphere becomes an “important extension of civil society” (Chambers 2002). This concept is used extensively in the work of Jürgen Habermas, who emphasizes the role of civil society as a public sphere or forum in which public opinion can be crystallized through open and reasoned debate free of both externally-imposed (state) and internally-imposed (hegemonic) forms of coercion. As such, the Habermasian vision stresses the autonomy of the public sphere. His public sphere is a “locus for limiting the power of the state” – it has a potential transformative and legitimating effect on democratic institutions through the force of

rational consensus emanating from an informed, engaged and united public (Fleming 2000: 2). Habermas believes that “[i]n a complex modern society the quality of democracy ultimately depends on the existence of the public sphere, on people’s intelligent involvement in politics and on organizations and associations which help form opinion through discourse” (Fleming 2000: 4).

In his idealized conception, Habermas sees the public sphere as open and accessible to all – a neutral arena wherein social inequalities are “bracketed” or set aside. His notion of the public sphere hinges on his theory of *communicative and reflexive rationality* which “brings along with it connotations of a noncoercively unifying, consensus-building force of discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively based views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement” (Habermas; quoted in Flyvbjerg 1998: 212). According to this theoretical framework, consensus is achieved through detached, rational debate and deliberation that adhere to the principles of his discourse ethics (which aims to ensure freedom and equality of participation, inclusiveness, and the use of reasoned arguments and evidence to support the validity of competing claims). Habermas argues that through this emphasis on rational discourse, the public sphere is able to free itself from the dynamics of power that infiltrate other domains in society.

In order to fully understand Habermas’s public sphere, it is important to be familiar with his conception of *lifeworld* and *system* and the relationship between the two. The “lifeworld” refers to the “reservoir of implicitly known traditions [and] the background assumptions that are embedded in language and culture” (Cohen and Arato 1992: 427). Not only does the lifeworld *inform*, but it is also *informed by* everyday interactions in

various informal social settings including the family, voluntary associations and communities. It is set up in contrast to the “system,” which refers to the formal institutions of the state and/or the economy that are characterized by structured interactions. Meanwhile, the public sphere is envisioned as a “virtual” (that is, imagined) space also contained within the lifeworld, and thus separate from the system.<sup>7</sup> It is within this space that the encounter between the diverse opinions and arguments of an “internally differentiated and pluralized” lifeworld transpire and where rationally-motivated consensus is achieved (Van Ham 2001: 164). Habermas’s public sphere also serves to safeguard the lifeworld against intrusions by the system. As Fraser notes, the public sphere acts as an “informally mobilized body of nongovernmental discursive opinion” that can deflect the “*colonization of the lifeworld* by the functional imperatives of the state and the economy” (Fraser 1990: 75; Murphy 2001: 354; italics his). This “colonization” can have various potential effects on the lifeworld. For instance, individuals and groups may “increasingly identify themselves and their aspirations in system terms” (Fleming 2000: 3). This threatens the autonomous nature of opinions that emanate from the lifeworld and are integrated via the public sphere. In contemporary society, Habermas points to the media as a means by which the system works to colonize the lifeworld by transmitting messages that serve to manufacture and/or manipulate public opinion. The use of rational communication in the public sphere can assist in

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<sup>7</sup> According to Simone Chambers, the logic that drives the system is different from that which underpins the lifeworld (2000). For starters, the state operates according to the logic of power, which is “hierarchical and coercive” (Chambers 2000: 93). Meanwhile the economy operates according to the logic of money, which is based on “laws of supply and demand” and seeks “profit, efficiency, and instrumental success” (Chambers 2002: 93). In contrast, the lifeworld operates according to the logic of communicative interaction, which is “egalitarian and persuasive” and seeks to produce and transmit meaning via autonomous communication (Chambers 2002: 93). The public sphere, being part of the lifeworld, also operates according to the logic of communicative interaction, seeking to achieve social integration and consensus through rational and reflexive communication.



discerning and thereby averting this type of external influence. Part of the task of a democratic civil society, therefore, is one of “de-colonizing the lifeworld” (Cohen and Arato; quoted in Murphy 2001: 354).

Central criticisms of Habermas are his idealistic conception of the public sphere as a neutral arena and his characterization of its medium – i.e. rational communication – as immune from the effects of power. Contemporary politics is often more about power plays between competing interests than it is about public debate and deliberation. For theorists of power such as Michel Foucault, power is ubiquitous – it extends beyond the boundaries of the state and permeates civil society to build or enhance *governmentality* among individuals (see Burchell et al 1991). According to Foucault, power is a “productive network which runs through the whole social body” – not only does it “weigh on us as a force that says no” but it “traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, quoted in Rabinov 1984: 61). Civil society and the public sphere, in the Foucauldian reading, are not immune to the effects of power. This notion is supported by Walzer, who argues that “the greatest danger of civil society is [...] exclusion from it” (2002: 40). In particular, Walzer is wary of the capacity of civil society to “reinforce and augment the effects of inequality” (2002: 39). He elaborates as follows:

The danger is that the benefits of association will be captured by middle- and upper-class citizens, who already possess the time and money necessary to form strong organizations and the education and skill necessary to run them effectively. Sometimes, when this happens, lower-class citizens are simply reduced to anonymity and silence; they become invisible men and women. But there is another possible outcome, more relevant to the self-consciously multicultural character of contemporary civil society, where the crucial divisions reflect not only class difference but also racial, ethnic, and gender difference.

Walzer 2002: 40

Rather than dissolving the power structure as Habermas does, thinkers such as Foucault and Waltzer seek to understand how it works in order to attempt to “minimize [its] negative effects (Flyvbjerg 1998: 223). Foucault employs techniques such as discourse analysis to examine communication as a means of producing and reproducing power relations through rhetoric. He sees civil society as a site in which these various *techniques of power/knowledge* are employed in order to educate individuals away from their particularities towards a universal “consensus” that is, in reality, a fiction that serves to “rationalize and authorize the arbitrariness” of a given political order (Burchell et al, quoted in Van Ham 2001: 158).

Flyvbjerg suggests that the works of Habermas and Foucault highlight an important tension in post-modern society; i.e. “the tension between consensus and conflict” (1998: 211). Whereas Habermas views consensus as the avenue towards empowering civil society, Foucault argues that conflict holds greater potential for empowerment (Flyvbjerg 1998: 211). This tension between consensus and conflict is important in the evaluation of collaborative governance processes that involve a variety of actors and consist of potential power differentials (e.g. government and non-governmental organizations or civil society players; men and women; Aboriginal groups and non-Aboriginal groups). When pressure for consensus in collaborative decision-making processes results in the compromise of particular values or beliefs on the part of minorities for the sake of the majority, the result cannot be considered to be empowering to all components of civil society. Consensus-based decision-making can serve to further marginalize already marginalized groups in society (see Snyder 2003). As Flyvbjerg observes: “feminist and

environmental initiatives, today central to the structure and functioning of civil society in many societies, got their issues on the public agenda not primarily by rational consensus but through power struggles and conflicts characteristic of activism and social change” (1998: 226).<sup>8</sup>

One way to overcome the critique of the neutrality of Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere is to reject the “singularity” of his understanding and instead view the public sphere as consisting of “internally differentiated and pluralized lifeworlds” that, in turn, inform a variety of “mini-publics” (Habermas, quoted in Van Ham 2001: 163; Fraser 1991: 66).<sup>9</sup> Nancy Fraser subscribes to this view of a pluralistic public sphere. She argues that Habermas’s account of the bourgeois public sphere – where the “suspension of status hierarchies,” “accessibility” and “rationality” are the orders of the day – is “too simplistic” (Fraser 1990: 60). On the contrary, she supports the claim that this bourgeois public is constituted by significant exclusions and conflicts. Referencing Geoff Eley, Fraser also draws attention to a “Gramscian moral” evident in the Habermasian notion of a unitary public sphere:

[T]he official bourgeois public sphere is the institutional vehicle for a major historical transformation in the nature of political domination. This is the shift from a repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one, from rule based

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<sup>8</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams’ approach towards negotiations regarding the province’s share of offshore oil revenues with the current federal Prime Minister Stephen Harper is better characterized as conflictive rather than collaborative. Williams has accused Harper of backing out of an election promise that would have seen natural resources removed from the equalization formula. Rather than accepting compromise deals, Williams has taken a firm stand, demanding that the Prime Minister honour his promise or offer an equivalent monetary compensation to the province. In late November 2007, the two leaders met in St. John’s among speculation that a compromise would be reached on the long-standing issue. However, the outcome of this meeting was that the two “agreed to disagree,” thus perpetuating Williams’ preference to steer clear of a consensus that would likely see him forced to accept terms that ultimately do not confer maximum benefits on the province.

<sup>9</sup> Habermas’s conception tended to stress a singular, comprehensive public sphere (Fraser 1991: 66). According to Nancy Fraser, he viewed “the emergence of additional publics as a late development to be read under the sign of fragmentation and decline” (Fraser 1991: 66).

primarily on acquiescence to superior force to rule based primarily on consent supplemented with some measure of repression.

1991: 62

In other words, for Fraser, deliberation within an overarching public sphere “can serve as a mask for domination” by “absorbing the less powerful into a false ‘we’ that reflects the more powerful” (1991: 64; 67). For the feminist theorist Jane Mansbridge, this “transformation of ‘I’ into ‘we’ occurs via “subtle forms of control” such as language that are embedded within the bourgeois public sphere (Mansbridge, quoted in Fraser 1991: 64). According to Mansbridge:

Even the language people use as they reason together usually favors one way of seeing things and discourages others. Subordinate groups sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do, they discover that they are not heard. [They] are silenced, encouraged to keep their wants inchoate, and heard to say ‘yes’ when what they have said is ‘no’.”

Quoted in Fraser 1991: 64

Selya Benhabib (1994) also draws attention to the question of whether all citizens have an equal ability to participate in a deliberative public sphere due to differential cultural, moral and other backgrounds and accessibility to various forms of capital and/or resources. “Participation in the public sphere,” she states, has “its own rules” and “even challenging these rules, which may be and often are exclusionary, requires first respecting them” (1994: 21). She draws attention to “moments of exclusionary violence” in which “otherness” is denied to those who find themselves “beyond the homogenizing logic of the ‘we’” (1994: 10). She refers to the process by which these groups are excluded or unrepresented by citing Jean-François Lyotard and his discussion of the unrepresented or the “differend” in politics.<sup>10</sup> Benhabib explains that the logic of the

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<sup>10</sup> According to Lyotard, the unrepresented is the addressee in a statement such as “we the people declare as a norm that...” (quoted in Benhabib 1994: 5). The “we” expressed in this statement represents, for

homogenizing and artificial “we” serves to disguise “an important political asymmetry between the law-givers and the constituents to whom the law applies” (1994: 6). It is through the application of this formula that a false autonomy emerges that “disguises the ‘differend’ in politics, insofar as what is heterogeneous, incommensurable, other and irreducible to a common denominator is here tied together via a formula of identity” (Benhabib 1994: 6). The differend thereby disappears, and in a process similar to that described by Fraser, another moment of domination is masked. According to Lyotard, the task of postmodernism is to “bear witness to the differends,” i.e. those conflicts that emerge because one rule of discourse stifles the emergence of an alternative discourse, and to attempt to give voice to the unrepresented or the stifled discourses (quoted in Benhabib 1994: 7). Benhabib supports Lyotard in this respect, emphasizing the need for “new forms of association that let the ‘differend’ appear in their midst” (1994: 23).

Fraser argues that the way to address the problem of stifled discourses, or the lack of participatory parity evident in the Habermasian conception of a comprehensive public sphere, is to support the existence of a multiplicity of publics rather than a singular public (Fraser 1991). Using a term derived from Gramsci, Fraser labels these alternative publics *subaltern counterpublics* and describes them as sites where marginalized or subordinated groups can come together to “invent and circulate counterdiscourses” (1991: 67). Not only do they help to “expand discursive space,” but they also present these groups with the opportunity to participate “in their own voice,” that is, according to their own

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Lyotard, “the lynchpin of the discourse of authorization” in that it creates a false unity between the “we” that is the speaker (the vocal segment), and the “we” that is the spoken to (the silent segment) (quoted in Benhabib 1994: 6). It succeeds in obliging all to abide by a particular law that has in reality been agreed to and promulgated only by the vocal segment and yet transformed into a norm that the silent segment is then forced to submit to (quoted in Benhabib 1994: 6).

particular “idiom and style” using culturally appropriate norms and mechanisms rather than speaking in a “borrowed discourse”, so to speak (Fraser 1991: 69; Champagne 1999).

In another departure from Habermas, Fraser discusses the need for a “post-bourgeois conception” of the public sphere that places less emphasis on the sharp separation between the associations of civil society and the state. According to Fraser, in the bourgeois conception “it is precisely this extragovernmental character of the public sphere that confers an aura of independence, autonomy, and legitimacy on the ‘public opinion’ generated in it” (1991: 75). The public sphere becomes an arena of “autonomous opinion formation removed from authoritative decision-making,” or what Fraser terms a *weak public*. She describes the alternative – a *strong public* – as one which is “empowered to translate such ‘opinion’ into authoritative decisions” (1991: 75). Fraser’s “post-bourgeois” conception of the public sphere includes this vision of weak and strong publics, as well as *hybrid forms* (1991: 77).

Fraser’s notion of a diversified and pluralized public sphere does not “preclude the possibility of an additional, more comprehensive arena in which members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity” (1991: 69). A democratic society, she argues, must include an overarching space in which diverse participants can deliberate about issues that “concern them all” (Fraser 1991: 70). The question then becomes how and why certain issues come to be present on the agenda of this comprehensive public. The process by which “private” or particular social “malaises” become public concerns or generalized social problems – and thus open for debate within

an overarching public sphere (or within a strong public with decision-making authority) – becomes a critical component of the politics of democratic society. Fraser argues that issues become a matter of common concern through the process of “sustained discursive contestation” in the pluralistic public sphere (1991: 71). She offers the example of the feminist subaltern counterpublic that succeeded in bringing the issue of domestic violence onto the public agenda and eventually onto the political agenda. In another reading, Patrick Champagne draws particular attention to the “mediatization of social malaises” or the role the media plays in transforming “what was experienced as a ‘personal’ or ‘local’ problem” into a “societal problem” in need of an overarching political resolution (Champagne 1999: 213). Champagne highlights the power dynamics at play in this process of mediatization. He argues that not only does this process run the risk of distorting representation and influencing public perceptions, but “the dominated are the least capable of controlling their own representation” and the “representation leaves little space for the discourse of the dominated” (Champagne 1999: 50, 51).

Ultimately, Fraser’s understanding of the public sphere as consisting of subaltern counterpublics, weak, hybrid and strong publics, as well as overarching umbrella publics or “super-publics,” encourages the development of theories pertaining to the “possible relations among such publics” (Fraser 1991: 77). Collaborative governance is one such relationship that opens up the possibility for an encounter between diverse publics, as well as a potential rapprochement between civil society and the state. Fraser draws attention to the important issue of accountability that arises from the emergence of these relationships, drawing attention to the need for research into the “institutional arrangements that best ensure accountability of democratic decision-making bodies

(strong publics) to *their* (external, weak or given the possibility of hybrid cases, weaker) publics” (1991: 76; italics hers). She emphasizes that in some cases, traditional representative forms of democracy may be more appropriate, while in other cases, a more “direct” approach – such as that implied by the creation of strong and hybrid publics – may be utilized (1991: 76). She also questions whether the creation of a “single, weak(er) external super-public” – not to replace, but to complement and represent the “various other smaller publics” – may be required to facilitate articulation and coordination with an empowered strong public (Fraser 1991: 76). These questions have important practical implications for research into collaborative governance and the incorporation of civil society actors into decision-making forums such as that proposed by the SSP and analysed in this thesis.

Post-modernists would likely agree with Fraser, arguing that in order to meet the communicative demands of post-modernity, the governing system must include discursive spaces where dialogue can unfold between the institutions of the state and the diversity of public spheres that exist in contemporary society (Larson 2001). These post-modern strong and hybrid publics blur the lines between the state and civil society, and provide enhanced opportunities for participation and deliberation. Collaborative governance structures can be said to represent attempts to create a breed of strong or hybrid public. Following Fraser’s analysis, they can be interpreted as attempts to build empowered publics (or an empowered civil society) that can influence decisions pertaining to particular (or more general) issues. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the SSP attempted to create “hybrid” publics in the form of Regional Steering Committees to influence policy pertaining to social and economic development in regions. To what



extent these forums (such as those created by the SSP) truly are empowered to influence government policy and decisions is difficult to assess and should be analysed on a case-by-case basis. As Foucault would stress, it is also important to recognize that power dynamics continue to characterize all facets of society and we must not neglect how they impact governance outcomes. Below we will examine the concept of governance and the various models that have emerged, and locate the SSP within this spectrum of arrangements.

#### ***4.3 Blurring the Boundary between Civil Society and the State: The Rise of the Governance Paradigm***

The evolution of the concept of civil society and the different theories regarding the relationship between civil society and the state have a deep resonance for discussions concerning governance, which emphasize a “change in the long-standing balance between the state and civil society” (Stoker 1998: 21). In this section we will explore some of the different understandings and perspectives on governance, and describe some of the manifestations and practical implications of governance processes.

Several factors have contributed to the rising interest in new governance theories.

Among them is the growing dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in traditional government institutions and modes of representation which have stimulated a search for alternative solutions (Peters 2002). A focus on governance can offer just that: a new set of structures and ideas to replace those that have become outdated. For instance, governance theory suggests that the consolidation and centralization of policy and decision-making authority may not always be the best approach. Similarly, the cumbersome institutions and processes associated with the bureaucratic ideal type are

criticized for their rigidity, inefficiency and non-responsiveness. Even the notion of a territorially-bounded nation-state is viewed by many as obsolete. The pursuit of democratization in the broad sense of the term (see footnote 1, page 2) and the increase in scepticism regarding the ability of representative democracy to adequately reflect the needs and concerns of a pluralistic post-modern public, have also supported the rise of new governance approaches that stress participation, active citizenship and a strong and engaged civil society. As these new governance approaches become increasingly discernible in various contexts the world over, a body of theoretical work has emerged that attempts to document and examine the various manifestations and implications of the “shifting pattern in styles of governance” (Stoker 1998: 17). In this work, there exists a general agreement that governance moves beyond the dichotomy of state/civil society, offering greater opportunities for participation, deliberation and, ultimately, citizen empowerment.

#### **4.3.1 Defining Governance**

The literature on governance focuses on “describing how steering is accomplished in society” (Peters 2002: 3). Indeed, the term “governance” comes from the Latin and Greek words referring to the “steering” of boats (Jessop 1998: 30). Building on this analogy, supporters of new governance theories often emphasize the need for “more governance” or “more steering,” referring to the need for better overall coordination and guidance, while calling for “less government” or “less rowing” in the sense of the actual administration and/or delivery of programs and services (Rhodes 652; Jessop 1998). This draws attention to the distinction between *governance* and *government* implicit in the governance perspective. Government refers to “the formal and institutional processes

which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action” (Stoker 1998: 17). Governance, on the other hand, “signifies 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” (Rhodes 1996: 652-653; italics his). While both may result in similar outputs, they refer to distinct processes.

An important and innovative aspect of the governance perspective is that it “challenges conventional assumptions which focus on government as if it were a ‘stand alone’ institution divorced from wider societal forces” (Stoker 1998: 19). The imaginary barriers that have traditionally divided different social spheres are dissolved, and a “new dialectic of public and private” emerges (Seligman 1990: 130). In other words, governance implies a “blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues” (Stoker 1998: 18). The central challenge that emerges is how to “find common harmony” among a “polyphony of voices” (Stoker 1998: 18). Ideally, this means that the process of governance is interactive, flexible, inclusive, non-hierarchical and dispersed. In these ways, governance is a concept that is in keeping with a post-modern worldview. According to Van Ham, post-modernism itself supports the transition towards a “more inclusive and mercurial means of governance” (Van Ham 2001: 182). Not only does governance support the post-modern values of communication and reflexivity, but it also holds up the “vision of self-organization, multiplicity and diversity of meaning” (Larsen 2001; Van Ham 2001: 182).

### 4.3.2 Governance and Participatory Democracy

A discussion of governance would not be complete without some mention of the alternative discourses of democracy, particularly the notion of *participatory democracy*. For many contemporary democratic theorists, participation – not representation – is “the core of democracy” (Grugel 2002: 249). Democracy becomes reconceptualized as a greater emphasis is placed on equal and direct participation by individuals in decision-making processes. Variants of participatory democracy include consensus democracy, in which political and legislative decisions are established via consensus among engaged citizens; and deliberative or discursive democracy, which builds on Habermasian notions of rational debate conducted in an open and accessible public sphere among free and equal citizens. In participatory democracy, civil society plays a critical role not only in laying the foundations for effective civic participation, but also as “the primary arena for activism through which to transform state practices” (Grugel 2002: 249). This understanding shifts the focus away from the individual and envisions instead the “empowerment of collectives, communities and groups” (Grugel 2002: 249). The governance perspective builds on many of the fundamental notions of participatory democratic theory.

The link between the governance perspective and the evolution of democratic theory towards participatory models is particularly evident within the international development field. The “new orthodoxy” that dominates contemporary aid and development policy is that good governance and democracy are essential “*prior or parallel*” conditions of development rather than outcomes thereof (Leftwich 1993: 605; italics his). Significant attention has thus been paid not only to the establishment of democratic practices and

institutions around the world, but also to the need to “widen *and deepen*” existing democracies (UNDP 2002: 1; italics added). A recent report published by the United Nations Development Programme emphasizes that “human development requires governance that is democratic *in both form and substance*” (UNDP 2002: 3; italics added). This means that effective democratic institutions are seen as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for development. According to the UNDP report, good governance also requires an examination of the “links between political institutions and social and economic outcomes” – in other words, it must not be “blind to differences” such as gender, class or ethnicity (UNDP 2002: 3). For proponents of good governance within development circles, the emphasis is on the expansion of opportunities for *equal participation by all citizens* not only in public debates and agenda-setting, but also in decision-making and policy formulation. These opportunities are facilitated by a free press, a vibrant and active civil society, open and transparent decision-making processes, as well as new forms of collaboration between government and civil society actors (such as participatory budgeting and collaborative governance arrangements) (UNDP 2002).

The line of thinking evident in the UNDP report is in keeping with what Grugel calls the “citizenship approach to democracy” (2002: 249). According to Grugel, this approach “avoids the reification of institutions that is inherent in empirical democratic theory” and instead “sets institutional practices within their social context” (2002: 249). It conceives of the construction of democratic citizenship as a struggle for power in the process of defining societal problems and deciding how to address them (Grugel 2003).

Futhermore, it draws attention to social relationships and quality of life issues (Grugel 2002). As Grugel states; “[d]emocracy can only be said to exist [...] when there is

popular consent, popular participation, accountability and a practice of rights, tolerance and pluralism. Formally democratic institutions, by themselves, do not guarantee or indicate the existence of democracy” (2002: 249).

Feminist theorists have been particularly influential in advocating for participatory approaches to democracy, drawing attention to structural inequalities in society and the need to represent diversity (Grugel 2002). Many feminists propose that the shift towards participatory democracy entails a consideration not only of the politics of ideas – of what and who is *being represented*, but also the politics of presence – of who is *doing the representation* (Phillips 1994). As Phillips observes:

We can no longer pretend that the full range of ideas and preferences and alternatives has been adequately represented when those charged with the job of representation are all white or all male or all middle class; or that democracies complete their task of political equality when they establish a free market in political ideas.

1994: 89

A shift in thinking towards governance based on participatory democratic models – or what Grugel calls a “citizenship approach” to democracy – reflects what is evident in the Strategic Social Plan in Newfoundland and Labrador. As we shall see, the SSP emphasized partnerships with communities and community-based organizations and was committed to “ensure community participation in problem identification and decision making” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 24). The feminist-inspired analysis of diversity and the representation of difference is particularly relevant for the analysis of the Labrador Regional Steering Committee of the SSP, in which various groups (including traditionally marginalized groups such as Labrador’s Aboriginal populations) were expected to come together as equals in a collaborative governance

arrangement and develop consensus concerning critical and highly sensitive social issues. Participatory or collaborative undertakings, no matter what the scale, need to be conscious of allocating a voice to marginalized or unrepresented groups and must enable the emergence of alternative discourses and opportunities to challenge prevailing notions or understandings. In other words, they must attempt to consciously avoid the differend (Benhabib 1994).

### **4.3.3 Understanding Governance and its Practical Implications**

Subsumed under the umbrella term governance are several different processes, the common factor being that there is a general shift away from the hierarchically structured, “externally-imposed,” centralist state apparatus towards varying degrees of participatory, “de-centred and pluralistic” forms of coordination for consensus-based decision-making (Stoker 1998: 17; Jessop 1998: 30). As Van Ham observes, “networking has now replaced the traditional vertical hierarchy as the main characteristic of the decision-making process” (2001: 177). This new conception of governance – as engaged, responsible citizens, complex networks of organizations and a minimal state apparatus – generally implies a decentralization of decision-making by “drawing on a set of institutions and actors [...] from beyond government” (Rhodes 1996: 653; Stoker 1998: 18). This has been referred to as a “hollowing out of the state,” and it opens up a range of new possibilities and roles for civil society actors (Rhodes 1996: 661). A practical overview of new governance processes offers not only a description of several different understandings of governance, but also describes various organizational strategies, key features and implications of these new arrangements as well as an account of the changing roles and responsibilities of the various players.

R. A. W. Rhodes identifies six distinct uses of the term governance. First of all, Rhodes points to the understanding of governance as the “minimal state.” In practice, he claims that this often refers to the “use of markets and quasi-markets to deliver public services” (Rhodes 1996: 653). In other words, the size of government is reduced through the process of privatization. In Canada, this version is best illustrated by the increased availability of privatized health care services.

Secondly, there is the notion of governance that focuses primarily on “corporate governance” or “the system by which organizations are directed and controlled” (Rhodes 1996: 654). This line of thinking has influenced the third usage of governance, which seeks to transfer private sector governance practices to the public sector in the form of “New Public Management” (NPM) thinking. This version envisions an “entrepreneurial government” based on principles including competition, citizen empowerment, a focus on outcomes and prevention, seeing clients as customers, and decentralization of authority that seeks to involve all sectors in the process of problem solving (Rhodes 1996: 655). NPM thinkers argue that the public sector should concern itself primarily with “steering” (i.e. policy development) and less with “rowing” (i.e. service delivery), stressing that the bureaucracy is a “bankrupt tool for rowing” (Rhodes 1996: 655). They seek alternative principles to guide the delivery of services in society, including “*catalysing* all sectors – public, private and voluntary – into action” (Rhodes 1996: 655, italics his).

A fourth version of governance described by Rhodes focuses on the discourse of “good governance,” which is associated in particular with the rhetoric of international development institutions such as the World Bank. Adrian Leftwich claims that the World



Bank definition of good governance focuses primarily on “administrative and managerial” elements, while a second definition commonly associated with the development activities of Western governments focuses more on political elements, i.e. the spread of a liberal democratic ideology (1993: 606).<sup>11</sup> Fifth, Rhodes describes an understanding of governance as an interactive and encompassing process or “socio-cybernetic system.” In this version, “policy outcomes” are understood as being the result of interactions between different levels of government and various non-governmental actors (including voluntary associations and private sector organizations) (Rhodes 1996: 657). Governance becomes focussed on creating opportunities for interaction between these different players. The patterns of interaction that emerge may include “self- and co-regulation, public-private partnerships, co-operative management, and joint entrepreneurial ventures” (Rhodes 1996: 657) The socio-cybernetic vision of governance “highlights the limits to governing by a central actor,” emphasizing instead the “multiplicity of actors specific to each policy area,” the “interdependency among these social-political-administrative actors,” their “shared goals” and the existence of “blurred boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors” (Rhodes 1996: 658).

Finally, there is the vision advocated by Rhodes himself, that of governance as “self-organizing networks.” This vision borrows certain elements from the various other understandings, overlapping in particular with the notion of a socio-cybernetic system of governance. It describes the emergence of complex networks that “span the boundaries

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<sup>11</sup> According to Leftwich, the World Bank’s definition of good governance includes: an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; the accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor, responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government; a pluralistic institutional structure, and a free press.

World Bank, quoted in Leftwich 1993: 610

of the public, private and voluntary sectors” (Rhodes 1996: 659). Mutually independent organizations come together in this vision to share resources and work together in order to accomplish a variety of objectives. The networks that emerge are described as autopoietic, that is, “autonomous and self-governing,” and they are resistant to central government regulation and control (Rhodes 1996: 659). The challenge of governance therefore becomes one of effectively managing these networks (establishing an overarching vision, coordinating activities directed at this vision, and ensuring democratic accountability) while maintaining the distance necessary to perpetuate organizational freedom (Rhodes 1996).

Gerry Stoker (1998) offers five key propositions to describe his understanding of governance, many of which reflect the various uses described by Rhodes. Along with each of his propositions, Stoker offers a related dilemma or issue which helps to expose some of the vulnerabilities or problems associated with the concept.

Stoker’s first proposition is that governance “refers to a complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government” (Stoker 1998: 19). Stoker draws attention to the ways in which the governance perspective challenges “constitutional/formal” understandings of government systems, such as the Westminster model in Britain (Stoker 1998: 19). When analysed, contemporary governance systems are a far cry from the centralist and fragmented structures described by these models. In reality, they exhibit a “complex architecture” that consists of “many centres and diverse links” between different levels of government and non-government players (Stoker 1998: 19). Contemporary governance consists of a centrifugal force that implies a *hallowing-*

*out* of the state as it transfers authority and responsibility to these satellite players. New arrangements such as the contracting-out of service delivery, the evolution of public-private partnerships, and increased collaboration in decision-making processes are common occurrences (Stoker 1998). It is these various complex arrangements which the governance paradigm attempts to describe. According to Stoker, the dilemma that arises in the face of such complexity is the difficulty of assigning responsibility, which can result in a crisis of legitimacy.

Stoker's second proposition emphasizes that governance is about a "blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues" (Stoker 1998: 21). It represents the "stepping back of the state" and the redirection of more responsibilities into the hands of agents in civil society as well as the private sector (Stoker 1998: 21). He points to the rise of the social economy as an indicator of this shift. The dilemma associated with this proposition is similar to the dilemma noted above – there is an ambiguity with regards to assigning responsibility which leaves open the possibility of "[b]lame and scapegoating" (Stoker 1998: 22).

The third proposition put forth by Stoker refers to the "power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action" (1998: 22). A strong interdependence evolves between the organizations, and they become bound together rendering independent action and autonomy problematic. The dilemma here is that outcomes can be unpredictable and sometimes unintended. Furthermore, the negotiations that take place between organizations can result in selfishness, game-playing, and other opportunistic behaviours (Stoker 1998: 23).

The fourth proposition builds on Rhodes' notion, focussing on governance as "autonomous self-governing networks of actors" (Stoker 1998: 23). Stoker describes governance networks as a type of "policy community" or a "function or issue based grouping" that not only attempts to exert an influence over government policy, but also works to take on much of the "business of government" (1998: 23). He goes on to discuss the notion of "regime-building," describing a regime as a "long-term coalition" of actors who "gain a capacity to act by blending their resources, skills and purposes" (1998: 23). Regimes have varying degrees of effectiveness depending on the resources at their disposal and the types of goals that they seek to accomplish. Stoker points to the problem of accountability and exclusiveness as the principal dilemma associated with networks. Furthermore, he claims that members of a network who are dissatisfied may not always feel at liberty to express their dissatisfaction (1998: 24).

Stoker's final proposition is that governance "recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority" (1998: 24). Here, we can discern a similarity with Rhodes' notion of governance as self-organizing networks. Stoker describes the role of government as *enabler* in a process of governance. Specific tasks include "coordination," "developing effective linkages between the relevant parties," "influencing and steering relationships in order to achieve desired outcomes" and overall "system management" (Stoker 1998: 24). The dilemma here is that there still exists the possibility of government failure. Failure may be attributable to conflict within civil society that can carry over into the governance process, to gaps or inadequacies that might exist in the process itself or within

participating organizations, or to problems with leadership (Stoker 1998: 24). As Bob Jessop suggests, given the “growing structural complexity and opacity of the social world, [...] failure becomes the most likely outcome of most attempts to govern it” (1998: 43).

We have seen that the general consensus is that new governance thinking emphasizes decentralizing authority and dispersing it among many partners taken from various sectors in society. Yet, as Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks point out, there exist many ways to organize a multi-level governance arrangement. They identify two types of multi-level governance, both of which represent “radical departures from the centralized state,” yet each chooses to “diffuse authority in contrasting ways” (2003: 241). Hooghe and Marks use four basic and systemic characteristics to distinguish between what they term Type I and Type II governance systems. These distinguishing characteristics are italicized in the passages below.

Type I Governance is based on the intellectual foundation of federalism, which is “concerned chiefly with the relationship between central government and a tier of nonintersecting subnational governments” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 236). It is made up of *general-purpose jurisdictions* in which decision-making powers and responsibilities are bundled together and then dispersed across “*a limited number of jurisdictional levels*” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 236; italics added). These are usually organized according to a “cascading” scale, with smaller territorial units being represented at each lower jurisdictional level (usually a local, intermediate, and central level) (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 239). Each multipurpose jurisdictional level is “perfectly nested” within those

above it and the boundaries, which are *nonintersecting*, may be drawn to correspond with communal identities or follow territorial borders (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 237, 241).

This type of governance is also characterized by a durable *systemwide architecture* that “lends itself to hierarchical direction” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 239).

Type II Governance, on the other hand, is popular among “neoclassical political economists and public choice theorists,” but can also be traced to the ideas of some scholars of “federalism, local government, international relations, and European studies” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 237). In this system, there may be a large number of *task-specific jurisdictions* that often overlap and may have *intersecting* membership (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 237-238). There are *many jurisdictional levels* in Type II governance. The argument is that “each public good or service should be provided by the jurisdiction that effectively internalizes its benefits and costs” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 238). The result is a poly-centric system that emphasizes flexibility in order to be able to adapt to “changing citizen preferences and functional requirements” (Hooghe & Marks 2003: 238). Each form requires a “new set of managerial tools” and, ideally, the result is a “greater efficiency in the production of public services” in comparison to more state-centric approaches (Stoker 1998: 18).

Building on a model originally developed to examine organizational behaviour (in particular, the management of universities), B. Guy Peters looks to the “garbage can perspective” to explore the “ways in which governance can be supplied in a world that is less clearly governed through authority and hierarchy” (2002: 7-8). This perspective is related to the theory of “bounded rationality” which perceives organizations as “acting

rationally only within narrowed boundaries” and seeking to “minimiz[e] decision-making costs rather than maximiz[e] the utility of outcomes produced” (Peters 2002: 7-8). The garbage can model applies to situations of “organized anarchies” which Peters suggests share three key features (2002: 8). First of all, they demonstrate preferences that are “inconsistent” or “ill-defined”; secondly, their structure is unclear and developed by “adaptation rather than [...] strategic planning from the center;” and finally, they consist of “erratic and uncertain participation” (Peters 2002: 8). The basic proposition of the garbage can model is that decisions are often the result of a “serendipitous confluence of opportunities, individuals and ideas” rather than being “structured, orderly and rational” (Peters 2002: 7). When “policy windows” open up, it depends on the people around the table and the agendas that have been set to determine if the issue will be addressed or the opportunity exploited by a “policy entrepreneur” (Peters 2002: 13). Thus we uncover an interesting proposition; that “individual involvement and entrepreneurship are critical for generating collective action” (Peters 2002: 14). This observation places an emphasis on individual leadership, which as we shall see, played a critical role in the achievements of the Labrador Regional Steering Committee of the SSP.

Bob Jessop (1998) focuses on governance as *heterarchy*, or self-organization, of which he recognizes three forms. Each functions on the logic of negotiation, which involves “reducing mutual incomprehension” as well as “negative and positive coordination” (Jessop 1998: 33). The simplest form of heterarchy is the interpersonal network, where shared interests bring individuals together, enhancing trust between them. In this situation, individuals do not officially represent their organizations. A more complex form of heterarchy is the self-organization of interorganizational relations in which

“interdependent but formally autonomous organizations [...] coordinate their actions to secure a joint outcome which is deemed mutually beneficial” (Jessop 1998: 36). A critical aspect of these forms of heterarchy is the added value or “resource synergy” that results from the coming together of the separate players and enables the collective to achieve goals which would be unattainable if the organizations acted alone (Jessop 1998: 36). The third and most complex form of heterarchy is “inter-systemic steering” which involves the “co-evolution of different institutional orders to secure agreed societal objectives” (Jessop 1998: 37). This final form of heterarchy attempts to achieve a certain level of embeddedness between organizations (Stoker 1998). Whatever form the heterarchy takes, there is still the issue of meta-governance. In other words, Jessop argues that the state may need to play a role in overseeing the smooth operation of the various governance mechanisms (networking, negotiation, coordination, etc.), implying that the new governance arrangements would take place “in the shadow of hierarchy” (Scharpf, quoted in Jessop 1998: 43).

Several other governance theorists would agree with Jessop in his contention that there continues to be a role for the state to play in the new governance. Michael Walzer, for instance, insists that “civil society requires, and will always require, a strong state” (2002: 48). This is because of the plethora of civil society actors that require some form of external coordination as well as a source of funding, which usually comes from the state. Making reference to a quote from President George Bush, Walzer speaks of “voluntary associations as ‘points of light’ in American society, as if government by contrast [is] a realm of darkness” (Walzer 2002: 42). He goes on to insist that “there would be very little light if the state did not organize and maintain the electricity networks and subsidize



the costs of fuel” (Walzer 2002: 42). It is also the responsibility of the state, according to Walzer, to “regulate the conflicts that arise in civil society” as well as to “remedy the inequalities produced by the associational strength of different groups” (Walzer 2002: 47). Similarly, Keith Whittington argues that, in order to mitigate the negative possibilities associated with civil society, it “must be placed within a political and institutional context” (1998: 30).

As we have seen, Toqueville also recognized the need to maintain a centralized government while, at the same time, to decentralize the administrative functions of the state. According to Tocqueville, the decentralization of administrative functions of the state is necessary due to the fact that, no matter how “enlightened and skillful a central power may be, it cannot of itself embrace all the details of the life of a great nation” (Tocqueville 1969: 66). Nevertheless, he maintained that some undertakings “are of importance to the whole state” and “[a]bandoned to the exertions of the towns or counties [...] they lead to no result, or at least to no durable benefit” (Tocqueville 1969: 66). Thus, just as civil society is “useful in making political institutions work effectively,” the state is “essential to maintaining social order” (Whittington 1998: 25).

For Rhodes, the key challenge for government is to enable the networks within society and to seek out new forms of cooperation (1996: 666). As I have pointed out, these new forms of cooperation could entail an attempt to “shift power from public to private sectors” thereby “reducing the role of the state and increasing that of civil society” (Alcántara 1998: 111). Most of the governance arguments presented here support the maintenance of a role for the state in coordinating, regulating, and supporting the

activities of civil society. The result is a moderate version of governance located in between the “state-centric” approaches on the one end and those that stress “governance without government” on the other. This moderate type of governance involves “an interaction of the public and private sectors” and between “top-down and bottom-up conceptions of how society should be steered” (Peters 2002: 4). The vision is that “networks of societal actors are heavily involved in providing governance, yet do so in cooperation with, and to some extent under the direction of, the state actors” (Peters 2002: 5).

#### ***4.4 Bringing It All Together***

New governance approaches emphasize de-centred, interactive, inclusive and reflexive approaches or what may be termed a “socio-cybernetic” or “heterarchic” approach (Habermas; quoted in Carleheden 2001: 92; Rhodes 1996; Jessop 1998). The Habermasian ideal of communicative and deliberative rationality reflects the underlying assumptions that have informed several of these post-modern approaches to governance. The “commitment to dialogue” evident in these governance processes, including the focus on “negotiations to mobilize consensus and build mutual understanding” (Jessop 1998: 35), as well as the important role of civil society or the public sphere is strongly reminiscent of Habermas’s theoretical notions of rational deliberation and the relationship between democracy and the public sphere. However, the failure of Habermas to acknowledge the implications of power differentials in the public sphere can also be applied to what I have termed “post-modern” notions of governance such as that which informed the SSP process.

It is my contention that Habermas's theory of communicative rationality and detached, power-neutral participation in the public sphere of discourse and consensus-building is a useful framework to employ when analysing the underlying assumptions that informed the SSP process and what it aimed to achieve (Flyvbjerg 1998). I would argue, however, that one must not overlook relations of power in the context of Labrador and how they inevitably permeate efforts at collaboration and consensus-based decision-making in the region. Diversity and difference, including the realities of marginalization and exclusion, inevitably intrude upon theoretically egalitarian collaborative or consensus-driven approaches. It is important to acknowledge these shortcomings and understand how they affect the outcomes of collaborative processes. On a spectrum of strong publics and weak publics, it is not difficult to discern where we would locate the government, the quasi-government, and the voluntary, community-based sector. Furthermore, in the context of Labrador, given the socio-cultural diversity and history of colonial relations, relations of power indeed play a central role and must not be overlooked or downplayed.

Peters similarly argues that "the rather benign assumptions of much of the governance literature may disguise some less open and democratic implications of the concept" (2002: 17). While the notion of governance would seem to imply a greater decentralization and collaboration in decision-making processes, the "loose structuring and seemingly participatory nature [...] can hide rather effectively the exercise of power, and the ability of a limited number of actors to shape outcomes" (2002: 14). This is apparent in the SSP process in Labrador, in which, as we shall see, a few powerful members of the Committee made the decisions regarding the priorities and initiatives of the Committee. Peters' analogy between contemporary conceptions of governance with

the garbage can model of organizational behaviour leads him to the conclusion that power becomes “as important or even more important than in state-centric conceptions of governing” (2002: 16). He goes on to observe that:

The role of political and institutional power may be especially pronounced when governments are forced to think and act horizontally, and to attempt to create more coherent patterns of governing. That integration across issue domains may be achievable only through the use of some form of power, whether derived from expertise or position. If governing is providing a relatively coherent set of priorities to society, then governance may find power and authority have not been lessened but only redefined.

Peters 2002: 17

These concerns regarding the hidden relations of power built into certain governance systems are also raised with respect to normative assumptions of civil society. As we have seen, Gramsci regards civil society as a potential “vehicle of the hegemony” (Chambers 2002: 91), while Habermas seeks, in part, “to expose the forms of domination practiced in civil society” (Chambers 2002: 92). Meanwhile, Walzer and Whittington draw attention to the exclusionary possibilities of civil society (Walzer 2002; Whittington 1998: 25). The risk is that models of governance that seek to draw in actors from civil society may internalize these forms of domination and inequality into their own processes. In the case of the collaborative governance process envisaged by the SSP, the Labrador Steering Committee may only serve as a “power elite” offering “social connections” that “give advantage to a few necessarily exclude the many.” (Whittington 1998: 25).

As Foucault has shown, conflict, rather than consensus, has historically played an important role in the democratic process. There may indeed be situations in which an idealized collaborative arrangement aimed at building consensus around difficult and

sensitive issues would not be the most appropriate avenue to ensure positive social change not only for the majority, but for the minority that risks being marginalized or excluded. As Flyvbjerg observes:

Feminist and environmental initiatives, today central to the structure and functioning of civil society in many societies, got their issues on the public agenda not primarily by rational consensus but through power struggles and conflicts characteristic of activism and social change.

1998: 226

I will conclude with a brief discussion regarding the dubious benefits of structuring participation in governance processes. Peters argues that a structuring of participation does not necessarily result in more participation. Quite often, he says, it is the opposite that occurs, and “as state-imposed constraints on participation become more relaxed then there are more demands for involvement, and also more participation in decisions” (Peters 2002: 11). This would have interesting implications for any effort of the provincial government to further structure the participatory process of the SSP, including any effort to create participatory mechanisms in order to facilitate inclusion of civil society into the process. Furthermore, Peters contends that continuous participation in structured collaborative decision-making situations can “tend to make preferences more consistent across the system” in that “the need to participate in what is an iterative game may force actors to moderate their views and to cooperate more” (Peters 2002: 11). If structured participation implies a tempering of legitimate demands of civil society, then it would be an effective tool for government to employ in order to facilitate the perpetuation of policies that support, yet again, what de Tocqueville called the “tyranny of the majority.” Perhaps there are advantages to maintaining a strong, autonomous civil society that can have the freedom to advocate as it sees fit on behalf of groups and issues

that might be neglected by the state. As Seligmen aptly points out, “the Achilles’ heel of any social movement is its institutionalisation, which, one way or another, must be through the State and its legal (and coercive) apparatus” (2002: 13). In Labrador, where a vibrant civil society exists and informal networks and synergies flourish, to formalize or institutionalize these processes may only result in a compromise which would ultimately serve to weaken the movements and snuff out the “thousand points of light” that make the society so colourful, vibrant and vocal in the first place.

## **5. Newfoundland and Labrador: Developments in Governance**

The lucrative natural resources of Newfoundland and Labrador have for centuries drawn people to this remote corner of the North Atlantic. The earliest inhabitants of the Island of Newfoundland, the Beothuk, the Mi'kmaq and their ancestors; and those of the Labrador Peninsula, the Inuit, the Innu (formerly called Naskapi-Montagnais) and their ancestors, developed particular adaptations and innovations which allowed them to live comfortably in this varied and often harsh environment. Thousands of years later, Europeans began arriving in waves – first came the Vikings around A.D. 1000 who wintered in “Vinland” (L'Anse aux Meadows) on the Northern Peninsula, then in 1497, Giovanni Caboto (John Cabot), who had set out in search of a trade passage to Asia for the King of England (King Henry VII). Cabot's arrival was a turning point in the history of the region, as news spread quickly of his discovery of teeming fishing grounds on the Grand Banks. Various European countries became involved in fishing and whaling ventures in the region. The influx migratory fishers, and later the establishment of settlements, eventually necessitated the development of new structures and institutions to ensure peace and good governance. These developed slowly in the fledgling colony, with power and authority at first far removed and concentrated in the hands of a few powerful individuals. However, as the colony expanded and leaders emerged to form associations that fought to uphold the rights of dominated and exploited groups in Newfoundland and Labrador society, the governance structures evolved and adapted to assure a greater degree of social inclusion, the distribution of wealth, political representation, democratic legitimacy, and an overall improvement in the well-being of the people of the province.

This chapter will set the context for the discussion of the new form of governance represented by the Strategic Social Plan in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador by offering an overview of some key historical trends in the province. It will focus on the evolution of different structures and forms of government as well as the emergence of a public sphere (or spheres) and a burgeoning of civil society. It will also trace some important social and economic trends in the province. For example, it will provide the background necessary to understand the evolution of the class system on the island, which is rooted in the merchant truck system and the relationship between the merchants from the West Country of England and outport fishing families. It will also discuss issues of social and political exclusion based on religious affiliation and/or socio-cultural background. Finally, it will discuss the factors that led to the devastating decline of the cod fishery in the province, and the efforts at economic diversification and social and cultural revitalization that have followed. Due to its particular history and socio-cultural realities, the Labrador context will be discussed separately from that of the island portion of the province. Nevertheless, the experience of Newfoundland greatly impacts the recent governance trends in Labrador.

### ***5.1 The Migratory Fishery: The Rule of the Admirals***

The 16<sup>th</sup> century ushered in the beginning of a historically critical international migratory fishery in Newfoundland and Labrador. From the beginning, the presence of seasonal fishermen in the region made law enforcement necessary, and an official authority had to be designated. As both France and England attempted to establish fledgling colonies in the region during the 17<sup>th</sup> and into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this need became even more pressing.



Nevertheless, the development of a fledgling form of “governance” including traditional governing institutions was a slow process in Newfoundland and Labrador. The reason for this was that Britain treated its presence in the region as a business venture rather than as a colonial venture (Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage Project 1997). Additionally, as a seasonal fishing station, the population was relatively small, and the pressure to develop local government was negligible (Bannister 1997). The duty of enforcing laws and maintaining peace in any given harbour during the course of the fishing season traditionally fell to the fishing admiral; that is, “the master of the first English ship to arrive in a Newfoundland harbour after March 25” (Bannister 2001: 168). The authority of the admirals was limited, and more complex or serious civil or criminal offences still had to be tried and settled in England (Bannister 2001: 200).

## ***5.2 Reform: “The Era of Naval Government”<sup>12</sup>***

With the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Britain was granted sovereignty over the island of Newfoundland, while France retained the right to a seasonal fishery along what came to be known as the French Shore (Hiller, 1991). By 1715, the population of the island of Newfoundland had reached over 4,000, and a more effective system of governance in the emerging colony was needed (Ryan 1980: 41). In 1729, the fishing admiral system was reformed, and the first naval governor, Captain Henry Osborne, was appointed. The governor was to oversee law and order in the region and to appoint civil magistrates to act as local administrators, thereby maintaining a year-round governing presence in the

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<sup>12</sup> See Bannister, Jerry. 2003. *The Politics of Cultural Memory: Themes in the History of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada 1972-2003*. Paper submitted to the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada. St. John's: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Web-published. Avail: <http://www.gov.nf.ca/publicat/royalcomm/research/Bannister.pdf>

region. According to Bannister, this “era of naval government” also “marks the beginning of civil government in Newfoundland” (Bannister 1997). The governor and magistrates were to cooperate with the admirals, who continued to oversee rights and practices related to fishing operations (Rowe 1980: 179). This “overlapping jurisdiction” led to power struggles between the governor and the magistrates, on the one hand, and the fishing admirals on the other (Bannister 2001: 199). The merchants from the West Country of England, who controlled the operation of the fishery, at first lent their support to the admirals. However, the merchants themselves soon became “an integral part of the system” as they were often the only qualified individuals present to take on the role of magistrate (Rowe 1980: 179). By 1760, the island “was divided into nine districts, administered by civil magistrates, and five maritime zones, governed by naval surrogates” (the latter being deputies of the naval governor) (Bannister 2001: 186). With the establishment of local courts, and the introduction of “constables, coroners, a sheriff and a grand jury,” some of the institutions on the island began to resemble those that existed in Britain (Bannister 2001: 186).

### ***5.3 Emerging Divisions in Newfoundland Society & The Growth of Social Movements***

By 1820, the population of Newfoundland had swelled to 42,535 due in part to the “heavy influx of Irish settlers” (Rowe 1980: 223). Settlement in small, rural “outport” communities generally reflected different religious denominations. Shared ethnicity or similar economic undertakings – for example, use of the same fishing grounds – sometimes provided linkages between different communities located in similar geographic regions (Webb 2000). In larger centres, including St. John’s, people of

different religious affiliations still separated themselves geographically and socially, and class divisions were apparent (Webb 2000). Historian Peter Neary observes that “Newfoundland society manifested several deep social cleavages” particularly “between merchants and fishermen” on the one hand, and between “Irish Roman Catholics and English Anglicans and Methodists” on the other (1973: 11). The majority of the population were dependent on the cod fishery for their livelihoods, and with the population steadily increasing, poverty was on the rise and socio-economic gaps were widening.

Amidst the economic adversity, “social and community movements” began to emerge under the leadership of key individuals (Rowe 1980: 235). For example, Irish Protestant merchant James McBaire was largely responsible for the formation of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor in 1804 (Baker 1982), the Benevolent Irish Society and the Merchants Society (later the Chamber of Commerce and then the Newfoundland Board of Trade) in 1806, and the St. John’s volunteer fire brigade in 1811 (Rowe 1980: 235).

The nascent civil society, characterized at first by the emergence of charitable and voluntary associations founded by McBaire and others, soon included voices agitating for political reform. Local newspapers were blossoming, providing a forum, or “bourgeois public sphere” where “government policies could be publicly debated” by a growing and “vociferous” populace (Bannister 1997; Rowe 1980: 223). Newspapers created some sense of cohesiveness among people, which, along with the proliferation of businesses and social institutions, enabled individuals to gain access to public spaces in

which to share information, debate, and organize various social and political activities (Webb 2000).

The 1820s also saw the growth of Newfoundland nationalist sentiments (Matthews 2001: 146). This, coupled with the reform movement that found its voice in the campaigning of Scottish doctor William Carson, who distributed pamphlets and letters advocating political change, and his collaborator, Irishman William Morris, made the granting of some measure of self-government to the island an imperative for Britain (Matthews 2001: 233). In 1832, representative government was instituted on the island of Newfoundland.

#### ***5.4 Representative and Responsible Government in Newfoundland***

Representative government granted Newfoundlanders the right to elect fifteen individuals (representing ten districts) to a House of Assembly, which in turn would be answerable to an executive Council appointed by the British crown (Webb 2001). This was a “tumultuous” time in Newfoundland’s political history, with elections often marred by “violence and intimidation” (Webb 2001). Dissent and hostility characterized the relationship between the Assembly and the Council, often resulting in a “stalemate” concerning important issues (Rowe 1980: 263). The political expression of the ethnic and religious divisions that existed on the island became apparent: power was in the hands of the English Protestants (Tories) who controlled the Council, and the Assembly generally consisted of predominantly Irish “reformists” (Liberals) coming from other religious denominations (especially Roman Catholic and Methodist) (Webb 2001). The reformists began petitioning for a new system, and beginning in 1855, Responsible Government was introduced.

Historian Peter Neary points out that “the agitations for representative and responsible government were not mass popular movements,” but rather the work of a few elite individuals based in St. John’s and other larger centres (1969: 38). The reformers were predominantly Irish Roman Catholics “who remained outside the traditional circles of power” (Bannister 1997). They had developed “a strident self-consciousness and burning sense of injustice” in face of restrictions placed upon their religious practices as well as their exclusion from government (Neary 1969: 39). According to Neary, these reformers were not necessarily “inspired by concern for democracy and constitutionalism *per se*,” but rather, they were seeking “redress of certain specific, longstanding grievances” (1969: 39; italics his). In terms of acquiring a following, the Catholic Church existed as a strong integrating force that enabled these reformers to exert a powerful influence over their brethren (Neary 1969: 39). Indeed, religious affiliation continued to be a dominant force in politics in Newfoundland until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Neary 1969).

This new system of Responsible Government consisted of four constitutional bodies: an elected Assembly; a crown-appointed Legislative Council (or upper house); an Executive Council (or cabinet) consisting of a premier or prime minister (the latter title was used after 1909) and ministers also appointed by the crown and accountable to the assembly; and the crown itself, consisting of the governor representing the monarch (Rowe 1980: 277).<sup>13</sup> While responsible government granted Newfoundland relative autonomy over local matters including the colony’s finances, “external affairs were still controlled by the imperial government” (Rowe 1980: 277). A Roman Catholic – Protestant split persisted

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<sup>13</sup> Responsible government is defined as one in which executive cabinet members who make high-level decision are chosen from among elected members of a legislature and are, in turn, accountable to the legislature.

in Newfoundland politics until Conservative Premier Frederick Carter addressed the problem in 1865. Carter developed a “denominational compromise” which ensured the proportional sharing of government positions and public funds among the three major religious denominations, a practice that became a “fundamental, if unwritten rule of Newfoundland politics” (Webb 2001).

The Newfoundland economy underwent a crisis in the late 1880s and early 1890s (Alexander 1980: 23). The traditional salt cod fishery that had been flourishing since the inception of Responsible government began to decline, due to falling export prices and falling production volumes, as well as an ecological crisis (Ommer 2002). The percentage of the population employed in the fishery began to decline. It was around this time that economic diversification first emerged as government policy (House 1998). The strategy was to move away from dependence on coastal resources and open up the resources of the interior. The construction of a railway therefore became a dominant, albeit controversial, subject in the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, alongside the hotly debated issue of France’s enduring rights to fish along the designated French Shore of the Newfoundland Coast (Rowe 1980).

### ***5.5 Entering the 20<sup>th</sup> century: New Experiments in Governance***

By 1900, a new railway was in full operation on the island, and the French Shore issue was more or less resolved (Neary 1980). The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of the Fisherman’s Protective Union (FPU), a “dynamic social, economic and political force unlike anything previously witnessed in the Colony” (Maritime History Archive 2005). Under the leadership of the charismatic William Coaker, and adhering to an egalitarian structure, the FPU became another cohesive force in Newfoundland society (Maritime

History Archive 2005). The FPU contributed to the budding sense of a common identity that had begun to emerge in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Webb 2000). Hoping to empower the poor working classes of rural Newfoundland and to ensure they secured more of the economic benefits from their respective industries, the FPU brought together not just fishermen, but workers from other emerging industries such as agriculture and logging (House 2001). By 1914, the FPU had a total of 21,000 members from across the island in 206 local councils from which power flowed upwards to district councils and ultimately to a supreme council (Maritime History Archive 2005; McDonald 1980).

In his quest to realize the goals of the FPU, Coaker established a newspaper to serve as a communications tool, involved the Union in the business side of the fishery through the creation of a co-operative enterprise, and founded an active political wing (Rowe 1980: 367). The political platform of the FPU – known as the “Bonavista” platform – called for reforms in “the fishery, social policy and *governance*” (Webb 2001; italics added). Specifically, it called for improvements in social welfare and education, as well as the creation of new governance structures such as “elected school boards and municipal bodies” as well as a “transportation commission” (Rowe 1980: 359). The FPU emerged as a strong opposition force after the election in 1913 (Rowe 1980). It represented an important step in the early evolution of grassroots political forms in Newfoundland.

### ***5.6 The Commission of Government***

The outbreak of war in 1914 greatly affected the people of Newfoundland. Not only did it significantly alter the political scene and plunge the island into debt, but the Royal Newfoundland Regiment suffered extremely high casualties, among the highest in the Union (Rowe 1980: 375). Post-war Newfoundland suffered from political and financial

instability. Combined with the worldwide economic downturn of the 1920s, by 1932 Newfoundland was facing a financial crisis. This crisis ultimately resulted in the collapse of Responsible Government (Elliott 1980). A Commission of Inquiry, the Amulree Royal Commission, was established with the mandate “to examine into the future of Newfoundland and in particular to report on the financial situation and prospects therein” (Great Britain 1933). Among other things, the Amulree Report recommended the suspension of the existing government and the introduction of a Commission of Government until the colony achieved financial autonomy and the people requested the restoration of responsible government. The Commission of Government was established, consisting of seven appointed members including a governor to act as chairperson, three British commissioners (who held the senior posts), and three Newfoundland commissioners (Great Britain 1933). The commissioners were essentially civil servants who together oversaw the administration of the colony with ultimate authority resting with the Dominions Office in London (Webb 2001).

The Commission operated from 1934 to 1949, longer than originally anticipated, due to the second outbreak of war in 1939 in which both the island and Labrador played an important and strategic role (Hiller 1998). Thousands of Canadian and American servicemen were posted to the region, with the major bases at Stephenville and Argentia, airports at Torbay, Gander and Goose Bay and the port at St. John’s all playing key roles in the war effort (Baker 2003). While the war brought renewed prosperity to the colony, it also brought anguish, as many young men from the region who were enlisted in the war effort would never return home.



### ***5.7 Confederation with Canada and the New Provincial Government under Joey Smallwood***

The colony emerged from the war financially independent, and the British government decided to hold a National Convention to decide the fate of governance for the region. In 1946, an election was held to determine the delegates to the Convention. Forty-five delegates were elected, among them Joseph R. Smallwood, a strong supporter of confederation with Canada. A farmer, former union organizer, newspaper editor, and host of a popular radio show, Smallwood was “intensely ambitious and energetic” and would become a prominent player in Newfoundland politics (Hiller 1998: 18). His extensive research and skilful campaigning “using the National Convention as his forum, and the radio as his way to reach households across the island” contributed to the success, by a slim majority, of the confederate cause in the second and final referendum held in 1948 (Hiller 1998: 54).<sup>14</sup> In March of 1949, after an amendment to the British North America Act and the drawing up of the Terms of Union, Newfoundland became the tenth province of the Canadian federation.

The new Provincial Government of Newfoundland came to consist of a 48-seat House of Assembly, with the leader of the party achieving the elected majority becoming Premier. Federal representation consisted of seven seats in the 262-seat House of Commons and seven senators. The Terms of Union had set out jurisdictional divisions, with affairs related to fisheries, criminal law, and banking falling under federal jurisdiction and the province retaining control over areas that included health care, social services and

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<sup>14</sup> The breakdown of votes in the referendum of July 1948 was as follows: 78,323 votes for confederation (52.3%), 71,334 votes for responsible government (47.7%), with the population of the Avalon Peninsula voting 60% in favour of responsible government, and the remainder voting 70% in favour of confederation (Hiller 1998: 54).

education (Webb 2001). The provision of these expensive social programs would have been a challenge for the province, were it not for the rapid expansion of the welfare system in the country which ensured that Newfoundland was “swept along on the coat-tails of Canada” (Webb 2001; House 1999: 5). Federal grants and transfer payments, including family allowances, old age pensions and unemployment insurance, brought to Newfoundland and Labrador “all the trappings of a modern welfare state” (House 1999: 5). Living standards improved significantly for most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, but the province still lagged behind the rest of Canada on indicators such as per capita income and unemployment (Wright 2003). The rapid expansion and affluence was propped up by federal largesse, and the underlying dependency that was being engendered would later emerge as a challenge to sustainable social and economic development in the province (House 1999; Letto 1998; Alexander 1983).

Despite its new status as a province, “the political culture and attitudes in Newfoundland remained similar to what they were before Commission of Government” (Wright 2003: 96). Felt suggests that the system exhibited some “quasi-feudal” characteristics, far from what one might expect for “an emerging modern state” (2003: 113). Smallwood inherited a political system in which power was concentrated in the hands of a small number of elites (often merchants or priests), and that exhibited a “minimal level of organization at the community level” (Felt 2003: 114). During the Smallwood era, and up until recently, politics were characterized by denominationalism and patronage (Wright 2003). According to Neary, “strong, locally-based democratic practices and values did not emerge in the province immediately after Confederation;” rather, “new obstacles to democracy appeared” (Wright 2003: 96; Neary 1969: 43). Neary makes

reference in particular to the “fantastical political grip” that the first Premier, Joseph Smallwood, had on the province (1969: 44). During this period, “Smallwood was able to centralize power because the people of Newfoundland, to that point, had not had a lot of experience with democratic institutions” (Wright 2003: 96). His charisma, his public speaking skills, his media savvy, and his appeal to the working class gave him significant power and influence. Meanwhile, the new federal money flowing into the province and into households – for which he took great credit – served to reinforce his dominance (Wright 2003; Neary 1969). The legacy of the Smallwood era persisted for many years. Evidence of it came in the form of weak municipal governments, little or ad-hoc coordination among community groups, and a concentration of power in provincial politicians and officials. As historian David Alexander has pointed out, Newfoundland has a long history of mismanagement, and Smallwood’s approach only succeeded in deepening dependency in the province. His efforts to follow the industrial development models applied in Central Canada were ill-founded, resulting in nothing more than a “shabby replica” which brought no benefits to the new province (Alexander 1983: 24). Newfoundland would have been better off focussing on local strengths, and identifying its own unique path towards development. Sociologist Ralph Matthews concurs with Alexander, stating that “by 1972, (...) its dependency was so severe that self-sufficiency no longer seemed possible” (1983:193). As we shall see, the notion of some level of decentralization of program design and delivery, as well as an emphasis on empowering communities and valuing local input in decision-making, is a recent phenomenon.

The first task of the Smallwood government was to tackle the issue of out-migration – a challenge that continues to plague the province to this day. The steady outflow of people

to other parts of Canada in search of opportunities began even before confederation, with a peak occurring in the period between 1956 and 1961, at which time “an average of 3,300 Newfoundlanders left the province yearly” (Letto 1998: 3). In an attempt to create opportunities for people to stay in the province, the government launched a program of industrialization and modernization based on Smallwood’s credo: “develop or perish.” The industrialization scheme sought external sources of investment “in cash or in kind” that Smallwood promised to match with loans from his provincial coffers (Letto 1998: xi). The first phase focused on small-scale manufacturing projects, all of which lost money and most of which ultimately failed. The second phase saw efforts turn towards large-scale industrial and natural resource projects, many of which ultimately saw benefits flow out of the province (Letto 1998; House 2001). The development of the Upper Churchill Falls hydro project necessitated the transport of energy through the province of Quebec to markets in Ontario and the United States. In negotiations between the British Newfoundland Development Corporation (Brinco) and Hydro-Québec, the latter held a stronger bargaining position. The final contract stipulated that Hydro-Québec would purchase the hydro power at a reduced price (to be periodically lowered even further) until 2041. This contract has meant that 96% of the economic benefits of the hydro development have accrued to Hydro-Québec, with Newfoundland and Labrador receiving a mere 4% (Churchill 2003). This does not include the money spent by the province on alternative energy due to a lack of access to power from the hydro project (Churchill 2003). This appropriation of revenues out of the province due to the botched Upper Churchill contract has shaped Newfoundland and Labrador politics throughout modern history and up to the present day.

Meanwhile, Smallwood's modernization scheme of the 1950s and 1960s emphasized centralizing communities. The resettlement of people from small outports into regional growth centres around the province started with the provincial Fisheries Household Resettlement Program and later acquired financial support from the federal government through the Atlantic Regional Development Agreement (the very first federal-provincial agreement). Community centralization was meant to result in greater ease and efficiency in the provision of services and the development of infrastructure. The program moved thousands of people, resulting in the disappearance of about 200 small rural communities (Wright 2003). Iverson and Matthews (1968) have criticized the resettlement program for offering little assistance to resettled families in terms of settling into new jobs. Anthropologist John C. Kennedy (1995) has also criticized the Smallwood resettlement program, focussing on its impact on communities in Southern Labrador, where a quarter of the population was resettled between 1967 and 1970 (with Mary's Harbour and Cartwright receiving the majority of families). Kennedy notes that there was a lack of attention that was paid to settlement and integration of new families in the recipient communities. These families suffered from a loss of access to traditional winter hunting and trapping grounds, and many of them returned to their communities during the summers to fish (Kennedy 1995). Furthermore, social divisions emerged in the recipient communities, which are still evident (Kennedy 1995).

Smallwood's resettlement program unwittingly gave rise to a resistance movement that sociologist Doug House has called "the purest form of community-based economic development in post-Confederation Newfoundland and Labrador" (2001: 13). House

explains: “people at the grass-roots level in some parts of rural Newfoundland began to organize resistance to being resettled” (2001: 13). For instance, the Northern Peninsula saw the development of the first Regional Development Association, and citizens of Fogo Island initiated some interesting community development initiatives (House 2001; Dewitt 1969). These were populist movements, initiated by coalitions of citizens and community committees. They focused on self-help and grassroots development, emerging as a response to the direction of government policy and “offering an alternative vision for rural Newfoundland and Labrador” (House 2001). Due to these transformations in public opinion, Smallwood’s popularity began to decline, and new leaders emerged in his wake.

## ***5.8 The Provincial Government beyond Smallwood***

### **5.8.1 Frank Moores and Brian Peckford: Economic Development through Local Control**

The new Progressive Conservative leader, Frank Moores, seized on the anti-centralist sentiments of rural Newfoundlanders and the budding rural development movement to secure his victory in the provincial election of 1972 (House 2001). It was under his government that the rural development movement was first institutionalized in the form of a government department that would evolve and persist into the present day.

Meanwhile, his economic development policies, which stressed the importance of securing local control over the province’s natural resources, have also had enduring influence.

When Moores resigned as leader of the Conservative party in 1979, the premiership passed to Brian Peckford. Like Moores, he stressed the importance of local control over

resources, concentrating in particular on offshore oil and gas. The jurisdictional dispute between the province and the federal government over this issue was a significant part of Peckford's tenure as Premier. The province looked to other jurisdictions – most notably the Norway and the Shetland Islands – in an attempt to identify an appropriate model for development of the potentially lucrative oil industry. The “North Sea model” stressed the importance of long-term sustainability of the industry by maximizing local economic benefits (through royalty arrangements and adjacency agreements in terms of employment and business spin-offs), ensuring social and ecologically responsible development, a focus on research and development and planning for the future beyond oil. Peckford's quest to secure maximum local benefits over offshore oil development culminated with the signing of the Atlantic Accord in 1985, which continues to be a significant document for the province to this day. The Accord was intended to ensure that the province would have significant control over the development of this resource through a federal-provincial co-management scheme, and also that it would be the “principal beneficiary” of all revenues generated from the industry (Crosbie 2003: 5). The Peckford government also pursued a new fisheries policy, with the province taking on a “more proactive role” in exercising control over this resource (Vardy 2003: 25). Having extended jurisdiction to the 200 mile limit in 1977, both the provincial and federal governments were “imbued with a newfound enthusiasm” and began expanding, modernizing and diversifying the fishery in order to ensure sustainability and competitiveness (Felt 2003: 115). Unfortunately, as Felt observes, the initiatives taken within the fishing industry may have been “too much, too fast” (2003: 115). A few years

later the province would be facing a collapse of the cod fishery, resulting in an unprecedented increase in unemployment and social dislocation.

The 1992 moratorium on northern cod and other stocks exacerbated an unemployment problem which had been increasing steadily starting in 1980 with significant job losses in the forestry, mining, and construction industries (Feehan 1991: 2; House 1999: 5). By 1985, "unemployment had become a chronic problem," prompting Peckford to create a Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (RCEU) in 1985. The mandate, recommendations and repercussions of the RCEU will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Five.

### **5.8.2 Clyde Wells: The Moratorium and a New Approach to Rural Development**

In 1989, the Liberal party under Clyde Wells came into power in the province. Wells' term in office would prove to be a difficult one, with the moratorium in 1992 and the subsequent surge in unemployment and out-migration. Overnight, the moratorium placed "between 22,000 and 37,000 harvesters and plant workers out of work" (Felt: 116).

Meanwhile, net out-migration from the province fell from -711 in 1990-91, to -3078 in 1992-93, and peaked at -9490 in 1997-98 (NL Statistics Agency). The government was under pressure to offer hope to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador in the face of a social and economic crisis. The new premier was interested in exploring new and innovative approaches to social and economic development for the province, and according to political scientist Stephen Tomblin, he "became known for creating new processes and partnerships between government and community, instead of relying on old processes" (2002: 100). As an alternative to the tradition of placing ultimate



decision-making authority in the hands of “political and bureaucratic elites,” Wells championed “a new approach to governance that was more transparent and accountable” consisting of “a weaker state, direct citizen engagement, building new partnerships and shifting responsibility to regional, community and voluntary agencies” (Tomblin 2002: 100, 102). Tomblin suggests that Wells’ leadership “was an important factor in the rise of a new approach to economic development” in the province (2002: 102).

Wells’ approach was developed and articulated by the Economic Recovery Commission (ERC), an entity that Wells set up to revisit some of the notions put forward in the RCEU report and whose leadership he entrusted to the former RCEU chair. The Wells government did not, however, adopt the RCEU report as “its guide to action” (House 2001: 18). Instead, under the advice of an Economic Recovery Advisory Board, it established a committee of senior officials chaired by the Premier’s Chief of Staff to produce a new Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the province. The chair of the ERC also sat on this committee. Given that “regional economic development was a central part of the ERC’s objectives,” it was no surprise that the SEP final report *Change and Challenge* recommended the decentralization of economic development through the creation of “community-based economic-development boards in seventeen zones throughout the province” (House 1999: 182; 189). Consistent with a joint request from the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, a joint federal-provincial Task Force on Community Economic Development subsequently set about making recommendations for the establishment of these economic zones, which subsequently grew in number to a

total of twenty. The work and influence of the ERC will also be further explored in Chapter Five.

### **5.8.3 Brian Tobin: A Different Spin on Wells' Approach**

In 1995, Wells resigned from politics and Brian Tobin took over the Liberal leadership, winning the provincial election the next year. Although there were some similarities between the two in terms of their support for federalism (Wells had opposed the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 which he felt would weaken the federal government and result in inter-provincial inequalities), Tomblin argues that the two men exhibited very different leadership styles and ideologies (2002: 103). Tobin was an advocate of "old ideas and practices" – he promoted "the Canadian, federal, redistributive system" and defended "subsidizing Canada's east-west ties and the old economy" (Tomblin 2002: 104). Unlike Wells, he did not exhibit an "enthusiasm for cutting government or preparing new ideas and processes (...) nor was he a critic of the political and bureaucratic needs of government and the extent to which these inhibited public debates on substantive issues" (Tomblin 2002: 103). Finally, he "was never as passionate as Wells about making the democratic process more transparent and accountable" (Tomblin 2002: 104). He was more pragmatic, and with the economic prospects of the province improving, he was also under less pressure to implement any major "structural changes" or to "redefine governing policy paradigms" (Tomblin 2002: 104). Since the seeds of the new approach to economic development had only just been planted and the new ways of working had not yet become part of the institutional culture of government, they were vulnerable. Taken together, all of these factors precipitated a break away from many aspects of the

new approach to social and economic development embraced by the Wells government (House 1999: 212).

Nevertheless, there were some initiatives that persisted despite the change in government. For instance, Regional Economic Development Boards had been established in the new economic zones, and a Strategic Social Plan (SSP) was released which built on work that had begun in the Wells era. The province continued to experience a cultural awakening, and Tobin supported this with a number of new initiatives in the cultural sector (Bannister 2003). Tobin also presided over the 1997 referendum on educational reform which saw the people of the province support the demise of the denominational school system.

#### **5.8.4 Roger Grimes: Newfound Nationalism**

Tobin resigned from provincial politics to pursue a position in the federal Cabinet in 2000, and in 2001 Roger Grimes took over the leadership. Under his administration, some of the “nationalist rhetoric” that had been apparent during the Peckford years was again discernible (Bannister 2003: 143). Grimes launched a Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, which set out to examine the province’s strengths and weaknesses and to offer recommendations for future prosperity. Issues including the Atlantic Accord and equalization claw-backs, the Churchill Falls Hydro Development, and the treatment of the province’s Aboriginal populations were hot topics. Grimes also placed great emphasis on the importance of education and training, for example by reducing tuition fees at Memorial University. In terms of new and innovative ideas, Raymond Blake argues that while Grimes stressed the need to “put old ways and approaches aside for the greater good of the province,” in practice it seems that

old habits were hard to break (2003: 25). The view that “government has a major role to play as a catalyst for growth in strategic areas” was reiterated, highlighting the importance of government creating “an environment conducive to success and growth” to attract private sector investment (Blake 2003: 25). Meanwhile, as Blake observes, government rhetoric continued to stress “effective partnerships between government, the private sector and communities” and the importance of building community capacity (Blake 2003: 25). Two new partnership initiatives that had been initiated under the Tobin government continued to operate – the Irish Business Partnerships, which focused on building linkages between the province and the Republic of Ireland, and the Strategic Partnership Initiative, a joint initiative between business, labour and government. The SSP initiative continued to grow, with the SSP Steering Committees that had been established in the regions during the Tobin era gaining strength and enabling regional government representatives to communicate and cooperate more effectively.

#### **5.8.5 Danny Williams: The Hard Line**

The provincial election in the fall of 2003 saw the Progressive Conservative party, led by Danny Williams, take power. Faced with what Dave Norris has termed “budgetary challenges,” Williams focused first on getting the province’s financial house in order.<sup>15</sup> Beginning his term with an overarching review of all government programs and a strict budget with projected program and job cuts, many people across the province, particularly those dependent on government programming or funding, felt anxious and

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<sup>15</sup> Norris suggests that these financial challenges were rooted in:

(i) constrained revenue growth over the years; (ii) the depletion of one-time revenues; (iii) increased expenditure commitments, particularly related to public sector compensation and the escalation in health costs; and (iv) the workings of the equalization formula which substantially reduce the net benefit to the province from the increasing offshore oil revenues.

2003: V.

vulnerable. Facing a pay freeze and the possible elimination of about 4000 jobs over four years, the public service walked off the job in the spring of 2004, a volatile strike that has the dubious distinction of being the largest in the province's history (National Union of Public and General Employees 2004). Many people complained that all the talk of partnerships would never materialize given the new reality. The integration of fourteen health and community services boards into four regional entities, and of eleven school boards into five, seemed to run counter to the notions of increasing decentralization and citizen participation (Tomblin 2005). Similarly, the re-invention of the SSP as the Rural Secretariat left many wondering whether the role of the community and voluntary sector in decisions affecting regions would be lost in the shuffle.

Despite these valid concerns, Peter Fenwick argues that in the face of a provincial debt that "exceeded 6% of provincial GDP and represented a full 25% of government spending for the year," the shift away from the spending practices of the previous two administrations towards greater fiscal restraint more reminiscent of the Wells era was inevitable (2004). Subsequently, Williams was able to secure some important victories for the province. His successful re-negotiation of the Atlantic Accord deal, which came into effect in January 2005, made him a local hero, and his dramatic negotiation strategies (including the lowering of Canadian flags at all provincial government buildings) sparked nationalistic sentiment in the province. Also, his public defense and promotion of the seal hunt on the international stage won him favour among many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who view the seal hunt as not only a significant economic endeavor for the province, but also an activity that holds an important place in the province's cultural heritage and one that is imbued with symbolic meaning. In August 2007, Williams

successfully negotiated a 4.9% equity stake for the province in the development of the Hebron offshore oil field, after taking a tough stance against oil companies who initially refused the deal, resulting in the project being delayed by several months. With super-royalties scheduled to kick-in as the price of oil rises, this hard-won battle has been hailed by many as a potentially lucrative investment for the province. In October 2007, Williams won a landslide election victory in the province, increasing his majority government by an additional nine seats in the House of Assembly. With the economy heating up in early 2008, the unemployment rate remaining high but continuing a steady decline, and out-migration continuing to eat away at the province's population and contributing to the tightening of the labour force, the Williams government still faces significant challenges.<sup>16</sup> The fishery, forestry, federal-provincial relations and the fate of rural communities are challenging priorities for the Williams government. The impact of global forces and decisions made in the offices of multinational companies will also be very important for the province. The fate of the province hinges largely on the decisions that are made today, and those who participate in these decisions will help decide the fate of the province in years to come.

## ***5.9 Labrador***

Labrador is a vast region that possesses several distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from the island part of the province. The unique geography, climate, history, societies and cultures of Labrador make the region seem worlds away from

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<sup>16</sup> GDP grew by 1.9% in 2006 (propped up in particular by mineral exports), compared to 4.7% in 2003 and 8.2% in 2002. (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007; *ibid* 2004; *ibid* 2003). In 2006, the unemployment rate dipped to below 15% "for the first time in 25 years" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007: 2). Meanwhile, population continues to decline, with the province losing 4368 residents between 2005 and 2006 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007).

Newfoundland, even though the two are united under one official provincial flag. In what follows, I will explore some aspects of the unique history of Labrador which have an important bearing on contemporary developments, including those in the area of governance and civil society.

### **5.9.1 Who Owns Labrador?**

The jurisdiction over Labrador, with its lucrative natural resources and rich Aboriginal history, has been contested several times throughout history. Jurisdictional disputes continue to characterize the political landscape of Labrador today. As on the island, the early history of Labrador was characterized by European colonial powers jockeying for control, particularly the French and the British. This conflict carried over into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with jurisdiction over Labrador being “transferred from Canada to Newfoundland and back again, several times over” (Gosling 1910: 432). This caused confusion and strained relations between Newfoundland and Quebec. More recently, the original Aboriginal inhabitants of Labrador – the Innu, the Inuit and the Metis – have claimed their own rights to land and self-government based on their ancestral title. The Inuit marked the beginning of a new era in January 2005, when the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement came into effect. Meanwhile, the Innu and Metis continue to work towards their own agreements with the provincial and federal governments.

Prior to the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the lack of any government presence in the region had meant that “anarchy and disorder were common” (Kennedy 1995: 75). Nevertheless, despite the consolidation of British rule in Labrador ushered in by the Treaty, Kennedy notes that the “regulations of successive governors did little to alleviate the situation” (Kennedy 1995: 75). The “tug of war over jurisdiction” between the governors of both

Quebec and Newfoundland would endure into the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Rompkey 2003: 27).

### **5.9.2 Early European Colonies in Labrador**

Early settlers in Labrador came into conflict with the Aboriginal inhabitants of the region, and violent confrontations often occurred. Aboriginal inhabitants resented the encroachment of Europeans onto their hunting grounds, upon which their survival depended (Brice-Bennett 2003). Rebellions by other Aboriginal tribes across North America had made the British aware of their “unjust occupation of native hunting grounds” (Rompkey 2003: 26). In an attempt to avoid “full-blown war,” the Royal Proclamation of 1763 set aside “all lands not already ceded to or purchased by Britain” as “reserved lands” for the Aboriginal people of the region (Rompkey 2003: 26). Many Aboriginal people, however, did not know about this Proclamation. Ultimately, it was unsuccessful at preventing the much of the “conflict and bloodshed” that was taking place in Labrador (Rompkey 2003: 34).

During his tenure as Governor of Newfoundland between 1764 and 1768, Hugh Palliser took active steps to discourage the attacks and avoid confrontation. His efforts were focussed primarily on the Inuit, against whom he launched counter-attacks and captured prisoners (Fitzhugh 1999). He also sought to confine the Inuit to the northern reaches of Labrador by striking a deal with Moravian missionaries who had been requesting permission to set up stations amongst them (Brice-Bennett 2003; Rompkey 2003: 34; Fitzhugh: 1999: 27). The Moravians established their first mission station at Nain in 1771, and slowly expanded to a total of eight stations by 1905.



### 5.9.3 The Moravian Missionaries

The Moravians had a tremendous impact on the traditional society and culture of the Inuit. As “conscious agents of change” they worked “to establish settlements of a Moravian character among the Eskimos of Labrador” (Hiller 1971: 95). They frowned upon traditional practices such as “polygamy and multifamily dwellings” and “prohibited dancing, drumming and singing” (Fitzhugh 1999: 39; 40). In terms of Inuit spirituality, they “confronted Inuit notions of a universe governed by mythical or animal deities” and “ridiculed common taboos and shamanistic incantations” (Brice-Bennett 2003: 37).

Gradually, the missionaries supplanted traditional beliefs with those of Christianity.

The Moravians also exerted an “enormous institutional influence” over the Inuit (Kennedy 1995: 68). Having encountered at first a society with “no form of central control” and “no paramount native authority to whom they could appeal,” they had a difficult time gaining “the needed ascendancy among them” in order to achieve their goals (Hiller 1971: 78).<sup>17</sup> With time, however, they were able to exert influence over the Inuit. Their role as the “middlemen between the Eskimos and Christ” had extended to a position as local patrons or middlemen between the Inuit and Europeans more generally (Hiller 1971: 95). They managed to “erode faith in accepted norms and traditions,” leaving the Inuit in a state of anomie and in search of new sources of meaning (Hiller 1971: 86). Meanwhile, the Moravians had made it clear that “any new social consensus would have to be under its aegis” (Hiller 1971: 86). In terms of governance, they adapted Inuit decision-making practices by creating two councils – one elected and one appointed

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<sup>17</sup> The closest thing to a leader among the Inuit was the *angakok* or shaman, “whose prestige, both within the band and among all the Eskimos of his locality, might fluctuate with his success in influencing or pursuing the hunt, with his ability in dealing with sickness, or with the effectiveness of his spells” (Hiller 1971: 78).

– to “assist in the ministry and to maintain law and order” (Rompkey 2003: 40). A third elected council was entrusted with monitoring the general well-being of the settlement and communicating the needs and concerns of the people to the missionaries.

Essentially, the Moravian Missionaries had taken on the role of “virtual governors of northern Labrador” (Rompkey 2003: 40).

#### **5.9.4 The Labrador Metis or Settlers**

There were some Inuit who did not settle near the Moravian mission stations in the North and who formed enclaves in more southerly regions. With the increasing presence of British and French merchants and traders in these regions, these populations of Inuit who lived beyond the influence of the Moravians were vulnerable to other influences as well as the risk of exploitation (Rompkey 2003). Some Inuit were taken away for exhibition at world fairs, while others were absorbed and assimilated into the new European settler populations (Baehre 2005; Rompkey 2003: 41).<sup>18</sup> Many male settlers in the region married Inuit women (Kennedy 1995). The descendants of these unions that occurred between predominantly Inuit women and European men in this part of Labrador are referred to today as the Labrador Metis.<sup>19</sup>

#### **5.9.5 The Labrador Innu**

Encounters between the Labrador Innu (Montagnais-Naskapi) and the British were less frequent than was the case with the Inuit. The Innu were the hunters of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, which they referred to as Nitassinan, dependent on the wild game

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<sup>18</sup> These Settlers referred to themselves as “liveyeres,” a word which can be traced back to the English West Country expression “live here” (Gosling 1910: 420). Gosling states that between 1868 and 1869 the population of “liveyeres” on the southern Labrador Coast and the Straits (between Blanc Sablon and Cape Harrison) was about 2479, “including about three hundred Eskimos and Montagnais Indians” (ibid).

<sup>19</sup> They first began using the term “Metis” in 1975. The term “Settlers” was, and still is, often used to describe the Metis of southern Labrador.

and fish of the interior for their sustenance (Fitzhugh 1999: 43). In particular, the caribou formed a large part of Innu diet as well as an integral part of their traditional society and culture (Henriksen 1973). They spent most of the year on the barren grounds of the interior, moving around in small family bands (Kennedy 1995). The Innu had an intimate knowledge of the landscape and knew how to survive in the harsh environment of the interior. They would travel incredible distances by foot or by canoe across the peninsula, and maintained extensive kinship networks with other bands throughout the entire region. In the summer months, they came together in larger gatherings on the coast. However, “the European occupation of the coast and the introduction of the fur trade would increasingly direct Innu attention to the resources of the interior” (Kennedy 1995: 20).

The Innu initially did not exhibit much interest in the fur trade conducted by the British through the chain of Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) posts that were popping up throughout Labrador, and they remained “aloof in their dealings with Englishmen” (Fitzhugh 1999: 45). They had a greater affinity with the French, who had not only “pushed back the advances of the terrible Iroquois,” but “had treated the Innu sympathetically, trying to protect them from the greed of unscrupulous merchants as well as disease and starvation” (Fitzhugh 1999: 44). Having formed relationships with Jesuit priests at posts along the Gulf of St. Lawrence in what is now Quebec, they continued to conduct pilgrimages south “well into the twentieth century” (Fitzhugh 1999: 45). By taking away their potential trappers and hunters, this travel interfered with the HBC objective of incorporating the Innu into the fur trade in Labrador (Rompkey 2003: 71). As a result, the HBC began utilizing “aggressive policies” to entice and coerce the Innu to participate in their trade and to become increasingly tied to their posts in Labrador

(Fitzhugh 1999: 44). The Innu were eventually “compelled by their desire for European goods and spirits into trapping when they would otherwise have been hunting” (Rompkey 2003: 43-44). They began to frequent the trading posts to obtain goods. Forest fires and subsequent declines in the caribou populations only aggravated the situation, with food shortages driving the Innu back to the posts and deepening their dependence on the HBC trade.

### **5.9.6 The Grenfell Mission**

In addition to the Moravian missionaries, other church groups, and the HBC, another “powerful organization that filled the vacuum left by an absent government” in Labrador was the Grenfell mission (Rompkey 2003: 56). Dr. Wilfred Grenfell first visited Newfoundland and Labrador in 1892 as part of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, which had been modelled on a similar pre-existing mission offering medical services to fishermen in the North Sea (Gosling 1910: 454). The new medical mission was to provide services to the transient population of fishermen who visited the coast of Labrador every summer.

Upon arrival in Labrador, Grenfell found a transient and resident population in dire need of medical services due to “long years of isolation, privation, ignorance and neglect” (Gosling 1910: 455). According to Ron Rompkey, Grenfell was overcome with a “zeal to alter life in Labrador,” devoting his life’s work to improve the social and economic conditions of all Labrador people (Rompkey 1991: 57). To begin with, he gained public and commercial support for the establishment of two small hospitals in Labrador – one at Battle Harbour and one at Indian Harbour (Rompkey 1991). He continued to seek support from a variety of sources, raising awareness of the plight of the people of

Labrador through his publications and international lectures. His charisma “attracted funds and also workers for his cause, most of them volunteers” (Rompkey 2003: 62). Gradually, he was able to offer more services to the people of Labrador, and in 1912 he broke away from the Deep Sea Mission and established the International Grenfell Association (IGA) (Fitzhugh 1999). The IGA continues to promote social and economic development throughout the region to this day, with projects ranging from health care to “education, light industry (such as crafts), justice, welfare, and even political representation” (Rompkey 2003: 56).

Grenfell has been described as a social activist for Labrador, having devoted his life to improving the appalling conditions he encountered in the region (Rompkey 1991). He even adopted the role of “unelected politician,” advocating on behalf of the people of Labrador before they had the right to vote in Newfoundland elections (Rompkey 2003: 56). As Bill Rompkey observes: “although, like the Moravian Mission, [the IGA] has been accused of paternalism, there is no doubt about the benefits that the Grenfell Mission brought to Labrador. In its heyday it too was a political force, an agent of change, its leaders filling the vacuum left by absent politicians” (2003: 70). Gosling summed up the impact that the IGA had, describing it as a “widespread humanitarian scheme (...) one of the most remarkable and useful to be found in the world” (1910: 464).

### **5.9.7 Substitute Governors in Labrador**

Although a number of “substitute governors” had been exerting influence over Labrador through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, there remained a lack of clarity regarding the “real governor” of Labrador (Rompkey 2003: 77). As we have discussed, the Treaty of Paris

“had placed Labrador ‘under the care and inspection’ of the Governor of Newfoundland,” yet there was little proof that the latter had assumed these responsibilities (Rompkey 2003: 77). Most of the social welfare and economic development initiatives in the region were undertaken by non-governmental bodies such as the HBC or the IGA. The Newfoundland government provided only a few scattered services, most of which “were intended primarily to serve Newfoundlanders fishing along the Labrador coast” (Kennedy 1995: 117). Rompkey describes the situation of Labrador as it entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

The government did not provide funding for education; the churches or the missions did that. And the government did not provide money for health care; Grenfell did that. It was only in the early decades of the twentieth century that any government became seized with the presence of Labrador, and this was because of the resources that either had been discovered there or were being exploited. As a result, both Quebec and Newfoundland, each of which had been a tacit if absentee governor at one time or another, began to vie for possession once more.

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### **5.9.8 The Labrador Boundary Dispute**

The affinity between the Innu and the French had an interesting impact on this jurisdictional dispute over Labrador that would come to a head in the early 1900s. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Canadian government had “provided welfare assistance and inoculations to the Labrador Innu” (Fitzhugh 1999: 44). According to Lynn Fitzhugh, “it was as though Canada had accepted eternal responsibility for the Innu; and Innu territory, by extension, was tacitly assumed to be Canadian” (1999: 44). As a result, in 1903 the province of Quebec insisted that a Nova Scotian logging company conducting operations in the Lake Melville area with permission from Newfoundland should be made to obtain a Quebec license (Rompkey 2003). Quebec argued that the interior of Labrador fell under its jurisdiction, and the question went to the courts.

The Labrador Boundary Dispute was finally resolved in 1927 with a decision of the Privy Council, in which the Newfoundland government was assured jurisdiction over an area of Labrador extending from the coast to the height of land in the interior and down to the southern border that had been established in the British North America Act of 1825 (Rompkey 2003). Nevertheless, only a few years later, when Newfoundland was struck with the post-WWI financial crisis and the Amulree Commission was conducting an inquiry into the matter, a notion that had been floating around for some time of selling Labrador to Quebec was again put on the table (Great Britain 1933). This option, however, was deemed short-sighted by the Commission, and Labrador remained under the jurisdiction of Newfoundland. At the time of confederation, Labrador served as an “important bargaining lever” for Newfoundland, and, once again, Smallwood proposed leasing Labrador to Quebec (Rompkey 2003: 81). Although this proposal was rejected, the post-confederation period has seen a continued struggle between the two provinces for control over the revenues from Labrador’s natural resources.<sup>20</sup> Rompkey makes an important observation pertaining to these disputes between Quebec and Newfoundland, stating that the discussions stressed both the “interests of Quebec” and “the interests of Newfoundland,” and yet “it is as if the interests of Labrador and the people who lived there were forgotten by all” (2003: 83).

#### **5.9.9 20<sup>th</sup> Century Developments in Labrador**

Besides the Labrador Boundary Decision, the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw other significant events unfold in Labrador (Kennedy 1995: 127). In 1918-1919, Spanish

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<sup>20</sup> The natural resources of Labrador have to pass through Quebec to reach markets in Southern Ontario and the United States, and the provinces have struck deals which have greatly benefited the province of Quebec to the detriment and resentment of many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians (Rompkey 2003: 82).

Influenza swept through northern Labrador, devastating the communities of Okak and Hebron. The Great Depression brought great strife to the people of Labrador, as prices for fish and fur both fell. The decline of the fur trade, which had become a “way of life” for many Labradorians, sent people seeking government assistance which at the time was being administered by the HBC (Fitzhugh 1999: 51). The Innu, who by that time were participating in the fur trade, were also impacted by the low prices. Their situation was aggravated by the encroachment onto their traditional hunting grounds by Settler trappers and logging operations which both contributed to a lack of game (Rompkey 2003: 55). The Innu faced serious food shortages, and would show up at the posts seeking relief (Rompkey 2003; Fitzhugh 1999). Meanwhile, falling fish prices coupled with the rising price of the salt used to cure the fish brought hardships to those dependent on the fishery (Rompkey 2003).

With the installation of the Commission of Government in 1934, Labrador became the focus of greater attention from government (Rompkey 2003). Governance structures and institutions began to make their presence known in Labrador. A Commissioner within the new government – Sir John Hope Simpson – “was likely the first senior politician to visit Labrador,” and the naming of the community of Port Hope Simpson on the South Coast of Labrador attests to the “admiration and respect” that he garnered from many Labradorians (Rompkey 2003: 84). The overall administration of Labrador was entrusted to a magistrate based in St. Anthony. Meanwhile, a ranger force was brought to the region providing a “wider range of economic and social services than rural residents had ever known” (Kennedy 1995: 124). The government slowly began to take over many of the functions that had been filled by the Moravians. When the HBC was forced to



withdraw from the region in 1942, the government was able to fill the void left behind by taking on the services that the company had provided. It established the Northern Labrador Trading Operation (NLTO) to run the posts and assumed responsibility for the operation of a supply vessel to the region (Taylor 1998). The managers of these stores were not simply traders, they also took on the role of local welfare officer (Rompkey 2003).

By 1946, Labradorians were given their first chance to vote in a Newfoundland election to select a Labrador representative on the National Convention.<sup>21</sup> The Government of Newfoundland was finally widening the scope of its democratic process by establishing a post for an elected official representing Labrador. The government “took the lead in all matters except education and health, which remained in the hands of the Moravians and the Grenfell Mission,” both of which “continued to be consulted closely on policy well into the middle of the twentieth century” (Rompkey 2003: 90; 101).

The 1940s brought new investments to the region. The introduction of modern infrastructure such as electricity lines and a railway line connecting Labrador City to Sept-Îles, Québec, opened up the area to industrialization (Rennie 1998). The groundwork was being laid for what would later become an important and lucrative mining industry in Labrador West. The Second World War also had a great impact on Labrador. The promise of jobs associated with the construction of the Goose Bay air force base attracted people from across Labrador to the Lake Melville area, changing the demographics of the region (Rompkey 2003: 93). With the advent of the cold war, the

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<sup>21</sup> They elected Lester Burry, a United Church Minister based in North West River, to represent Labrador’s interests (Riggs: 2000).

military presence extended beyond Goose Bay with the construction of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line sites at several locations in Labrador. The international military presence irreversibly altered the face of Labrador, bringing benefits to some in the form of employment and spin-offs, and hardships to others whose traditional lives would be altered by intrusive military operations.

#### **5.9.10 The Impacts of Confederation on Labrador**

Confederation brought its own set of social, political and economic changes to Labrador, although the paternalistic treatment of the region by the new provincial authorities was slow to change. Labradorians voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining Canada, supported the Liberal party in its bid to lead the new provincial government and elected Harold Horwood as their first representative in the House of Assembly (Rompkey 2003: 101). Many Labradorians saw confederation as a “way out of decades of neglect” (Don Jamieson, quoted in Rompkey 2003: 100). However, while confederation did bring many benefits to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians alike, Labrador remained on the political fringe of the new provincial government and was left to deal with a new strain of external and often paternalistic dominance and control. As Rompkey observes, “when Newfoundland was chastising Ottawa for lack of understanding and lack of adequate response to local identity and local needs, it still did not acknowledge that it stood in a similar relationship to Labrador” (2003: 100).

The new government’s policies of modernization and industrialization spread to Labrador, with Premier Smallwood pressing for the expansion of mining activities in Labrador West, the harnessing of the hydro power potential at Churchill Falls, and his centralization policies focussing in particular on the South Coast. The Labrador Straits

region, where the economy continued to revolve around the fishery, saw the disappearance of what had been a troublesome and intrusive international border between the neighbouring communities of L'Anse au Clair and Blanc Sablon (Rompkey 2003: 117). New population centres were emerging throughout Labrador, and the government scrambled to extend services to these areas. Still, there remained a significant portion of Labrador's population for whom the responsibility for the provision of social and economic services remained "fraught with ambiguity" (Rompkey 2003: 117). These were the Aboriginal people of Labrador.

At the time of confederation with Canada, the Terms of Union made no mention of the Aboriginal peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador. This made the Aboriginal population of the province unique in Canada in that they did not fall under the auspices of the Indian Act. The federal government thereby avoided its fiduciary responsibility towards the Aboriginal peoples living within the boundaries of the new province. They were left under the administrative and legislative control of the province and subject to a variety of negotiated arrangements between the two levels of government (Hanrahan 2003: 235). This practice was formalized in 1965, with the signing of the first Federal-Provincial Agreement for Financial Assistance to Native Communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, a cost-sharing agreement to be renewed every five years (Hanrahan 2003). Despite these agreements, Aboriginal people in the province still lacked official status, and were "unable to participate equally in programs and services aimed at Aboriginal people elsewhere in Canada" (Hanrahan 2003: 217). The omission of Newfoundland and Labrador's Aboriginal population from the Terms of Union resulted in the Aboriginal

people of Newfoundland and Labrador being “among the most marginalized Aboriginals in Canada” (Hanrahan 2003: 239).

Until the 1960s, the Labrador Innu continued to live predominantly as nomadic hunters and gatherers in the interior of Labrador and had little contact with traders, missionaries and other elements of white society. They have been seriously impacted by events that triggered massive transformations in their society and culture in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Coupled with the lack of support exhibited by the encroaching society, the adaptation of the Innu to the new reality has been an extremely painful process. The Innu were faced with an anomic condition.<sup>22</sup> According to Fitzhugh, “of all the First Nations of North America, few have been as severely demoralized by their incorporation into “the White society way” as the Labrador Innu” (1999: 45). Their increased dependence on Europeans, the infringement on their traditional land, and the resulting settlement at both Davis Inlet (now relocated to Natuashish) and Sheshatshiu, all precipitated massive changes in the social structure and a loss of traditional culture for the Innu. A highly egalitarian society that placed a premium on individual autonomy and collective decision-making, the Innu were now expected to adjust to a European system characterized by the values of a market economy and exhibiting a highly differentiated and hierarchical social structure (Henrikson 1973).<sup>23</sup> The realities of life in the settled

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<sup>22</sup> Sociologist Émile Durkheim defined anomie as a social condition in which the traditional norms that regulated society are no longer relevant and individuals struggle to find a sense of meaning and frame of reference for their actions.

<sup>23</sup> According to Henrikson, the Innu stress the “equality and independence of all men” and “no one will either give or take orders from others” (1973: 44). Only in the formation of particular task-oriented groupings, such as those formed for the purpose of a hunting expedition, would a “leader” or *wotshimao* emerge. This designation – translated by some as “first among equals” – would last for the duration of the

communities on the coast contradicted many of the values such as sharing and independence that were an integral part of the Innu value system and life in the country (Henrikson 1973). The European influence created a system of “social division and hierarchy” within the communities that was “not inherent in Innu society” (Mailhot 1997: 60).<sup>24</sup> The loss of the traditional values and way of life for the Innu has resulted in a crisis in identity and an absence of meaning – a condition of anomie that has resulted in social and economic hardships and tragic losses. They have had strained relations with authorities, and both sides struggle to overcome the distrust that has plagued the relationship.

The tendency of government officials to impose decisions in a top-down manner on the people of Labrador with little or no consultation and a lack of understanding regarding local realities and needs, particularly with regards to the Aboriginal groups in the region, did not change with the introduction of a new provincial government following confederation. The Smallwood resettlement program of the 1950s and 1960s exhibited many of these characteristics, and had a great impact on the people of Labrador. For many Inuit families in northern Labrador who had settled around a few northern mission stations and trading posts, resettlement was an extremely painful episode in their history (Hanrahan 2003). The relocations also had a significant impact on the people living in scattered communities along the South Coast.

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task and was theoretically open to anybody at any time, although usually conferred to the best hunters of the group (Henrikson 1973).

<sup>24</sup> According to José Mailhot, who conducted anthropological fieldwork in Sheshatshiu, social position for the Innu came to be associated with “the different degrees of Europeanization exhibited by the various groups in the band” and prestige was “inversely proportional to Indian-ness” (1997: 60; 64).

In the case of the South Coast, most relocations occurred between 1967 and 1970, with about one-quarter of the population being resettled. The influx of people into receiving communities such as Cartwright and Mary's Harbour caused new social divisions and changed the patterns of traditional resource harvesting. New residents were reluctant to infringe on the hunting or trapping grounds of others, but were far from their own traditional grounds (Kennedy 1995: 194; 204). In the case of Cartwright, the community "became even more divided," and today still exhibits "several distinct neighbourhoods of people from various abandoned (...) communities" (Kennedy 1995: 204). Similar divisions are also evident in Mary's Harbour.

For the Aboriginal people that were resettled, these were traumatic experiences that resulted in the separation of families, internal divisions within the new communities, a loss of identity and self-esteem for individuals, and the rise of poverty, crime and substance abuse (Rompkey 2003: 106). In the north, the Inuit communities of Okak and Hebron were closed down, and the people were moved to larger centres at Makkovik, Nain and Hopedale. Meanwhile, authorities made two attempts to relocate the Innu who had only just begun to settle around a mission station at Old Davis Inlet. First, the Innu were moved to Nutak to be consolidated with the Inuit people living there, but the move failed when the Innu walked back to their original site. The second move was to Utshimassits or New Davis Inlet on Iluikoyak Island, four kilometres away. Today, the Innu insist that "the people of Utshimassits didn't decide to move themselves;" rather, "it was the government and the priests who made the decisions in those days" (Innu Nation and Mushuau Innu Band Council 1992: 11). The move alienated them from their traditional caribou hunting territory, which they could not access for part of the year.

Many years later, in 2002, a third move would take place in a final attempt to rectify a situation that had gone from bad to worse.

### **5.9.11 Labrador-Newfoundland Relations**

In terms of Smallwood's industrialization scheme, the major development projects launched in Labrador exhibited a purely extractive policy thrust (Martin 1971). No provisions were made to ensure that benefits from large-scale resource developments in Labrador would accrue to Labradorians. Mining developments in western Labrador precipitated the growth of Labrador City and Wabush which, prior to the 1980s, had little contact with the rest of Labrador and were more connected to the province of Quebec (Rompkey 2001: 147). In these and the other Western Labrador resource town, Churchill Falls, residents today enjoy a high standard of living and a per capita income higher than any other economic region in the province. But they often feel alienated from the rest of Labrador.<sup>25</sup> The hydro development of the Upper Churchill also saw very few benefits accrue to Labradorians, other than a small energy allocation to supply power to the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River. In terms of employment, "few Labradorians ever worked on the Churchill project or with the iron ore companies" (Martin 1971: 30). Recent demographic statistics indicate that the population of Labrador City and Wabush is composed of "20 per cent French and 10 per cent foreign born" (Rompkey 2003: 147).

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<sup>25</sup> In 2003, residents of Zone 2 (the Hyron Regional Economic Development Corporation) averaged a personal income per capita of \$29,700, compared to a provincial average of \$19,800. There is the perception among fellow Labradorians that Labrador West is a "Cadillac community," a sentiment that leaves local residents sometimes feeling isolated and alienated within Labrador (Rompkey 2001: 44)



The damming of the Churchill River had severe implications for the Innu, who lost large tracts of their traditional lands to flooding, including hunting grounds and sacred sites. The raw materials from Labrador industries, including mining, forestry and the fishery, were shipped away for secondary processing and the associated economic benefits and spin-offs accrue elsewhere. Smallwood's developmental focus was on the Island portion of the province, a project that was to be partially financed by the "industrial colonization" of Labrador, made evident in his 1966 statement: "If we are not big enough, if we are not imaginative enough, if we are not daring enough to colonize Labrador, someone else will do it" (quoted in Rompkey 2003: 135).

A centre-periphery relationship existed and, arguably, continues to exist, between the Island and Labrador. The social and economic gains derived from natural resource developments in the hinterland have been appropriated for the benefit of people on the Island or elsewhere. There has been little, if any, re-investment into the local development of Labrador. In the Smallwood era, when Labradorians looked to the government for assistance, they found the response was lacking.<sup>26</sup> As Rompkey observes, Smallwood could not ignore the gulf that existed between the Island and Labrador (2003). This division had physical, social, economic and psychological dimensions, and Smallwood was the first premier to make an attempt to bridge this gulf (Rompkey 2003: 127-128).<sup>27</sup> In 1964, he changed the official name of the provincial

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<sup>26</sup> The Iron Ore Company of Canada that conducts mining operations in Labrador West in many ways played the role of government in that part of Labrador (Rompkey 2003: 127). However, over the years the company has steadily decreased its contributions to the social development of the towns (Labrador West Status of Women Council and Femmes Francophones de l'Ouest du Labrador 2004). There is a sentiment among some locals that government has reacted slowly and lacks adequate resources, leaving many feeling neglected and insecure.

<sup>27</sup> Well into the 1970s, there was a lack of adequate communication between the Island and Labrador contributed to the gulf between the two. Media programming from the Island was often inaccessible to



government from the “Government of Newfoundland” to the “Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.” Two years later, he established the Department of Labrador Affairs. The first minister of this department, Charles Granger, speaking in the Legislature, stated that: “Labrador does not exist for the benefit of Newfoundland and this province does not exist for the benefit of Labrador. We have to work together for this one great task” (quoted in Rompkey 2003: 128). Still, the new Department “did virtually nothing” and ceased to exist after 1972 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974: 1296).

Tom Burgess, elected in 1966 as a member of the Liberal party under Smallwood, had hoped to adequately represent the people of Labrador in St. John’s. He quickly formed the opinion that, although the Smallwood government was very aware of the value of Labrador, they did not have any intention of doing much for the people of Labrador. He felt that “it was a case of out of sight, out of mind” (Burgess 1971: 32). Frustrated by the lack of attention paid to Labrador issues, he left the Liberal party and joined the burgeoning current of change and political awakening that was occurring in parts of Labrador. It was becoming obvious that the feelings of “alienation from and dissatisfaction with the government in St. John’s” that had been present in the old Labrador were still alive in the post-confederation era (Rompkey 2003: 149). Burgess founded the New Labrador Party (NLP) in 1969 to focus explicitly on the needs of Labradorians, and in the 1971 election, he won the seat for his riding of Labrador West.

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Labrador residents, who often tuned into other Atlantic or Québec programming that provided little information on local or Newfoundland matters. Newspapers from St. John’s faced circulation problems, and there existed no widely-circulated Labrador newspaper (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974). According to Rompkey, the newspaper of choice for many Labradorians, because of its availability, was the *Montreal Gazette*, not the *Evening Telegram* (2003: 128). Furthermore, Labradorians could not readily access information regarding Government programs and services (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974).

This provided support for the prevailing sentiment amongst Labradorians that they lacked an effective voice in the provincial government, which meant that their needs were consistently neglected by the authorities. The “growing disenchantment with the provincial political process in Labrador” helped to convince Smallwood that he needed to pay more attention to the voice of Labradorians (Baker and Cuff 1993: 9). Shortly after the election, he appointed Mel Woodward and Roy Legge, representatives from Labrador, to his cabinet (Rompkey 2003: 149).

In 1972, the new provincial government under Frank Moores saw the victory of a second NLP candidate in a by-election in the riding of Labrador South (Baker 2003). Mike Martin became “the first native-born Labradorian elected to the provincial legislature” (Rompkey 2003: 151). Like Smallwood before him, Moores had to pay close attention to the particular needs of Labrador. Soon after his election, he created a Royal Commission on Labrador, which was given the task of examining the economic and sociological conditions of life in Labrador.

The report of the Royal Commission on Labrador, released in 1974, was highly critical of the treatment of Labrador by the provincial government. The commissioners, being aware that “most Labrador residents have had very severely limited opportunities to influence [Government] policy direct[ly],” took it upon themselves to consult locals and incorporate their views in their final report (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974: i). The report confirmed the prevailing sentiments of Labrador residents regarding “the Island’s indifference to and neglect of their area” (Rompkey 2003: 153). It drew attention to the “adverse effects of colonialism, absentee representation and badly

structured Government agencies,” noting “the generally shabby presence of Government in some parts of Labrador and the lack of presence in other places” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974: 106). Describing the particular problems and challenges faced by Labradorians, the Commission emphasized the need for Government to acknowledge that “Labrador is inextricably a component of the future of this Province, and that equality of service, concern and attention is long overdue (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1974: 106; ii).<sup>28</sup>

### **5.9.12 The Awakening of Labrador**

According to Tony Williamson, founding director of Memorial University’s Labrador Institute of Northern Studies, the 1970s were time of “revolutionary change (...) in the political development of Labrador people” (1980: ix). Besides the important work of the Royal Commission on Labrador and the success of the NLP, improved transportation and communications spurred on other milestones. The decade was kick-started with a conference entitled “*Labrador in the 70s*” which brought together representatives from all over Labrador to take stock of the opportunities and challenges facing the region and to articulate a common vision for the future. This conference, the first of a string of conferences that would take place at the beginning of each subsequent decade, was “the first coming together of all Labrador” (Williamson 1980: ix). It attempted to create and open an accessible public sphere or forum for dialogue between the various cultures and regions that existed within Labrador. It presented an opportunity for mutual learning and

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<sup>28</sup> Problems cited by the Commission included: the primitive state of communications, the serious disparity in educational opportunities, insufficient government presence in the health sector, inadequate social welfare programs (particularly family counselling and child welfare services), the desperate housing situation, lack of infrastructure in many communities (including public utilities, sports and recreation facilities, transportation links, shore infrastructure for the fisheries, secondary processing facilities for the forestry industry), unsettled land claims, and complications arising from Labrador’s geographical situation (high cost of living, isolation factor, small and scattered population).

sharing in the quest of all Labradorians to shape the destiny of Labrador (Rompkey 1980).

Critical developments in the 1970s included the incorporation of municipalities and the formation of regional development associations, which was encouraged by the newly formed Department of Rural Development, the first of its kind in the province. The 1970s also saw the birth of Aboriginal organizations. The Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was founded in 1973, and in 1977 the Sheshatshiu and Mushuau Innu bands came together formally under the auspices of the Naskapi-Montagnais Innu Association, later the Innu Nation (IN).<sup>29</sup> The Labrador Heritage Society came into being, with the objective of protecting and preserving Labrador history and culture through projects such as the development of Them Days Magazine. Pan-Labrador associations also began to emerge, such as the Labrador Resources Advisory Council (LRAC), the Combined Councils of Labrador (CCL), and the Labrador Craft Producers Association (LCPA) (Williamson 1980).

Both the LIA and the IN first filed land claims with the government of Canada in 1977. The settlement of these separate and, in some cases, overlapping claims is “of paramount importance” to the further development of Labrador (ACOA 2001: 49). Unsettled claims create uncertainty and have hindered development efforts ranging from the large-scale natural resource projects such as the Voisey’s Bay nickel mine or the development of the Lower Churchill, to small-scale ventures such as the designation of national parks, forestry activities, or tourism-related developments (ACOA 2001). Other groups currently negotiating or pursuing land claims in Labrador include the Inuit of Northern

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Quebec, represented by the Makivik Corporation, the Labrador Metis Nation (LMN), and the Naskapi of Quebec (ACOA 2001).

With oil and gas exploration beginning to take place off the Labrador coast in the 1970s, the question of how to best develop the natural resources in the region for the benefit of Labradorians was being hotly debated (see House 1981). LRAC was formed in 1976 based on a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Labrador. The intention was for LRAC to act as a voice for Labradorians when it came to natural resource developments in the region. It was groundbreaking in that it brought together representatives from all over Labrador, including Aboriginal representatives, and managed to bridge “distinct cultural and regional chasms” to an unprecedented extent (Kennedy 1995: 212). Despite its relative success in advancing the regional model in Labrador, LRAC suffered from a lack of consensus among the diversity of Labrador representatives, and was often “forced to bite the hand that fed it” by providing controversial policy recommendations to the provincial government which was its source of funding (Rompkey 2003: 155). This dilemma contributed to the demise of the Council in 1982.

CCL was formed in 1972 when the community councils in northern Labrador started to come together at annual meetings to discuss the similar challenges facing their communities. In 1979, other communities were invited to join, and the movement quickly spread out to encompass all of Labrador. The umbrella organization, which still exists today, is meant to provide Labradorians with a “unified front in negotiations with governments and other agencies” as well as “social contact throughout the length and

width of Labrador” (Shiwak 1980). Having endured financial difficulties, a strained relationship with the provincial government, and exhibiting a weak capacity to influence policy overall, the recent reinstating of the CCL’s operating grant and improving relations with the Williams government have injected new hope into the organization.

LCPA was a rural development initiative of the provincial government which promoted arts and craft as an industry in Labrador until its demise in 1991. The LCPA was successful at maintaining communication with its dispersed membership through a newsletter, and it later took advantage of the new possibilities offered by teleconferencing (Kennedy 1995). Other organizations, including the Labrador Craft Marketing Agency, continue to promote arts and crafts in Labrador.

The 1970s also saw the creation of a new Labrador flag, symbolic of a pan-Labrador identity. By the close of the decade, Labradorians were “becoming involved in the development of their resources and in the management of their own affairs” (Rompkey 1980). However, there still existed a major hurdle to overcome, identified by Bill Rompkey in his speech at the second pan-Labrador conference entitled *Labrador in the 80s*:

There is no question that Labradorians are speaking out and are being heard. But, I ask, *is there always a clear message?* It seems to me that there is fragmentation and, too often, a lack of harmony among the various groups. Of course, it is impossible (indeed, unhealthy) to have total agreement, but I think we have to strive, in Labrador, for a greater degree of unity – because, *united we stand; divided we fall*.

1980: xii.

Although the next few decades would see increasing dialogue and growing mutual awareness between the different groups and regions, bridging the gap between the many

solitudes that exist within Labrador would prove challenging. Rompkey's words still hold true today.

The 1980s saw further improvements to the transportation network in Labrador, which also contributed to efforts at bringing the people of Labrador closer together. In the Straits, communities were linked by a paved road that extended to Red Bay, and construction began on the first phase of the trans-Labrador highway. In 1982, the Labrador Air/Marine Services Agreement set out the federal government's commitments to improving transportation infrastructure in Labrador. Thirteen airstrips were constructed in major coastal communities, and mail and freight services were improved (Rompkey 1990). Communications infrastructure also improved, again contributing to building solidarity in the region.<sup>30</sup> However, there remained serious gaps. Road construction on the South coast had yet to begin, and the grievance of the Royal Commission on Labrador regarding the lack of access to local news was still evident.<sup>31</sup> Labrador West continued to be more connected to Quebec, and the Straits region was more connected to the Northern Peninsula.

The natural environment, which has always formed an integral part of life in Labrador and remains "at the core of the identity claimed by Labradorians," came into sharp focus during the 1980s (Brice-Bennett 1990: 9). As we have seen, the government under Brian Peckford placed natural resources at the top of its agenda, emphasizing in particular the

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<sup>30</sup> The OKalaKatiget Society was formed with the mandate to provide radio, television and newspaper services to residents of the North Coast and Lake Melville region.

<sup>31</sup> CBC still did not provide a fully regional service, and no pan-Labrador newspaper existed (Brice-Bennett 1990). While Labradorians were able to "learn more and more about the south" they were still unable "to talk back or even to talk among themselves" (Rompkey 1990).

importance of local control over resource developments.<sup>32</sup> Many studies were conducted to assess the possibility of further natural resource developments in Labrador. The Innu and Inuit became active in petitioning for the protection of the natural environment. They insisted on full participation in all discussions regarding developments to take place on their traditional territory, fighting hard for their rights to be upheld. For example, the Innu staged several protests condemning the practice of low-level flying over their territory which interfered with their traditional caribou hunt.

In 1985, a new force emerged on the Labrador political landscape: the Labrador Metis Association, later the Labrador Metis Nation. The increased vocalization of the different perspectives by the various stakeholders in Labrador, which sometimes contradicted each other and were often at odds with the interests of developers, revealed further divisions. According to Carol Brice-Bennett, “the process of environmental assessments, review and studies (...) brought conflict, and polarized individuals, families, organizations and communities in Labrador more than any other single issue in the 80s” (1990: 9). The different views and interests of the different peoples of Labrador collided, and “new fences were put up – both real and philosophical – in relations between people living in Labrador” (Brice-Bennett 1990: 12). In a statement that harkened back to that of Rompkey’s a decade earlier, Brice-Bennett asked: “Has Labrador become a region of solitudes and silences? Can all these differences be reconciled or is the idea of Labrador unity only an illusion?” (Brice-Bennett 1990: 12).

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<sup>32</sup> Peckford made several attempts to renegotiate the terms of the Upper Churchill contract, but these were ultimately unsuccessful, and the government shifted its focus from hydro development to the oil and gas sector.



In 1988, Labrador obtained a seat in the federal parliament, with Bill Rompkey being the first to represent the new riding. Both levels of government began paying more attention to Labrador, and government bureaucracy was expanding to oversee programs and services. As Brice-Bennett observed: “hoped for action became inaction as Labrador in the 80s was programmed into a maze and paper chase of bureaucracies operating programs” (1990: 12). A further challenge for Labradorians was that the government policies and programs that were being implemented in the region were still being developed and imposed by officials far removed from Labrador. As a result, they seldom exhibited an adequate understanding of the particular needs of the jurisdiction, nor did they acknowledge the regional differences that existed within Labrador (Brice-Bennett 1990).

As the province entered the 1990s, with Clyde Wells in power for the first half of the decade, the new notions of integrated social and economic development that were being circulated in the corridors of the provincial government would have a lasting resonance with many people in Labrador. The *Labrador in the '90s* conference, which set the agenda for the upcoming decade, included discussions that were influenced by the new ideas in government (Combined Councils of Labrador 1990). Economic diversification was on the agenda, with particular emphasis on identifying and building on inherent strengths in the region. There were discussions regarding the importance of strategic planning and an approach to social development that stressed local solutions. Human resource development and a focus on youth were raised as critical areas, along with the importance of self-reliance. In terms of governance in Labrador, conference delegates identified problems associated with a lack of flexibility and coordination in government,

as well as a lack of access to information regarding government programs and services. Key themes that hailed from the conference included the need for mechanisms to enable Labradorians to have greater input and influence on decision-making affecting their region, as well as the need for policies and programs to recognise the unique needs of Labrador. The natural environment and Aboriginal issues also continued to figure prominently in all discussions regarding the future of Labrador, with the latter capturing critical attention early in the decade.

### **5.9.13 Aboriginal Labradorians in Recent Years**

A series of tragic events in the Innu community of Utshimassits (Davis Inlet) in the early 1990s made shockingly apparent the consequences of the government's historical neglect of Labrador's indigenous peoples. The prevalence of tragic deaths in the community reached a critical point following the deaths of six young children in a house fire in 1992.<sup>33</sup> The children had been left alone at home while their parents were out drinking. A People's Inquiry into the tragedy released a report in 1992 which called for the relocation of the Innu community of Utshimassits where social conditions had been steadily deteriorating.<sup>34</sup> The urgent need for a solution was driven home in 1993, when a home video taken by a police officer showing Innu children sniffing gas and talking about suicide was released to the public. In 1996, it was formally announced that the

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<sup>33</sup> Utshimassits experienced 47 alcohol-related deaths between 1973 and 1992 (Mushuau Innu Band Council 1992)

<sup>34</sup> The Mushuau Innu were relocated in 1967 from Old Davis Inlet on the mainland of Labrador to Utshimassits on Iluikoyak Island. The new location was not conducive to the emergence of a viable, healthy community. The terrain was not suitable for the construction of septic systems or outhouses, leaving people without proper sewage disposal systems. Foundations would shift with the freezing and thawing of the soil upon which they were constructed, causing damage to the structure of the homes and making them unsafe and unfit for habitation. Safe drinking water was provided by two community wells, but even this water was at risk of contamination (Press 1995). Furthermore, the Island was cut off from the mainland in the spring and the fall, leaving the Innu alienated from their traditional land for a significant portion of the year.

Innu of Utshimassits would be relocated to Sango Bay. Six years later, shortly after the registration of the Sheshatshiu and Mushuau Innu bands under the Indian Act, the people of Utshimassits made the move to the newly created reserve of Natuashish.

Seeking a path that will lead to healing and renewal, the Innu have shown remarkable determination in the face of such immense transformations and extreme adversity. They have proven to be extremely adept at utilizing the media to vocalize their predicament, bringing their problems into the public sphere and garnering support from global civil society for their plight. Still, the social problems persist. Alcoholism and substance abuse remain endemic problems and suicide rates soar above those of the rest of the province.<sup>35</sup> The Innu quest to regain control of their own destiny continues.

#### **5.9.14 New Governance Structures and Processes for Labrador**

The latter half of the 1990s saw the formation of new governance structures for Labrador. Under Clyde Wells, as a result of *Community Matters: The New Regional Economic Development* (the report of the Task Force on Community Economic Development in the province) five Regional Economic Development Boards were established in Labrador in 1995 to cover the five new designated Economic Zones in the region (see Figure 5.1 below).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The suicide rate amongst Innu adolescents is 20% higher than the rate for the Island portion of the province (Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information 2004).

<sup>36</sup> The events leading up to the formation of the Task Force on Community Economic Development and the aftermath of the *Community Matters* report will be discussed in a later chapter. The five Regional Economic Development Boards in Labrador include the Inukshuk Economic Development Corporation for Zone 1; the Hyron Regional Economic Development Corporation for Zone 2; the Central Labrador Economic Development Board for Zone 3; the Southeastern Aurora Development Corporation for Zone 4; and the Labrador Straits Development Corporation for Zone 5.



**Figure 5-1: Economic Zones in Labrador<sup>37</sup>**

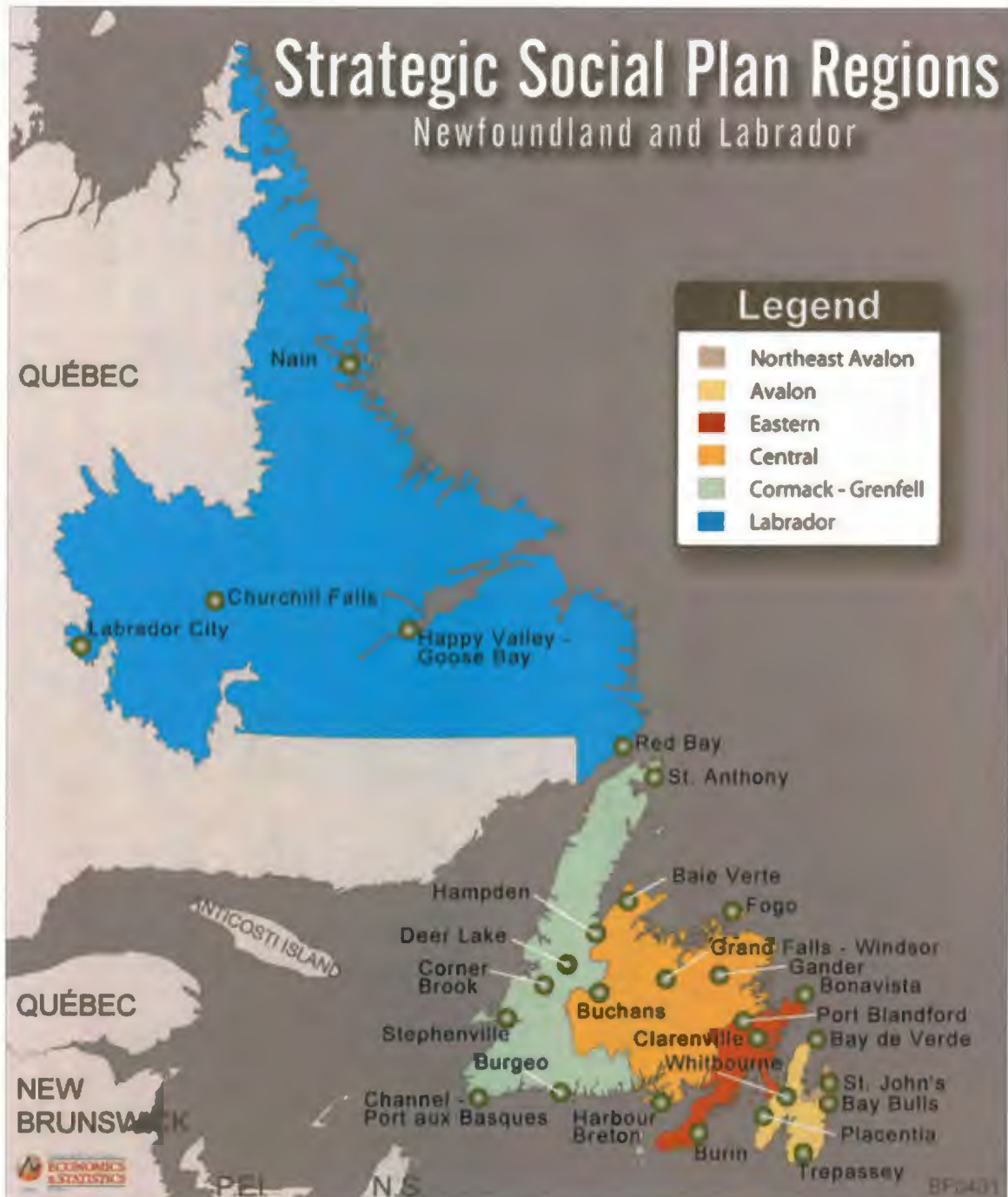
In 1996, Brian Tobin created the Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat with the mandate to “advance Innu and Inuit land claims negotiations and to ensure Labrador issues were addressed more efficiently and effectively” (Government of Newfoundland

<sup>37</sup> Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency. Avail:  
<http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/Maps/>

and Labrador 2000). As a central agency located in the provincial government's Executive Council office, the Secretariat had the capacity to coordinate departmental activities in Labrador horizontally across government. In 1998, the Secretariat opened up an office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

In 1998, the whole of Labrador was designated as a single Strategic Social Plan (SSP) region (see Figure 5-2 below). A single Regional Steering Committee, with representation from across the Big Land, would oversee the implementation of the Plan in the region. The SSP is the subject of this thesis and will be discussed in greater detail throughout the following chapters.





**Figure 5-2: Strategic Social Plan Regions in Newfoundland and Labrador<sup>38</sup>**

Other key developments affecting Labrador during Tobin's time in office included the hard stance he adopted in negotiations with the nickel giant Inco over the development of

<sup>38</sup> Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Economics and Statistics Branch. Avail: <http://www.envision.ca/templates/news.asp?ID=4511>

the Voisey's Bay nickel mine, one of the world's richest known sulphide deposits. He did not want the deal to turn into another Upper Churchill, and refused to settle on any arrangement that would see the raw material shipped out of the province for processing (Tobin 2002). Ultimately, negotiations with Inco broke down under Tobin.

Nevertheless, his tough position may indeed have paid off in the end as his successor, Roger Grimes, signed a deal that many anticipated would allow benefits from the Voisey's Bay development to flow to the people of the province. According to Rompkey, the most groundbreaking aspect of the Voisey's Bay deal was the historic gathering of industry representatives, provincial and federal government officials, as well as Aboriginal leaders from the LIA and IN at the same table to sign a deal in which each party felt confident that it would gain (2003: 165). This co-operative effort had never before been achieved in the region. Both the LIA and the IN signed an Impact and Benefits Agreements (IBA) with Inco which aimed to ensure that Innu and Inuit people will benefit from the mining developments. The LIA has set up Tasiujatsoak Trust, which makes funds from the IBA available for allocation to various grassroots projects in the five Inuit communities as well as North West River and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Meanwhile, the Innu have benefited by programs such as the Environmental Guardians Training Program. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether the benefits will outweigh the costs. Both the LIA and the IN have expressed concern over a travel subsidy offered to Newfoundlanders to help meet labour requirements at Voisey's Bay, as well as the environmental risks associated with a spill that occurred in 2005.

### 5.9.15 Labrador in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

The total population of Labrador in 2001 was 27,860.<sup>39</sup> Of this total, 9700 residents claimed Aboriginal identity, with about 1660 people identifying themselves as Innu, 3960 as Métis, and 3880 as Inuit. Resource-based industries, such as the fishery, mining, and forestry, continue to be critical in the region, and new industries are on the rise.

Globalization and the new economy are increasingly influencing development in Labrador. This has been particularly so with the launching of the SmartLabrador project and the forging of relationships between Labrador and other northern jurisdictions around the world.<sup>40</sup> SmartLabrador was Industry Canada's Smart Communities demonstration project for Labrador focussed on expanding IT capacity throughout the region, particularly by establishing broadband capability and offering web-based support to local business. The project was a great success in the region, bringing Labrador's widely dispersed communities closer together by creating a virtual Labrador-wide community.

Leaders from across Labrador ushered in the new millennium with the *Directions North: Labrador in a New Century* conference that took place in 2001 (Macdonald 2001). At the conference, new and innovative items were on the agenda alongside the more familiar topics. Transportation was revisited as a key issue, as was education and training and the settlement of Aboriginal Land Claims. Meanwhile, other discussions revolved around emerging industries in Labrador, including technology, e-commerce and tourism.

Speakers from other regions in Canada, including Nunavut and the North West Territories, and from as far away as Russia, Norway and Iceland brought lessons from

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<sup>39</sup> This number represents a -5.6% change from 1996 data.

<sup>40</sup> Labrador is working on cultivating relationships with other Northern jurisdictions around the world. Evidence of this was the hosting, by the city of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, of the international Circumpolar Agricultural Conference in the fall of 2007.



their own jurisdictions to share with the conference delegates. Innovative approaches to governance and development in Labrador were also on the agenda. Workshops were devoted to discussions regarding collaborative models for development, the importance of partnerships in areas such as education and training, the advantages associated with community-based involvement in health, and an overview of the provincial Strategic Social Plan and what it had achieved in Labrador. Reflecting on a central theme of the conference, Agnes Pike (former president of the Combined Councils of Labrador) drew attention to the importance of working together. Pike emphasized that the way to achieve prosperity is through partnership, citing the success of collaborative ventures such as the Labrador Fishermen's Union Shrimp Company, the Eagle River Credit Union, the Labrador Heritage Society, and the Creative Arts Festival.

In an important symbolic gesture to the people of Labrador, the official name of the province was changed in 2001 to include Labrador. In the same year, Grimes created a new line department, the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs (DLAA), in an attempt to give the people of Labrador a stronger voice in government. The department, which continues to exist today, is mandated to coordinate and implement government policy appropriate for Labrador, and to renew the provincial government's relationship with Aboriginal peoples in the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2002).<sup>41</sup> Commenting on the creation of this new department, Rompkey expressed the hope that it reflected a realization on the part of the provincial government that "Labrador

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<sup>41</sup> The minister and deputy minister of the newly created department were to be based in Labrador. Many felt that this modification enhanced the effectiveness of the department and it was welcomed by the people of Labrador, although the arrangement would not last.

is different and that you cannot run it effectively from St. John's with old and erroneous attitudes" (Rompkey 2001: 15).

Since being elected as Premier in October 2003, Danny Williams has made the development of the Lower Churchill hydro project, the sustainability of the military base in Goose Bay, and the completion of the trans-Labrador highway top priorities for the province in Labrador. Williams has announced that Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro will take the lead in the potential development of the Lower Churchill, a decision that is meant to ensure that maximum benefits from the project will flow to residents of the province. Immediately following his re-election in the fall of 2007, Williams elevated the profile of the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio by appointing an Inuit woman, Patty Pottle, as the new minister of Aboriginal Affairs alongside John Hickey, minister of Labrador Affairs.

Of all the developments to impact Labrador under Williams, the most significant was the signing of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement in January, 2005. This achievement is a milestone in Labrador history, marking a new era of legally and constitutionally-enshrined self-government and land-ownership for the Labrador Inuit. The successful negotiation of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim by the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was a major step forward and has set the precedent for the settlement of other Aboriginal land claims in Labrador. The agreement has provided the Inuit of Labrador with defined rights to self-government as well as title to land and jurisdictional rights to adjacent seas in parts of Northern Labrador now called Nunatsiavut. The new Nunatsiavut government is entitled to develop and enforce laws in the land claims area,

and collaborates with the federal and provincial governments in the provision of social services. The presence of this new government structure has changed the face of governance in Labrador, and introduces a new dynamic into the work of all the organizations that are active in the region.

Today, many people insist that the only way for Labradorians to achieve effective control over their lives is if they are able to “form a common voice for Labrador” (Rompkey 2003: 165-166). These same people place “utmost importance (on) the ‘unification’ and ‘solidarity’ of the five different regions” into a Labrador that would be “greater than the sum of its parts” (Rompkey: 165-166). It seems clear that decisions made in St. John’s are often inappropriate and unacceptable, and that new ways of involving Labradorians in decision-making that affects their region is necessary.

The Strategic Social Plan (SSP) represented an opportunity for Labradorians to achieve the new vision of greater self-determination. The Labrador region made important progress towards achieving this vision through the implementation of various aspects of the overall goals of the SSP. The following chapters will take a closer look at the SSP process in the province, with a particular focus on the Labrador region.

## **6. Methodology**

The research presented in this thesis was conducted in three phases. Phase One involved researching the Labrador Regional Steering Committee of the Strategic Social Plan (SSP) alongside members of the Values Added Community University Research Alliance (CURA) and exploring possibilities for further independent research. Phase Two consisted of developing and conducting independent field research pertaining in particular to the evolution of both intra-sectoral relationships (in particular, between different organizations belonging to the voluntary, community-based sector and between different departments and agencies within the provincial government), and inter-sectoral relationships (between the government and the voluntary, community-based sector) in the Labrador region. Phase Three comprised the analysis and interpretation of data collected in the field and revisiting the region to validate research findings with participants. The following offers greater detail about the different phases of the research.

### ***6.1 Phase One: Values Added CURA Research Assistant***

The focus of Values Added CURA research is on the innovative approach to social policy evident in the development and implementation of the *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* (1998). The purpose is, in part, to analyze processes and themes related to the SSP, including collaborative governance and the role of the Voluntary, Community-Based Sector (VCBS). The initial stages of the Values Added CURA research entailed an examination of various aspects of the Regional Steering Committees of the SSP. The stated goals were as follows:

1. To examine the barriers and bridges to the formation of multi-sectoral partnerships within the SSP committee, and to consider the value of various forms of collaboration within and between sectors;
2. To analyze the process and rationale behind the selection of regional priorities by the SSP committee;
3. To explore the role of the SSP process in building relationships, creating new interfaces, and encouraging synergies between individuals, organizations, and sectors.

The SSP Regional Steering Committee chosen for the first case study was Labrador, which corresponded with my interests. As a member of the Values Added CURA research team, I participated in this research as an assistant to the lead researcher. My responsibilities included assisting with the development of interview questionnaires, participating in a series of interviews that were conducted, and contributing to the analysis of findings.<sup>42</sup> Through participation in the Values Added CURA research, I furthered my understanding of the SSP implementation in the region in order to refine my own research question.<sup>43</sup>

Preliminary analysis of the Values Added CURA research revealed key findings regarding the engagement of the VCBS in the overall SSP process. While *People, Partners and Prosperity* had clearly set out the vital role that the VCBS would play in SSP implementation, it was apparent that “involving the voluntary, community-based sector in a meaningful way is a more complex process than occurred through the SSP

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<sup>42</sup> Interviews were conducted with twelve current or former members of the Regional Steering Committee, as well as with eight community groups who exhibited some knowledge of the SSP in the region.

<sup>43</sup> It was during this phase of the research that I implemented significant changes to the original vision of the project, after learning more about the research needs and interests in the region (see Prologue for more information regarding initial research ideas).

Committees” (Powers and Felt 2005, 18). What was needed was not only a greater understanding regarding the potential role of the VCBS, but also of the opportunities and challenges associated with engaging this sector in a collaborative governance process such as that espoused by the SSP. The identification of this gap in our knowledge guided the development of my own research goal: to explore the views of the VCBS in Labrador concerning the SSP or collaborative governance more generally (including their participation, real or potential; perceived advantages and/or disadvantages; status of and attitudes towards different intra- and inter-sectoral collaborative efforts and arrangements).

Phase One of the research project also involved familiarization with the case study region. During this phase, I traveled twice to the region to attend conferences and explore the possibilities for conducting research. The first was the pan-Labrador meeting of the five Regional Economic Development Boards in Labrador held in Mary’s Harbour between April 19<sup>th</sup> and April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004. The second was the Planning Session of the Labrador Regional Steering Committee of the SSP, held in Battle Harbour on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004. These conferences offered an excellent overview of current issues facing the different regions in Labrador. They also presented an opportunity to establish contacts in the region, to learn about research needs and opportunities, to discuss the research with potential participants, and to determine the practical considerations of field research in the region. Developing relationships with people in the region by visiting, actively participating in the conference, and sharing my ideas and interests was a critical component of the research methodology. Furthermore, by participating in these conferences I was able to observe the dynamics of interaction among individuals

representing different regions and organizations across Labrador. In particular, as an observer at the Planning Session, I was able to witness an important component of the work of the Labrador Regional Steering Committee of the SSP in action. This gave me valuable insight into the opportunities and challenges facing the Committee.

## ***6.2 Phase Two: Field Research***

The second phase of the research revolved around organizing and conducting a series of interviews in the field. This phase consisted of two components: the Labrador component and the Key Informant component. For the Labrador component, practical considerations persuaded me to narrow the case study to focus on communities located in three zones: the Labrador Straits, the South Coast and Central Labrador.<sup>44</sup> The communities in which interviews were conducted include: L'Anse au Clair, Forteau, L'Anse au Loup, West Ste. Modeste, Mary's Harbour, Port Hope Simpson, St. Lewis, Cartwright, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River. To ensure the confidentiality of participants, I will not disclose the names of specific organizations or individuals. The individuals were approached because of their connections to various local community groups and included staff (for the most part, the executive directors) as well volunteers. Selection was based on the individual's willingness to participate in the study after telephone calls were placed to most of the organizations listed on the directory of nonprofits available at [www.envision.ca](http://www.envision.ca). Most of these individuals were born and raised in Labrador, with the exception of a few who were originally from outside Labrador but had resided in the region for several years. For the most part, these individuals traced their roots to the island of Newfoundland, with the exception of one

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<sup>44</sup> Due to the high cost of transportation within Labrador, I chose to focus on several communities along the highway between L'Anse au Clair and Cartwright, as well as communities in Central Labrador.

individual who was originally from another country. In terms of local political or family affiliations, the research focussed on the meso-level of political and socio-cultural considerations; that is, those which emanated from or impacted the organization in question, rather than the individual. However, the researcher acknowledges the impact that inter-personal relationships and micro-level political and socio-cultural considerations have on the organizations and, therefore, on the nature of collaboration undertaken by any particular organization. This factor is noted in the thesis under “challenges to collaboration”, however, a thorough analysis of the roots of inter-personal conflict and/or collaboration do not form a central focus of the thesis.

An interview questionnaire was developed that consisted of open-ended questions to be administered through structured interviews to representatives of civil society – that is, non-governmental organizations – based in the case study communities (See Appendix 1: Interview Questionnaire, Labrador Component). Due to the high number of organizations in the communities, I focused the selection process in two ways. First of all, I followed Will Kymlicka’s categorization which draws a distinction between “public interest groups” and “private associations” (2002: 82). Kymlicka defines the former as those groups “participating in democratic debate and public discourse, including NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) and social movements, in which citizens attempt to address each other on issues of public concern and to change public opinion” (2002: 82). Meanwhile, the latter comprises “artistic groups, recreational groups [and] many religious groups” in which individuals “associate with other like-minded people to pursue particular conceptions of the good” (2002: 82). I chose to interview groups that were more aptly described as “public interest groups” according to Kymlicka’s definition.



Secondly, I further narrowed the selection of possible interview subjects by focusing on those whose mandates most closely resembled the goals and objectives of the SSP as outlined in *People, Partners and Prosperity*; that is, organizations whose efforts focused on social and economic development initiatives.

Using the Directory of Nonprofits available through the Community Services Council, I was able to develop a list of potential participants comprising 54 organizations. Of these, I secured interviews with 26 individuals who represented approximately 41 separate organizations.<sup>45</sup> In an effort to simplify the interview process, I requested that individuals speak from the perspective of only one organization each, preferably the one with which they were most closely connected.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the total number of organizations represented for the purpose of the subsequent analysis was 26. This selection was also influenced by an attempt to reflect the diversity of organizations present in the regions (See Table A-1, Appendix 2, Organizational Classification of Groups Interviewed”).

An important part of Phase Two consisted of securing permission from Memorial University’s Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) to conduct the proposed research. Following the guidelines of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, a detailed description of ethical issues associated with the proposed research was submitted to the ICEHR. In addressing the issues of free and informed consent, an interview consent form was

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<sup>45</sup> Many of these individuals were community “leaders” who were involved in some capacity (for example, as a staff person, board member, volunteer, etc) with several organizations in their community or region.

<sup>46</sup> When applicable, most participants chose to speak on behalf of the organization with which they were employed as staff (17 out of 26). Others chose to speak on behalf of the organization with which they were most affiliated as volunteers (9 out of 26). Participants occasionally referenced experiences relating to their other affiliations, and while this information was not included in the formal analysis, it is at times utilized to illustrate a particular theme or to provide additional examples supporting an observation or hypothesis.

developed that included a summary of the research and information regarding the purpose of the interviews. The consent form also enabled participants to state their preferences in terms of recording the interviews as well as the appropriate referencing and/or confidentiality requirements (See Appendix 3: Interview Consent Form). The application for ethical approval also stipulated that the researcher would provide the opportunity for participants to validate the research findings to ensure a continued flow of information between the researcher and participants.

With permission secured and interviews scheduled, I traveled to the region to conduct the interviews face-to-face. Besides the formal interviews, I also participated in several informal discussions with people in the area to gain overall impressions of the general attitudes and opinions of local residents regarding social and economic development in their region; the role of voluntary, community-based organizations; and the effectiveness of related provincial government programs and services. I was also invited to attend several local meetings and events in which I joined in as a participant observer.<sup>47</sup>

The Key Informant component of Phase Two of the research involved preparing a different questionnaire to be administered to individuals possessing specific knowledge of the SSP (See Appendix 4). These individuals were selected based on their knowledge of and involvement with some aspect of the SSP development or implementation. The questionnaire contained open-ended as well as a series of closed-ended questions

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<sup>47</sup> Some meetings and events I attended included: the annual general meeting of one regional organization, the monthly meeting of a voluntary sector umbrella group, a career fair (the result of a collaborative effort of several organizations), two voluntary sector training workshops (I participated as a presenter in one of these workshops), a number of local festivals and fairs (also the product of collaboration among several groups), and a conference (in which I participated on a panel discussion of student research in Labrador).

requesting ranked responses.<sup>48</sup> Of eight individuals who were identified as potential key informants, I was able to secure interviews with five, whose identity will remain confidential.

### ***6.3 Phase Three: Analysis & Validation***

Phase Three consisted mainly of the process of analyzing the information collected in all the interviews that were conducted. The analysis of interviews from the Labrador component was the more complex of the two, as the purpose of the Key Informant Component was predominantly to gather background and contextual information. Responses from the representatives of community-based organizations in Labrador were compared and contrasted, and key themes teased out of subjective and often highly descriptive responses. The 26 interviews were coded and responses to each question methodologically examined using what Glaser and Strauss call the “constant comparative method” to reveal analogous as well as divergent elements, and to examine possible relationships between responses. Every new element introduced in a response was noted. The number of respondents associated with each element indicated the relative significance of the statement, observation, experience, etc. Elements associated with the greatest number of respondents became key themes that emerged from the analysis (frequency determined relative significance). Elements of responses that were not necessarily considered significant due to a low recurrence value but which I considered particularly insightful or relevant were filed as additional statements, observations, or experiences. These were excluded from the analysis but are at times cited in this paper

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<sup>48</sup> Feedback from participants indicated that the closed-ended questions requiring a ranked response were difficult to answer and as a result descriptive responses were often given. As a result, these questions elicited more open-ended responses and, although somewhat informative, not much weight is given in the analysis to the ranked responses offered by participants.

along with their frequency to illustrate a particular theme or to provide additional examples supporting an observation or hypothesis. At all times, each individual element of a response was traceable back to the respondent by means of the coding system. This was to ensure ease in the identification of relationships between responses, for example, the relationship between the response given and particular characteristics of the respondent's organization such as location or conceptual category (See Appendix 5: Conceptual Categories and Properties).

The approach to the data analysis was guided in some respects by the methodology of grounded theory proposed by Glaser and Strauss. Grounded theory supports the "discovery of theory from data," emphasizing the process whereby theory emerges from the systematic analysis of information obtained through rigorous social research (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 30).<sup>49</sup> It aims to "generate general categories and their properties for general and specific situations and problems" in order to inform the development of new theory or verify existing theory (ibid.).<sup>50</sup> In the analysis of the data gathered for this project, the constant comparison of responses, as well as the analysis of the possible relationships between responses and characteristics of respondents' organizations revealed patterns from which themes emerged. Then, in accordance with grounded theory, these themes informed the selection of appropriate theoretical frameworks. The themes are used in this thesis to support new or existing substantive or formal theoretical notions related to collaborative governance and the voluntary, community-based sector.

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<sup>49</sup> According to Glaser and Strauss, Grounded Theory emphasizes "theory as process; that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product" (1967: 32).

<sup>50</sup> A category is described as a "conceptual element" of a theory, and categories are characterized by properties (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 30). Categories and properties are both "concepts indicated by the data (and not the data itself [sic])" (Glaser and Strauss 1967: 30).

Following the completion of the data analysis for the Labrador component, I returned to the region to conduct a validation of the preliminary findings. By means of a group presentation as well as face-to-face meetings with participants, preliminary findings were discussed in order to ensure that my interpretations and observations were valid, and to clarify any misunderstandings. Of the 26 original participants in the Labrador component of the study, 19 were successfully contacted and revisited to conduct the validation.<sup>51</sup> Several new participants were also involved in the validation of research findings, offering support for general conclusions and providing additional observations. For the Key Informant component, participants were sent transcriptions of their interviews and given the opportunity to comment on misunderstandings or inaccurate portrayals. The final thesis will be made accessible to all participants, in order to close the circle between researcher and research subjects and in hopes of contributing to the knowledge base regarding collaborative governance processes in Labrador.

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<sup>51</sup> The six remaining participants were either away, unable to participate in the validation, or efforts to contact them were unsuccessful.

## **7. Laying the Foundations: Context, Background and Overview of Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan**

As we have seen in chapter four, the shift towards new governance systems that incorporate non-state actors is a phenomenon that is gaining prominence around the world, including in Canada. Within our national boundaries, the provinces of Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador have led the way in developing strategies and frameworks intended to renew and strengthen government's relationship with the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS). In particular, Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan (SSP) has attracted much attention. Ian Peach, the director of the Saskatchewan Institute for Public Policy, has called the SSP "the most ambitious horizontal policy-making process" in the country (2004); and Premier Roger Grimes lauded it as the "pre-eminent model of social development in Canada" (2003). In terms of the original spirit and intention of the SSP, these assertions are not far off the mark. Indeed, the SSP process was examined in order to inform other similar processes including the national process of relationship-building between the federal government and the VCBS: the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). With other research into the process available through the Values Added Community University Research Alliance, there is no doubt that the province's experience with the SSP will offer valuable lessons to others who are looking to undertake similar endeavours.<sup>52</sup> This chapter will offer an overview of the contextual circumstances (social, economic and political) that surrounded the formulation of the Strategic Social Plan (SSP) in Newfoundland and Labrador. It will begin with a description of the recent historical trends that have impacted the voluntary

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<sup>52</sup> To access Values Added CURA research, go to [www.envision.ca](http://www.envision.ca)

sector in Canada, culminating with the VSI process of the early 2000s. It will describe the VSI process in order to locate the provincial SSP within this overarching national policy climate. It will focus in particular on the ideas, individuals and processes that led up to the development of the plan, drawing in part on a series of key informant interviews that were conducted with individuals who were involved at some stage in its development or implementation. Finally, as background to the empirical case analysis which follows, this chapter will present a detailed description of the key principles laid out in the SSP document, *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*.

### ***7.1 The Changing Role of the VCBS in Canada***

In the first three decades following the Second World War, economic prosperity and an adherence to Keynesian economic principles led the government of Canada to become increasingly involved in the social welfare of many of its citizens (Meinhard and Foster 2001). National programs targeting specific social concerns such as health, education, old-age security, child welfare and income support for the poor were established and an assortment of federal-provincial fiscal arrangements negotiated to support their delivery. Many argue that the incorporation of economic and social concerns into the public sector the institutionalization of “social governance” – precipitated a decline in the activity of the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) (Larner and Craig 2002; Evans and Shields 2000). While the shift may have contributed to what Larner and Craig describe as a reduction in the “overall role and influence of non-governmental agencies (...) in policy formulation and service provision” (2002: 12-13), Evans and Shields argue that the entrance of the state into the realm of social welfare traditionally tended by these

agencies did not imply a total demise of the sector (Evans and Shields 2000). Rather, gaps in the state's provision of social programming left many citizens marginalized within the system which meant that the on-going work of voluntary, community-based organizations (VCBOs) remained critical (White 2005). Therefore, although the state had "appropriated some responsibilities previously accruing to the voluntary sector, the family, and to a lesser degree, the market," where its presence waned, these same non-state entities "continued to operate relatively autonomously, as well as they could and they saw fit" (White 2005: 9).

By the mid-1970s, the Canadian welfare state had reached its apex. A series of economic recessions in the 1970s and 1980s, combined with an escalating deficit and debt, precipitated a program of fiscal restraint which included cuts to social programming (Meinhard and Foster 2001; White 2005). As government policy moved away from the Keynesian model and increasingly adopted neo-liberal principles, the new emphasis was on downsizing the state through cutbacks, privatization and the devolution of programs and services to non-state actors.<sup>53</sup> Successive governments were "stealthily, and steadily whittling away at the Welfare State" (Meinhard and Foster 2001: 5) by divesting of former responsibilities in the social sphere (Evans and Shields 2000). The new trend was to "partner" with VCBOs which were expected to fill the vacuum by becoming involved in delivering services on behalf of the state<sup>54</sup> – a practice reminiscent of the contract culture associated with the Thatcherite policies in Britain (White 2005). The shift was

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<sup>53</sup> Some associate the delegation or transfer of services from the public sphere to community-based organizations with the notion of Communitarianism (see Thériault and Salhani 2001). Others see this shift as indicative of the New Public Management way of conducting business (Mitchell, Longo and Vodden 2001).

<sup>54</sup> VCBOs were being transformed and appropriated as "little arms of the state" (Larner and Craig 2002: 17).



based on the notion that contracting social service delivery to the VCBOs and their networks of volunteers would be cost effective (LaForest 2001). However, the delegation of responsibilities to the VCBS was soon followed with cuts in government expenditure. This placed increasing pressure on voluntary organizations whose resources were being stretched thin. The relationship between the sector and government became strained, and at times, antagonistic (LaForest 2001; Phillips 2003). As Evans and Shields have observed, the neo-liberal era, unlike the Keynesian, had shown its “tendency to use the third sector rather than support it” (2000: 10).

The funding cuts of the early 1990s impacted in particular on organizations whose activities included advocacy or lobbying on behalf of “special interest” groups in society. Several politicians were beginning to question the legitimacy of many VCBOs in terms of their capacity to represent the public interest (LaForest 2001: 8; Pross and Webb 2003).<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, many of these and other VCBOs now played a critical role in social service provision and, if their funding dried up completely, serious gaps would emerge. In order to circumvent the dilemma, the government moved away from the practice of allocating core funding to organizations and opted instead for project-based funding (LaForest 2001: 9). In this way, government was able to exert greater control over the types of activities it funded. This had the detrimental effect of leaving many organizations scrambling to source funding by producing “a ‘product’ or ‘service’ that they could sell to government or others” (White 2005: 13).<sup>56</sup> Recipients of government

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<sup>55</sup> Pross and Webb also draw attention to the decline of public confidence in charitable organizations after a series of high profile cases including the tainted blood scandal at the Canadian Red Cross, and incidents of abuse at residential schools run by religious groups (2003).

<sup>56</sup> Hall and Banting (2000) have described the possible ramifications for nonprofits of seeking alternative funding to compensate for lost or reduced government funding. These include: an increase in competition

funds had to grapple with the requirements of the state administration, including public accountability and the exigencies of the New Public Management (NPM).<sup>57</sup> Valuable time and energy were consumed as overburdened staff and volunteers diverted their attention away from their organizational mandates and focused on developing project proposals,<sup>58</sup> navigating the intrusive state bureaucracy, and responding to government-imposed regulatory frameworks and accountability requirements.<sup>59</sup> The government was increasingly infringing on the autonomy of VCBOs, which led some to refer to the sector as the “shadow state” (Wolch 1990). According to Kathy Brock, the dilemma between accountability and autonomy is “one of the most striking points of strain in the relationship between the third sector and government” often acting as “oppositional forces obstructing productive relations between the two sectors” (2000: 5).

While the restructuring of the state had precipitated hardships for the voluntary sector and strained its relationship with government, the downloading of social service provision to the VCBS brought about some unintended consequences. Government had become disconnected from community, and its capacity to develop and implement effective social

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amongst nonprofits may jeopardize relationships and hurt collaborative efforts; turning to the private sector for donations may open up the risk of losing credibility by becoming too closely associated with a commercial product; and seeking to generate revenue by instituting fees for services or entering into commercial ventures may alter the fundamental nature of the organization (Hall and Banting 2000: 19).

<sup>57</sup> According to Rhodes, NPM has two facets: managerialism and the application of new institutional economics (1996). Managerialism emphasizes introducing private sector managerial practices such as performance measurement, results-based decision-making, participatory management, and viewing clients as customers into the public sector (Rhodes 1996: 655). New institutional economics stresses competition, “disaggregating bureaucracies” (or empowering citizens by transferring more control to communities), entrepreneurialism, and offering choice to customers (Rhodes 1996: 655). As Lerner and Craig point out, the discourse of NPM “often stood in stark contrast to core values and accepted modes of working” within the VCBS (2002: 17-18).

<sup>58</sup> Phillips and Graham have noted that the practice of “chasing funds” can lead to what they call a “mission drift” within VCBOs (1999: 160-161).

<sup>59</sup> Laforest (2001) has confirmed that the nature of the funding impacts various aspects of the “organizational structure” of VCBOs (4). She points to the rise of “professionalization and bureaucratization” among VCBOs, the “greater demands for accountability and performance measures”, and the “displacement of power away from constituencies and the board of directors towards the funder” (Laforest 2001: 5).

policy had been seriously reduced. This resulted in what has been referred to as a “hallowing out” of the state (Phillips 2003; Laforest 2001; Rhodes 1996). Meanwhile, workers in the VCBS had been forced to adapt to their new reality by acquiring new skills and knowledge, and many had become politically engaged (Larner and Craig 2002: 19). The birth of these new “community entrepreneurs” (Larner and Craig 2002) who maintained strong roots in the community but whose networks had expanded to include professionals, government officials and politicians, had transformed the sector. Government came to rely on the VCBS both as a “vital resource for information and policy advice,” and as a link to its citizens and communities (Laforest 2001: 2). This intermediary role of the sector was added to the long list of important contributions that the voluntary sector made to the lives of Canadians. The need to resolve the problems facing the sector, as well as to renew its relationship with government, soon became apparent. In the early to mid-1990s, the voluntary sector finally found itself “on the federal radar screen” (Phillips 2004: 4).

## ***7.2 The Voluntary Sector Initiative***

In 1995, a Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR) was established consisting of several leaders drawn from the VCBS. These representatives were brought together to share information and initiate collaboration on common issues facing the sector. The VSR identified three overarching issues facing the sector; first, the troubled relationship with government; second, a regulatory and legislative framework that hindered the work of the sector; and third, a crisis of legitimacy and accountability.<sup>60</sup> A major initiative undertaken by the VSR was the formation of a panel of inquiry, commonly referred to as the Broadbent Panel, with the

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<sup>60</sup> This passage on the history of Voluntary Sector Initiative is based on information provided in the VSI website. See: <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/about/history.cfm>

mandate to investigate and make recommendations regarding the critical issues facing the sector. However, the influence of the VSR on government was already becoming apparent even before the Broadbent Panel released their final report in 1999.<sup>61</sup> According to Phillips, the Broadbent Panel had adopted the role of “policy entrepreneur (...) hoping to pry open a policy window” that had already begun to appear (2003: 24). The VSR then went about encouraging the implementation of the Panel’s recommendations; in particular, the formation of a joint Government-VCBS process through which issues could be further explored and addressed (Government of Canada 2006).

The efforts of the VSR paid off with the federal government’s announcement in 2000 of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). The VSI was a five-year collaborative process undertaken by the VCBS and the federal government that focused on capacity building in the sector and on enhancing its relationship with government (Voluntary Sector Initiative 2003b). It was made up of 125 representatives from both government and the VCBS who came together as members of six Joint Tables to address a variety of broad issues facing the sector and to collaborate on several specific projects (See Figure 7.1 below). Major pieces of work undertaken by the VSI Joint Tables or the other associated bodies included the development of a formal Accord between the Government and the VCBS<sup>62</sup>, the creation of opportunities for the VCBS to be involved in policy-making at the federal

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<sup>61</sup> In 1997, the Liberal Red Book had acknowledged the importance of the VCBS as the “third pillar of Canadian society” and had committed to supporting the sector, creating the Voluntary Sector Task Force shortly after winning the election (Phillips 2003; White 2005). Similarly, the 1999 Speech from the Throne referred to the importance of enhancing the relationship between the sector and government and explicitly referred to the signing of an accord with the sector (VSI 2003b; Governor General: 1999).

<sup>62</sup> In December 2001, former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien signed the *Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector*. The “Accord” is a formal agreement between the government and the VCBS which sets out the values and principles to guide a renewed relationship between the two sectors (VSI 2004b).

level,<sup>63</sup> and raising awareness of the sector within government and among the general public.<sup>64</sup>

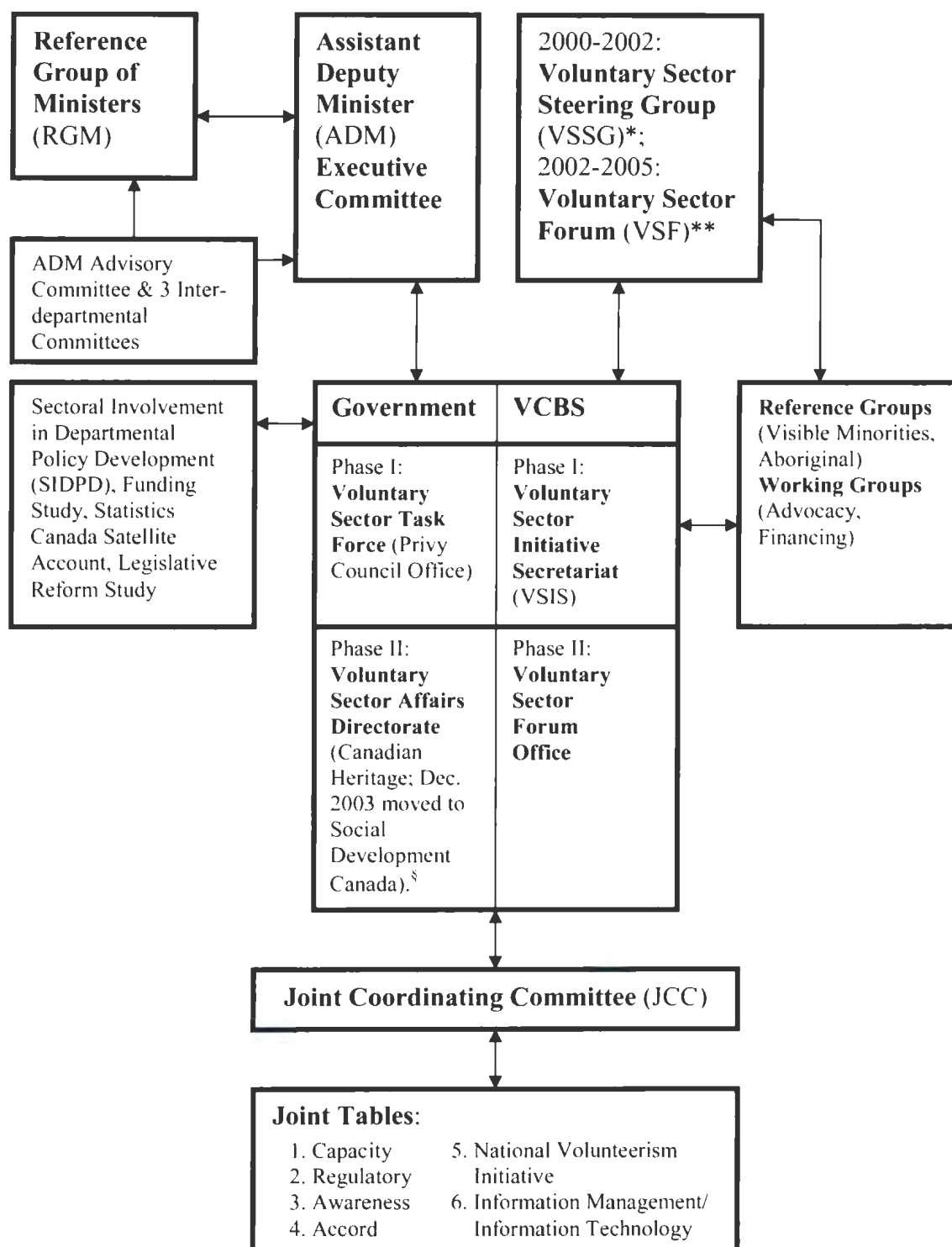
Some have described the VSI as an exercise in “horizontal” or “collaborative” governance, an effort to address the failure of neo-liberalism that had become evident by the end of the 1990s (White 2005: 19). However, Phillips argues that while efforts such as the Canadian VSI represent a movement towards a new collaborative way of working, it would be a “myth to assume that horizontal governance is being practiced as conceived” as “there remain embedded in current modes of governing some significant contradictions and tensions between the old and the new – between what propelled NPM and what is essential for horizontal governance” (2004: 20). White observes that the Accord existed as “a vague tool for guiding relations at the federal level” but could not achieve all it set out to without analogous structures in place at the provincial level (White 2005: 19-20). Although the provinces of Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador were ahead of other jurisdictions in developing policies or frameworks aimed at strengthening the relationship between provincial government and the VCBS, these initiatives evolved separately from the VSI nationally. In fact, the experiences in Québec<sup>65</sup> and in Newfoundland and Labrador were examined by those involved in the VSI to help inform the development of the national initiative. I will now turn to a more detailed description of the Strategic Social Plan in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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<sup>63</sup> This component of the VSI mandate was subsumed under the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) which comprised 30% of the total budget for the VSI (Government of Canada 2004).

<sup>64</sup> The Voluntary Sector Awareness Initiative was in charge of this aspect of the VSI. This initiative also investigated questions related to voluntary sector integration and cohesion (VSI 2003b).

<sup>65</sup> For more information about the evolution of state-third sector relations in Québec, see Deena White (2002) “Harnessing a Movement, Taming an Ideology: On the State and the Third Sector in Quebec.” In *Improving Connections between the Governments and Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations: Public Policy and the Third Sector*. Kathy Brock, Ed. Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen’s University.



**Figure 7-1: VSI Structure<sup>66</sup>**

<sup>66</sup> \* The VSSG was ultimately refined to consist of 18 VCBS representatives including members of the VSR, the sector co-chairs of Joint Tables, the chairs of the sector Working Groups, the VCBS members of the JCC, and one representative from each of the sector Reference Groups (VSF 2005; VSI 2003).



### ***7.3 A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador***

Newfoundland and Labrador's Strategic Social Plan (SSP) was guided by many of the same values and objectives as the VSI and emerged in part as a response to the same overarching changes to the federal policy environment described above (see Rowe and Randell, 1999). However, the SSP was also influenced greatly by a series of distinct events and experiences that transpired within the province. Many of these developments pre-dated even the early stages of the VSI process such as the formation of the VSR. Many of the innovative ideas and approaches espoused by the SSP had begun to emerge by the mid-1980s both within particular branches of the provincial government and on the agendas of critical non-governmental players such as the Community Services Council (CSC) of Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>67</sup> The encounter between these internal and external forces of change within the corridors of power in the province, combined with immense transformation in the social, economic and political spheres, all coalesced to lay the foundation for the creation of the provincial SSP.

We will begin by looking at some of the developments internal to the provincial government that influenced the development of an SSP for Newfoundland and

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**\*\***The VSF replaced the VSSG after 2002. It consisted of a diverse representation of 22 voluntary sector representatives, including 9 members of the VSSG and 13 new members.

§ Within government, the body responsible for the VSI was located in a central agency (the Privy Council Office) during Phase I but moved to a line department (Canadian Heritage, then Social Development Canada) during Phase II. It was acknowledged that "tradeoffs are involved between a home in a central agency and a line department," and while locating the initiative in a central agency can help "to keep the process connected (...) to the political level," line departments are better able to manage funds associated with these types of initiatives (VSI 2004: 100).

<sup>67</sup> The CSC was formed in 1976 to "identify unmet community needs; to stimulate interaction amongst voluntary organizations; to enhance the voluntary sector's capacity to work effectively with the public and private sectors; to provide a forum for citizen participation in social policy development; and to support volunteerism" (CSC 2002: 2).

Labrador.<sup>68</sup> External factors and circumstances were also of critical importance, and these will be described below.<sup>69</sup> As political scientist Stephen Tomblin points out;

Paradigm shifts are the product of political struggle, and even though external factors do create pressure and opportunities for establishing new intellectual processes, ideas, processes (sic) and institutions, in the end, the direction and pace of change depend on various contextual factors, including the strength and autonomy of the old regime and the kind of political resources and incentives available to those involved in the struggle. Changing economic circumstances alone do not determine policy and political outcomes.

(2002: 91)

### **7.3.1 Internal Forces of Change:**

#### **7.3.1.1 The Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment**

In tracing the history of the SSP, I will begin by examining some of the key recommendations of the final report of the 1985-1986 Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment (RCEU). Established by Premier Brian Peckford, the RCEU was chaired by sociologist Dr. Doug House and was tasked with investigating the underlying causes and trends associated with the high level of unemployment in the province, which by 1985 had peaked at 21.3% or twice the national average (House 1999). Coupled with the fundamental and persistent problem of dependency on federal government transfers in the form of Equalization payments to the provincial government and Unemployment Insurance (UI) to individuals (Feehan 1991), the province was in dire need of a viable, long-term solution to its economic quandary. The RCEU conducted a

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<sup>68</sup> It is difficult to separate out the different forces of change in this way, as the internal and external developments and circumstances are all inextricably linked. Therefore, while remaining cognizant of the complex ebb and flow of ideas and information that coalesced at the right time to influence the ultimate development of the SSP, what follows attempts to tease out some of the key players, fundamental notions, and critical events that paved the way for the emergence of the SSP.

<sup>69</sup> As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the overarching federal policy climate resulting from the decline of the welfare state and the rise of neoliberalism influenced the development of the SSP in much the same way as it did the VSI nationally. Because these dynamics have been described in the beginning of the chapter, they will not be included again as an external factor although it should be kept in mind as part of the wider context.



thorough examination of the dynamics of employment, unemployment and dependency in the province, paying particular attention to rural development initiatives in other jurisdictions, as well as the impacts of training, job creation programs, the income support system, and the fledgling oil and gas sector (House 2001; Feehan 1991). The final report of the RCEU, *Building on Our Strengths*, “argued for a fresh new approach to the future economic development of the province” based on an “integrated approach” (House 1999: 6).

According to House, the “integrated approach” recognizes that “one size does not fit all,” stressing the importance of formulating pragmatic solutions that build on the inherent strengths of a given place while remaining open to diverse ideas and philosophies (House 1999: 21). It emphasizes long-term outcomes, encouraging sustainability through community stewardship and citizen participation leading to greater self-reliance. The approach calls for balance in all aspects of development; for example, attention to both rural and urban areas, large-scale projects and small-scale enterprise, established industries and emerging industries (including the new economy sector), and participation by men and women, young and old, etc. (House 1999: 23). Significantly, the approach draws attention to the interdependence between social and economic aspects of development and advocates greater decentralization of decision-making not only within the government departments and agencies, but also externally to communities and regions (House 1999: 23-24). It is within these articulations of the integrated approach that we find the fundamental ideas that would ultimately influence the development of the SSP.

At the time it was released, *Building on Our Strengths* was not well-received by the provincial bureaucracy. However, the response from business and labour interests was positive, and it received great support from the general public (House 1999; Feehan 1991). The divergent reactions resulted in a muted response by the provincial government, which neither officially accepted nor rejected the report and selectively implemented some of its 242 recommendations (House 1999:14). This is not surprising, given that the work of the RCEU represented the first effort “to create a new vision for Newfoundland” and new ideas must simmer before their flavour can take hold (Tomblin 2002: 97). However, the vision was carried forward by subsequent efforts, and the integrated approach espoused by the RCEU “has since become part of the rhetoric of governance in Newfoundland and Labrador” (House 2003: 16).

### **7.3.1.2 The Economic Recovery Commission**

After a few years of gathering dust, the RCEU report was brought back into the limelight during the provincial election of 1989. The popularity of the report among the general public made it a valuable addition to each party’s platform. Ultimately, the Liberal party under Clyde Wells won the election, and the new Premier stuck to his promise of creating an Economic Recovery Commission (ERC) with the mandate to take a leadership role in the development and implementation of a new economic development strategy for the province. Wells appointed Doug House as head of the ERC, creating the expectation that the ideas contained within the RCEU report would guide its work.

While the work of the ERC itself was guided by the principles of the integrated approach, instead of using *Building on Our Strengths* as the basis for the development of a new approach to guide overall social and economic development in the province, the new

government wanted to develop its own plan. Wells established the Economic Recovery Advisory Board (ERAB) to act as an “advisor and watchdog,” offering advice to both the ERC and government directly regarding economic matters and to report to government regarding the progress of the ERC (House 1999: 54). The ERAB quickly identified the need for a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the province, and recommended that a public consultation be conducted in order to inform its development. The ERAB was subsequently re-framed as the Advisory Council on the Economy (ACE), and charged with the task of conducting the public consultation for the SEP. The findings of these consultations were fed into a Strategic Economic Plan Committee of senior provincial officials composed mainly of deputy ministers representing the economic departments in government. Premier Wells appointed his own Chief of Staff, Edsel Bonnell, to chair the SEP Committee. House was appointed as the ERC representative, and based on his advice it was agreed that a representative from the Department of Education would also participate.

With support from Bonnell, House was able to have significant influence on the SEP process and the final product. Indirectly, critical elements of the integrated approach were becoming “central to government policy” (House 1999: 120). In 1992, *Change and Challenge*, the SEP for Newfoundland and Labrador, was released. According to House, the plan incorporated “much of the philosophy and approach” of the ERC and the RCEU before it (1999: 120). The SEP contained some sections related to social issues that were believed to have an impact on economic development; for instance, education and training, and income security. In particular, the inclusion of a section on income security was a result of House’s influence on the process. House was also able to persuade the

group to designate the ERC as the lead agency responsible for investigating and making recommendations pertaining to income security reform (House 1999). As a result, income security reform became a major focus of the work of the ERC from that point on. Research was conducted into how the UI system operated, how it interacted with the economy and how it hindered economic development at the local level. An Income Security Plan (ISP) was ready by 1995, but it turned out that its release would be overshadowed by political developments that would precipitate a significant shift in government policy and programming after 1996. The events of 1995-1996, and subsequent developments, will be discussed further below.

#### **7.3.1.3 Gradual Shift towards a “New Governing Policy Paradigm”<sup>70</sup>**

The incorporation of new ideas and ways of working into a governing regime with its “embedded ideas, established interests and institutions” does not happen automatically (Tomblin 2002: 91). As Tomblin points out; “(l)eadership by itself is not sufficient to determine the pace and extent of reform; governance structures, embedded values and institutional traditions are also important determinants of reform” (2002: 90). Tomblin draws attention to Peter Hall’s insight into how the political system (institutional structures and decision-making processes) may impede or facilitate change and how this can help to shed light on the Newfoundland and Labrador experience (2002: 91).

The “process of contestation” (Tomblin 2002: 91) that was initiated by such bodies as the RCEU and the ERC met significant resistance at first. In particular, the “Old Guard” – the high level officials who were steeped in the culture of the bureaucracy and remained steadfastly loyal to the old system – employed subtle techniques to undermine efforts to

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<sup>70</sup> See Tomblin (2002).

implement change (House 1999). According to House, these senior public servants were and are “wary of innovation and change that threaten the established order” (House 1999: 31). Nevertheless, the seeds that were planted by the RCEU and nurtured by subsequent players would grow slowly, fueling a “decade of policy innovation and debate” that was ushered in around the mid-1980s (Tomblin 2002: 100).

Gradually, the steadfast structures and processes of the provincial government were beginning to absorb the new ideas and strategies. As one key informant observed, it was a steep learning curve at first, but the innovative ideas of the ERC and others provided a great start – an opportunity for people to begin to think and behave differently. First of all, government departments and agencies began to engage in strategic planning exercises. By stressing the need to revisit fundamental issues, to research program outputs and outcomes, and to identify strengths and weaknesses, it was becoming apparent that these exercises contributed to an increase in efficiency and effectiveness. They also revealed the advantages of maintaining an open dialogue amongst departmental officials, as well as with partners at the regional or community level. This paved the way for a second shift that soon became discernable – one which emphasized coordination and collaboration with both internal (government) and external (community) partners.

These new, more collaborative ways of working together were being emphasized not only to further the strategic planning processes, but also in terms of the role that greater integration and horizontality could play in policy development and program delivery (Rowe and Randell: 1999). For instance, a series of scandals in the late 1980s (including

the cases of abuse at Mount Cashel orphanage and Exxon House in St. John's) led to the establishment by the House of Assembly of a Select Committee on Children's Interests in 1995. This was an inter-departmental committee that reported directly to the House of Assembly instead of going through the traditional departmental lines of communication to the relevant minister. The idea was that solutions to complex social problems could be better addressed not via the conventional silo approach (in which government departments acted in relative isolation from each other), but rather via a more horizontally integrated approach in which they worked together to develop coordinated solutions. For the provincial government, this was an innovative approach that, in the words of one respondent, represented a "tsunami" in the way in which it transformed traditional ways of operating.

Finally, as Tomblin observes, there was a "growing interest in adopting a more community- and citizen- based approach" to development and in experimenting with new approaches to governance (2002: 102). These trends were discernable in the final report of the Select Committee on Children's interests, *LISTENing & ACTing: A Plan for Child, Youth and Community Empowerment*. This report emphasized the need for substantive change in the government's approach to social policy and service delivery and called for "two significant shifts in philosophy: involvement of children, families, communities and community organizations in addressing social challenges, and prevention-oriented social policy" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 57). They were also evident in government's decision (as set out in the SEP) to establish economic zones across the province in which citizens would lead local planning and implementation of regionally-specific social and economic development plans (Government of Newfoundland and

Labrador 1995). A federal-provincial Task Force was set up in 1994 to make recommendations regarding the creation of the zones and the establishment of Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) to guide development in each zone. The final report of the Task Force, *Community Matters: The New Regional Economic Development*, sets out the principles of the new approach to development. Bottom-up participation is cited as “the essence of the new regional economic development,” and the core values include: local leadership, public participation, partnerships, decentralization, flexibility, and, significantly, “improved coordination and greater co-operation between and among community-based organizations and government agencies” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1995: 47).

All of these innovative ways of thinking and working not only contributed to the subsequent development of the SSP, but their gradual introduction into the day-to-day operations of government would make public officials more receptive to their further application in the context of SSP implementation. Notions that had “started out as heresy in 1989” were slowly on their way to becoming the new orthodoxy, as more and more people began to lend their support to the new ideas and approaches (House 1999: 228-229). In many cases, the work of the ERC and other external actors were “merely articulating what many people were feeling and thinking;” giving “official recognition and support” to the “nascent currents for change within the society and economy” (1999: 229). These currents would gain strength from external forces of change that also contributed in important ways to the development of the SSP.

### **7.3.2 External Forces of Change:**

#### **7.3.2.1 The Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador:**

In the late 1980s, the newly formed Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) had been working towards improving the well-being of citizens by focusing on addressing needs in the social sphere. They regularly vocalized their ideas, aspirations and concerns to the provincial government through annual briefs to the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet (Rowe 2002). According to Executive Director Penelope Rowe, in the course of their work the CSC had encountered “fragmented service delivery within the provincial government, a lack of relationship between departments and little interest in the delivery of social services except as last-resort programs” (Rowe 2002: 114). The provision of social programming in the province was guided by a “residual, remedial approach,” and the links between social and economic development were not fully appreciated (Rowe 2002: 114). In 1988, they decided “to encourage the government to take a more concrete, cohesive approach to social policy development and to its relationship with the voluntary sector” (Rowe 2002: 114). The notion of undertaking a comprehensive program of strategic social planning to guide social development for the province was presented to government officials. According to Rowe, the initial reaction was not very promising. However, with perseverance, and the timely release of the SEP in 1992, the idea of a complementary Strategic Social Plan caught on. The CSC had convinced the provincial government that this would be a valuable undertaking. An idea whose seeds had been sown and nurtured through the efforts of an external, non-governmental agency and that would ultimately reflect the underlying philosophy and organizational culture of its parentage became a process internal to government (Rowe 2002: 115).



### 7.3.2.2 Socio-Economic Context

The breakthrough of the CSC in the early 1990s coincided with other external developments that would also have a great impact on the decision to create a SSP for Newfoundland and Labrador. From a socio-economic standpoint, the early 1990s was a period of immense transformation for the province. A “loss of economic security, increased emigration (especially the young), reduced services and the changing population base [were] causing tremendous upheaval and stress in the lives of people throughout the Province” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: vii). Meanwhile, the forces of globalization, the advent of new technologies and the repercussions of world events also greatly impacted the province, creating the need to re-evaluate Newfoundland and Labrador’s position in and relationship with not only the Canadian federation, but the entire “post-modern” world.

Some of the most profound changes that occurred were associated with the collapse of the provincial groundfish fisheries.<sup>71</sup> In 1992, the federal minister of Fisheries announced a moratorium on northern cod, which was soon followed by moratoria on other groundfish stocks (Storey 1993).<sup>72</sup> The social and economic crises precipitated by this collapse sent shockwaves throughout the province, and the tremors continue to be felt today. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador lost their economic mainstay, and the very fabric of their social and cultural life threatened to unravel.

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<sup>71</sup> Total landings of northern cod and gulf cod stocks declined from 38,648 tons in 1984 to 11,828 tons in 1992 (Palmer and Sinclair 1997). There was also a decline in Grand Banks American plaice and other cod stocks (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2003).

<sup>72</sup> At the time of its announcement in 1992, many predicted that the northern cod moratorium would last two years. However, it was extended in 1994, and in 2003 the “outright closure of the cod fishery in Newfoundland, the Maritime provinces, and Quebec” was announced (Murray et al 2005: 8).

The collapse of the groundfish fishery exacerbated the pre-existing unemployment problem, placing 19,000 fishermen and processors out of work (Murray et al 2005: 7). Indirectly, it negatively impacted another 20,000 jobs and severely threatened the viability of hundreds of coastal communities (Murray et al 2005; Palmer and Sinclair 1997). There was a significant increase in dependency on government assistance programs; with the average monthly social assistance cases increasing from 20,000 to 36,000 between 1989-90 and 1996-97 (Rowe and Randall 1999: 82).<sup>73</sup> The entire province suffered an unprecedented population loss and a changing demographic as more and more young people moved away in search of employment and opportunities outside the province. Rural regions suffered the most, while more urban areas - in particular, the St. John's metropolitan area - experienced marginal to significant increases in population. Following the decline of the groundfish fishery in the province, fishermen began to look increasingly at other species. Market shifts accompanied the ecological shifts, and "shrimp, crab and other invertebrates increasingly brought high prices on the new global markets" (Hamilton and Butler 2001: 3). As a result, the industry in the province underwent what Hamilton and Butler have called a "cod to crustaceans transition," with snow crab and northern shrimp becoming the foundation of a new, higher-value fishery (2001: 3). The new fishery carried "different socioeconomic implications," that created

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<sup>73</sup> The decline in self-reliance was aggravated by flaws in the design of federal fisheries compensation packages; namely, the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) and its successor, The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS). The latter was allocated a \$1.9 billion budget and reached as many as 40,000 recipients, ultimately coming to a pre-mature end without accomplishing its goal of "reducing the number of fishers in the industry", but rather succeeding "only in creating a dependency on government assistance" (Murray et al 2005: 8).

inequalities between individuals, communities and regions (Hamilton and Butler 2001: 4).<sup>74</sup>

Outside of the fishery, the province faced fiscal difficulties as a result of changes and reductions to federal transfer payments that had supported various social programs (Rowe and Randell 1999: 82).<sup>75</sup> The Unemployment Insurance system was revamped, and a “significantly reduced unified block grant” – the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) – replaced a series of matching grants that had traditionally supported the provision of a range of social programming in the provinces (health care, post-secondary education, social assistance, and other social services) (White 2005).<sup>76</sup> These changes shifted the responsibility for social welfare away from the public sector, increasingly placing it in the hands of individuals, families, or other private or civil society institutions.

The fiscal constraints of the early 1990s combined with the immense changes in both the social and economic spheres posed significant new challenges in terms of public policy and service provision in the province (Rowe and Randell 1999). Taken together, these overarching factors helped to convince all the parties involved to take heed of the innovative new ideas and approaches that were being debated within and outside of

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<sup>74</sup> Hamilton and Butler describe cod as “a democratic fish,” in that it is “accessible near shore to almost anyone with a small boat” (2001: 4). On the other hand, they point out that shrimp “tend to concentrate farther offshore, and require larger vessels with more power for trawling” (2001: 4). Meanwhile, those with small boats can engage in crab trapping, which “requires less investment than shrimp trawling” and “tends to support more processing jobs on land” (2001: 4).

<sup>75</sup> The review of federal programming and the reductions in federal expenditure on social programs were the result of the decline in the welfare state discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>76</sup> According to White, the new CHST grant “weighed in at 7 billion dollars under the combined contributions of the programs it replaced” (2005: 12).

government. The changing socio-economic context provided fertile grounds in which the innovative ideas of both internal (ERC) and external (CSC) agents could take root.

### **7.3.3 The Emergence of the SSP**

In the early 1990s, the internal and external factors described above converged and it was decided that the provincial government would commence the process of creating a Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. Premier Clyde Wells decided to model the process on that of the provincial SEP. A Strategic Social Plan Committee was established comprising senior government officials - this time from the “social” departments in government (including, for example, Justice, Social Services and Health). Their first task was to research and develop a Strategic Social Plan consultation paper. The group was chaired once again by Well’s chief of staff, and House was invited to the table to represent the ERC. Significantly, Rowe – self-described as “a rank outsider who was a very vocal community advocate” – was also invited to be part of the Committee (2002: 115). The willingness of the provincial government to partner with a representative of the VCBS in the process of developing a Strategic Social Plan was a clear sign that a shift was taking place. How the process would ultimately transpire would provide greater insight into the depth and scope of this shift.

Coming in as an “outsider” to participate in a process that functioned according to the norms of the government culture and consisting predominantly of individuals well-versed in this way of conducting business, Rowe faced multiple challenges (Rowe 2002: 115). Among these were the challenges associated with gaining the trust of the group and educating them about the nature and role of the voluntary sector - including the importance of involving this sector in policy-making. In observing the interaction among

the other group members, she has noted that “they did not have much of a relationship amongst themselves” (Rowe 2002: 115). As the only representative of the VCBS participating in this confidential process, Rowe also had to balance the needs and desires of various groups, some of whom “felt left out and wondered if they could trust (her)” (Rowe 2002: 115). In her contribution to the consultation paper, Rowe was expected to present a vision of the role of the voluntary sector “from the perspective of government” while remaining “true to the sector” (Rowe 2002: 115). She was in the difficult position of having to synthesize the unique perspectives and expectations of two distinct sectors.

By 1995, the Committee had drafted a Strategic Social Plan. A central element of this initial draft was an integrated approach to income security reform, which had been brought to the table by the ERC.<sup>77</sup> Although this particular initiative called for a horizontal effort across government departments, the majority of the vision articulated in this early version of the plan still addressed issues from the traditional “silo-based” approach. There was a section on education, a section on health, a section on employment, a section on the voluntary sector, and so on, with specific sets of goals and priorities established for different departments and government programs. The early Plan did, however, emphasize the role of community, drawing on the experience of projects such as the Community Education Network in Stephenville.<sup>78</sup> Ultimately, despite the desires of many of its authors, this first iteration of a Strategic Social Plan for the

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<sup>77</sup> As mentioned above, the ERC was working on an Income Security Plan (ISP) at the same time that the SSP consultation paper was being developed. The influence of the ERC over the development of the original SSP is evident in that the ISP was “featured as a cornerstone of the new approach” (House 1999: 173).

<sup>78</sup> The Community Education Network is a not-for-profit organization based in Stephenville, Newfoundland that takes a holistic approach to social and economic development, drawing attention to the importance of lifelong learning embedded within communities and emphasizing the role of partnerships and collaboration in their work.

province would not be released to the public. Wells announced his retirement in late 1995, and the progress became side-tracked by an election the following year.

#### **7.3.4 Tobin and a New SSP**

Following the election in 1996, Brian Tobin became the new premier. With an improved economic outlook for the province, Tobin was faced with “less pressure for structural changes” and “less political incentive to redefine governing policy paradigms” (Rowe 2002: 103). As part of the transition to the new government, all departments undertook a review of programming aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. This review resulted in the dissolution of many economic development structures that had been established during the Wells era, and the ERC was no exception. In their place, Tobin set up new structures that were in keeping with “the traditional model of democratic government;” with “politicians making policy to be carried out by their officials in the line departments” (House 1999: 213). However, some of Tobin’s “new” approaches continued to resemble those that had been advocated by the ERC and others (House 1999: 225). For example, the new government carried on supporting the Regional Economic Development Boards as the lead agencies for rural development in the province, which in turn continued to espouse many of the central tenets of the integrated approach. Therefore, despite the transfer of power after 1996, some of the fundamental notions underlying earlier efforts at change endured. Tobin was offering up the same wine that had been fermenting under the prior regimes, but “in newer bottles” (House 1999: 225).

The SSP was another initiative that survived the transition from Wells to Tobin.

According to Rowe, Tobin understood and was committed to the concept of strategic

social planning (2002). Furthermore, efforts that were underway to reform the public sector and to introduce new practices such as multi-year departmental planning and new accountability frameworks all “contributed to changes in the organizational culture supportive of the goals and objectives of the Strategic Social Plan” (Rowe and Randell 1999: 83). Nevertheless, the existing draft of the SSP was closely associated with the previous administration and contained elements that the new premier did not wish to support (in particular, the sections regarding income security reform). A new team was formed to review the original iteration of the SSP, which was re-written to better reflect the philosophy and the priorities of the new government.<sup>79</sup> The paper was released in the spring of 1996, and a Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) was formed shortly thereafter to coordinate the public consultation, prepare a report, and to make recommendations to government regarding the development of the SSP.

### **7.3.5 The Social Policy Advisory Committee**

SPAC was made up of fourteen members representing various non-governmental organizations (particularly voluntary groups and academia) and chaired by Penny Rowe. Many of the representatives were “vocal public advocates who were willing to tackle government” and, according to Rowe, their inclusion reflected well on the process (2000: 116). Participants came from all over the province and exhibited varied backgrounds. Each was accustomed to working on a specific issue (health or community education for instance) or with a different client-group (women, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal

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<sup>79</sup> Patti Powers, who headed up the income security reform project while with the ERC, continued to be involved with the SSP after the transition to Tobin. In this way, although the section on income security reform was “expunged” for the most part from the new document, threads of the first SSP did make their way into the new iteration (House 1999: 224).

persons, the elderly), which made it challenging at first for them to find ways to work together effectively and to develop a cohesive vision (Rowe 2000: 116).<sup>80</sup>

SPAC embarked on an extensive and demanding public consultation in the fall of 1996. Over a period of nine weeks, they participated in 100 meetings with a variety of informants.<sup>81</sup> The SPAC consultation occurred at a difficult and chaotic time for the province. Facing an uncertain future, people were very emotionally charged. Many reacted strongly to the sensitive topics raised at the public meetings. According to one key informant, to send a group of individuals around the province at that time to record the experiences and opinions of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and shape them into a document for public consumption was evidence of “pretty courageous social policy.” The openness of the public consultations resulted in elevated expectations among many people, which made it hard for the government not to follow through with their commitments. SPAC worked hard to accurately reflect the information gathered from the public consultation, while struggling to stay “honest to the committee” and to create a plan that was “doable” for government (Rowe 2002: 118).

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<sup>80</sup>Rowe observed that the consultation document itself was structured vertically in an issue- or client-oriented manner, and it was challenging to find ways in which the group conduct its business in a more integrated and horizontal manner (2002: 117). The lack of horizontal integration and cohesiveness within the voluntary sector was acknowledged and investigated by the Voluntary Sector Awareness Initiative of the VSI, and it would prove to be a recurring challenge for the ultimate success of certain aspects of the SSP implementation.

<sup>81</sup>Informants included: “the general public, the voluntary sector, groups, organizations, individuals with an interest in social policy issues, service/program providers, Government employees and other social policy stakeholders” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: ix). Meetings with government employees were held in camera. The Committee split into smaller groups of one to six members to preside over the meetings. In total they met with 1,500 individuals from 130 communities (ibid: x). The structure of meetings varied from private, one-on-one sessions to round-table discussions, public meetings, gatherings organized by specific groups such as women’s groups, social assistance recipients or rural development associations (ibid). SPAC also received formal written briefs, letters, questionnaires, e-mails, and other forms of feedback from over 600 respondents (ibid).



In 1997, SPAC submitted two companion reports to government. *Volume I: What the People Said* presented an overview of the main topics raised during the public dialogue, while *Volume II: Investing in People and Communities* drew attention to “significant issues and trends” and offered recommendations to government on how to “strengthen fragile social and economic structures” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: xi). The latter would form the basis of the subsequent SSP document.

*Volume II* of the SPAC report identified key issues and themes that had emerged from the public consultation, and went on to propose new directions and strategies through which government could respond effectively. The central features of the SPAC proposal centered on “a new framework for social development based on investing in people by integrating social and economic development initiatives and by strengthening individual, family and community resources” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: viii). It emphasized the need for social policy to be “forward looking and developmental rather than reactive” and to “support a fundamental role for individuals and local communities in achieving well-being” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: viii). In reference to comments made during the public consultation, the document drew attention to how the bureaucracy and turf protection between departments can “hinder social development and make comprehensive cross-departmental approaches difficult to attain” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 17). Significantly, SPAC advocated a move away from the government’s traditional way of conducting business. Rather than assigning individual departments with the responsibility of identifying solutions to particular social issues, a more collaborative approach was envisioned.

The vertical structure of government in which each department operated as a “silo,” disconnected and often unaware not only of the activities of other departments, but also of the activities of non-governmental actors, was seen as inefficient and inadequate. The lack of communication and coordination - both inter-departmentally and inter-sectorally - contributed to a lack of knowledge regarding overlaps in programming, the existence of unmet needs and gaps, potential complications arising from the interaction of different departmental policies and programs, as well as potential synergies that could arise from greater collaboration. SPAC advocated a more horizontal approach to policy and program development, as well as service delivery, both within government and between government and non-governmental actors. They asserted that “greater responsibility should be assigned to individuals and communities and that more tangible authority be vested in non-Governmental input” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 57). SPAC acknowledged that a shift to the new social development framework that they envisioned would require “new attitudes, new ways of doing things, and the sharing of power and resources;” in sum, it would depend on “a philosophical shift” in the conventional ways of operating within the provincial government (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 27).

### **7.3.6 The Launch of the SSP**

Once submitted to government, the SPAC report had to be reviewed, accepted and the basic concepts transformed into a formal policy instrument (Rowe 2002: 118). Cabinet accepted the report “in principle,” and work was started on developing a final document that would guide the implementation of the SSP for the province. An interdepartmental committee was struck and charged with the task of putting together a Cabinet paper based

on the SPAC report. According to one key informant, the challenge for those who became involved in developing the final document was to strike a balance between the SPAC vision, following through with the commitment to improve programs and services, and the need to create a plan that the government could live with politically. After struggling through as many as 42 drafts and after considerable debate and discussion, government finally settled on what it considered to be a suitable version. *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* was released in August, 1998 by Premier Tobin.<sup>82</sup>

### **7.3.7 Understanding People, Partners and Prosperity**

The following will offer an in-depth description and analysis of the SSP document, *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. For the most part, this section will not comment on how the various elements of the Plan ultimately played out in the implementation phase. Chapter 8 will consider the actual implementation of the Plan, which, due to practical and other considerations, did not necessarily adhere to all the ideas presented in the document.

#### **7.3.7.1 The SSP Vision and Strategies:**

Building on the SPAC report, the SSP proposed an over-arching strategic framework based on the concept of social development that aimed at guiding the people of the province along a new path towards enhanced social and economic well-being. A major component of the Plan was to achieve a shift in the way public policy and planning was undertaken, placing a greater emphasis on long-term outcomes, place-based development,

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<sup>82</sup> Henceforth, any reference to the SSP, or the Plan, in this thesis will refer to the *People, Partners and Prosperity* document, unless otherwise indicated.

and participatory approaches. The Plan laid out three key strategic directions to guide implementation in hopes of achieving sustainable solutions: “building on community and regional strengths,” “integrating social and economic development,” and “investing in people” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 9). The various goals, objectives and action items contained within the plan all attempt to respond to these strategic directions. The SSP goals are as follows:

Vibrant communities and regions in which people actively participate in their collective well-being;  
Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in individuals, families and communities;  
Self-reliant, healthy, educated individuals and families living in safe, nurturing communities.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998

In addressing the first strategy – building on community and regional strengths – the Plan stressed the importance of involving and supporting communities and the community-based sector<sup>83</sup> as critical “partners”<sup>84</sup> in the successful implementation of the SSP. The sector was seen as playing “a vital role in both personal and community development,” contributing “substantially to the cultural, social and economic life of the province” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10). Community-based organizations were recognized as capable of responding effectively to needs in the community by providing programs and services in an appropriate manner, and they were seen as an important vehicle for citizen engagement. Furthermore, it was understood that

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<sup>83</sup> The community-based sector is also referred to in the Plan as the third sector or the voluntary sector. In this thesis, I have also employed the acronym VCBS. The Plan defines the sector as comprising “neither government (the public sector) nor business (the private sector),” and being “made up of a variety of groups, ranging from informal associations to registered charities which have volunteer governance and do work that benefits society, the community or a group within the community” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10).

<sup>84</sup> A closer reading of the nature of the “partnership” as articulated in the SSP document will be considered below.

they played a fundamental role in fostering social capital, and in harnessing and developing the skills of local leadership. Social capital is defined in the Plan as “A community’s capacity to work together effectively in collective action” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10). As part of the SSP process, communities (represented by the citizens, volunteers and groups based therein) were to become involved in problem identification, regional planning exercises, and the coordinated delivery of programs and services (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 24). In this way, they would help to ensure that responses would be appropriate, flexible, and satisfactory. This “regular process of public participation” was intended to “promote inclusiveness and thus a sense of social cohesion and civic responsibility” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 10). Previous programs, such as the Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) and the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), had undermined social capital by creating divisions between vested groups within the communities. Similarly, the emergence of new fisheries, particularly the crab fishery which was concentrated in fewer hands, also created community divisions.

In terms of the integration of social and economic development, the Plan strongly acknowledged the importance of identifying these linkages and in ensuring that social investments were not neglected. However, two key informants noted the difficulty encountered by those attempting to translate this understanding into practical instructions that would guide the implementation of the Plan. It was not clear how this would affect government operations. Coordinating investments across the social and economic sectors and merging social and economic policy objectives was a challenging proposition. One key informant remarked that it was in discussions surrounding the labour market that

concrete actions that would advance this strategy began to emerge. The SSP focused in particular on the linkages in the spheres of employment and education. It encouraged investment by both levels of government in employment opportunities in the private and community-based sectors and stressed the need for employment programs targeted at particular groups including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and under-employed or unemployed people (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 27). It also drew attention to the need to invest strategically in education and training.

The third strategy – investing in people – necessitated a “shift in thinking” wherein social programs would not be viewed “as a drain on financial resources” but rather, as “a critical investment in the people of our province” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 11). It implied a move away from traditional remedial approaches towards a new model based on prevention and early intervention. This strategy also required coordination across departments and sectors in a holistic, flexible, and client-centred approach that contributed to greater self-reliance.

#### **7.3.7.2 The Place-Based Approach:**

Unlike the provincial government’s approach to economic development, which purports to be “rooted firmly in regions and communities,” the SSP recognized that, despite the existence of regional boards overseeing health, education and economic development, the traditional approach to development in the social sector “tended to focus programs on delivering services to individuals, often in isolation from the larger context in which they live” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 8). The Plan advocated a shift to a “place-based approach.” This approach entailed “examining issues from the broader community context in which people live, work and interact” (Government of

Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 8). It sought to identify the roots of social problems and to consider local strengths and weaknesses in terms of responding not to symptoms, but to underlying causes. The place-based approach implied a more holistic, integrated and horizontal way of understanding issues and developing solutions, and ultimately promoted individual and community resilience.

#### **7.3.7.3 The Importance of Partnerships:**

The SSP placed a great emphasis on forging partnerships between and within different sectors in society. The traditional departmental and sectoral silos that often contributed to counter-productive ways of working characterized by inter-organizational distrust, territoriality, inefficiencies and fragmented services were to be slowly dismantled. In their place, new relationships based on dialogue, coordination, collaboration, and cross-departmental and multi-sectoral approaches were to emerge.

Within the provincial government, greater horizontality was intended to pave the way for the integration of social and economic policy and planning, the harmonization of programs and services, and the coordination of financial investments (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 16). The Social Policy Committee of Cabinet was to be charged with ensuring that mechanisms were established “to support cross-departmental decision making,” while an interdepartmental committee of deputy ministers was to be established to ensure diverse representation in the implementation of the Plan (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 16). The federal government was also seen as being a critical partner in the process. It was anticipated that greater coordination across departments and across the different levels of government would help to clarify roles and responsibilities, reduce duplication, enhance

efficiency, improve accountabilities and create synergies that would result in new ideas and better ways of working (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998).

The SSP also stressed the importance of building partnerships at both the regional and community level. In particular, the Plan envisioned an important role for the various regional boards across the province – the Health Institutions Boards, Health and Community Services Boards, Education Boards, and Economic Development Boards.

According to Rowe and Randell:

There were some forty-four elected and appointed regional boards in the province [...]. Together these boards manage[d] more than half of the provincial government's program spending. They were established to ensure that public policies, programs and services [were] responsive to local conditions while remaining consistent with overall provincial policy direction. If the Strategic Social Plan [was] to be meaningful at the "grassroots," regional boards provide[d] a logical base from which to support local efforts and recognize local leadership.  
(1999: 86)

The SSP was to support the boards in order to enable them to engage in coordinated planning in their regions. For their part, the boards were to take action together to support the development and the engagement of the VCBS in the SSP process at the regional level. The regional boards were therefore "the catalyst for involving other relevant partners in their regions," which "*in time*" was meant to include community-based agencies (Rowe and Randell 1999: 86; italics added). Therefore, while the Plan did stress partnerships at the community level, it was clear that in the beginning any involvement of community was to be facilitated by these boards. The latter would exist as the true "regional partners with Government," acting as mediators in the once-removed relationship between government and community (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 24).



The various partnerships described above were seen as “central to the successful implementation” of the Plan (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 15). Nevertheless, the government was cautious in its commitment to greater decentralization of decision-making to non-governmental partners. While the Plan stated that government would “delegate certain authorities” in keeping with the policy objectives of the SSP, it was careful to explain that final and ultimate responsibility for implementation remained with government (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 15). At the end of the day, government would be held accountable, and it therefore had to retain the last word regarding public-policy directions, allocation of public resources, and compliance with standards of delivery (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 15).

#### **7.3.7.4 Evidence-Based Decision Making and a Social Audit:**

A major component of the SSP was the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving the various goals of the Plan. Unlike the traditional approach to measuring success, which focused on process indicators or *outputs* - i.e. programs and services - the approach advocated by the SSP emphasized the need to monitor *outcome* indicators - the longer-term social and/or economic impacts of any particular output (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 35). Measuring outcomes in this way would require a concerted effort by the provincial government to identify relevant social and economic indicators and to collect baseline data against which all progress could be measured. The SSP committed the provincial government to undertake a comprehensive Social Audit

five years following the implementation of the Plan to identify strengths and weaknesses and adjust the approaches accordingly.<sup>85</sup>

#### **7.3.7.5 Building on the Social Policy Advisory Committee:**

According to key informants, the SPAC report was carefully consulted for the development of the final SSP document. One key informant indicated that this was the result of the interdepartmental committee's commitment to remain faithful to the public consultation. The committee consistently referred back to the SPAC report and voted on the individual components to determine their inclusion in the Plan. Upon close inspection, almost all aspects of the SPAC report are reflected in the SSP document in some way. For starters, the over-arching framework of the SSP is founded on the concept of social development as articulated by the SPAC. Furthermore, the three strategic directions contained within the SSP were taken straight out of the SPAC report. Nevertheless, four out of five key informants indicated that while *People, Partners and Prosperity* did reflect the majority of the fundamental ideas proposed in the SPAC report, it fell short in that it omitted specific details and strategies and was ultimately a very high-level, general document. This had both positive and negative implications, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

In an effort to determine which elements of the SPAC report were stressed more than others, the key informants interviewed for this research project were asked to rank the SPAC strategies in terms of how much they felt they were emphasized in *People,*

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<sup>85</sup> *From the Ground Up*, a document released in 2003, measured well-being in the province and represented the first Social Audit in all of Canada.

*Partners and Prosperity*.<sup>86</sup> Four out of five key informants indicated that Research, Analysis and Evidence-Based Decision Making was emphasized “very much,” while three out of five key informants indicated that Prevention and Early Intervention; Strong, Balanced Partnerships and Alliances; and Accountability through Social Auditing were also emphasized “very much”.<sup>87</sup>

Key informants were also asked to list important elements identified in the development of the SSP (in particular, through the SPAC) that were left out of *People, Partners and Prosperity*. Responses to this question varied. Four out of five key informants concurred that the direct engagement of community in the SSP process was emphasized more in the SPAC report than it was in *People, Partners and Prosperity*. As we have seen, the latter placed a greater emphasis on “strong partnerships at the regional level,” rather than reaching directly down into the community (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 24).

A comparative analysis of the SPAC report and *People, Partners and Prosperity* also reveals a difference in the nature of the relationship between government and community, as expressed through the subtleties of the language. The SSP envisions community as encompassing community groups, volunteers and citizens (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 18). The SPAC envisioned community partnerships as “new alliances” in which “power and control” would be shared, “partners” would work

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<sup>86</sup> The ranking system included five possible responses for the level of emphasis placed on individual SPAC strategies that were listed: very much, quite a bit, somewhat, not much or don’t know. Key informants requested that it be noted that this ranking exercise was challenging, and that not much weight should be placed on individual responses. I therefore chose to include only those responses which demonstrated a high level of consensus among informants.

<sup>87</sup> In terms of the other SPAC strategies, Public Participation and Collaboration also received a high-level ranking by respondents, with two out of five key informants stating that it was emphasized “very much” in the SSP, and one stating that it was emphasized “quite a bit”.

together to achieve “*common goals*”, and in which “*more responsibility*” would be accompanied by “*more resources and authority*” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 23; italics added). They saw the need to incorporate “*consumer, family and community input*” into government decisions through the “*systematic*” and “*ongoing*” involvement of citizens and voluntary organizations in various forums (including but not limited to meaningful public consultations) (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 24; italics added). The emphasis was on “*consensus-building*,” “*collaboration*” and “*mutually acceptable*” decisions (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 24; italics added). In contrast, the SSP encouraged “*broad participation at the community level*” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 18; italics added). It defined community-based partnerships more in terms of the government providing “*support*” and “*building capacity*” in communities, so as to ensure the “*involvement*” of “community groups, volunteers, and all citizens” rather than emphasizing an equal partnership approach and authority sharing in all aspects of the process (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 18; italics added). Furthermore, while the community-based sector was seen as capable of performing a number of roles in implementing the SSP, a close reading suggests that the initiative for this involvement was to come from the sector itself, which was to be “*prepared to partner with Government*” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 24). *People, Partners and Prosperity* states that:

The community-based sector can perform a number of essential roles in implementing the Strategic Social Plan. These include:

- partnering with regional boards to plan for integrated social and economic development,
- implementing regional prevention strategies on a local basis,
- providing voluntary services on a coordinated, client-centred basis,

- contracting with Government to provide client services on behalf of Government, where appropriate,
- providing employment opportunities in the sector to deliver services, implementing programs and carrying out social and economic development work.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 18

The implication seems to be that the VCBS is therefore responsible for implementing certain aspects of the Plan. This notion will be further explored in Chapter 8.

One key informant drew attention to another clear departure from the SPAC report - the decision to drop the notion of creating a Community-Based Resource Alliance from the SSP. According to SPAC, the Resource Alliance was to act as a forum for representatives from government and non-governmental organizations to come together as equal partners to identify priorities, create inter-sectoral linkages, discuss optimum use of resources, and to inform public policy (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1997: 29-30). It was meant to act as the mechanism through which real partnerships would be formed, where effective collaboration, sharing of information, and discussion could occur and where external players could feed into the policy process in government.<sup>88</sup> By abandoning this idea, the Plan was left without a mechanism through which government could facilitate the involvement and engagement of the sector, or through which government could forge meaningful partnerships with the sector.

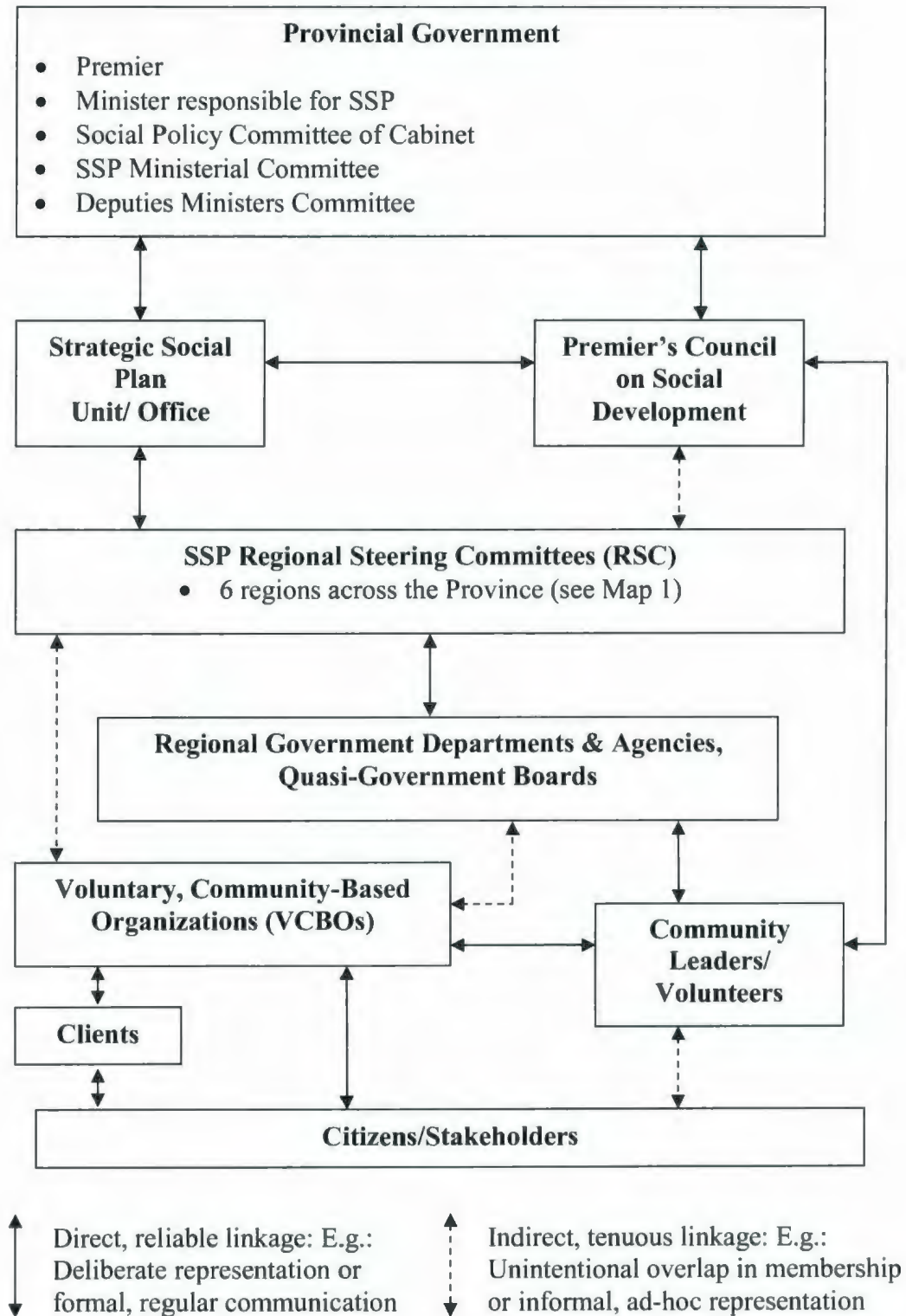
### **7.3.8 The SSP Structure & Components**

The following section offers an overview of the key structures and components of the SSP. For a visual representation of the key SSP structures and relationships, see Figure

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<sup>88</sup> According to one key informant, the failure to include this recommendation in the final SSP document was a critical oversight that ultimately prevented the Plan from being fully implemented based on the SPAC vision.

7.2 below, and refer to Figure 5-2 on page 144 for a map of the SSP regions across the province.



**Figure 7-2: Strategic Social Plan Structure and Relationships**

#### **7.3.8.1 The Ministerial Committee and the Committee of Deputy Ministers**

A ministerial committee was assigned responsibility for the Plan that consisted of all the members of the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet (ministers from the Departments of Education, Health and Community Services, Human Resources and Employment, Justice, Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Environment and Labour, Government Services and Lands and Tourism, Culture and Recreation) along with the chair of the Economic Policy Committee of Cabinet, the minister of Finance, the president of Treasury Board, and the chair of the Cabinet Committee on Rural Renewal (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 15). These ministers were charged with ensuring that “the directions of Government are carried out and that Cabinet is kept fully apprised of all developments related to the Plan” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 15). The premier selected a lead minister responsible for the Plan from among those present on the ministerial committee. A committee of deputy ministers representing the same departments in government was also created to assist the ministerial committee and charged with “administrative responsibility for the Plan’s implementation” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 16).

#### **7.3.8.2 The SSP Office**

In order to facilitate the horizontal approach advocated by *People, Partners and Prosperity*, it was decided that the administration of the SSP would be housed within the Executive Council of the provincial government. The SSP Office was established as a central agency in government to oversee and support all aspects of the Plan. In essence,



it was the “bureaucratic presence” of the SSP in government.<sup>89</sup> It comprised eight staff, including an assistant deputy minister who reported to the designated lead minister (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2003).<sup>90</sup>

#### **7.3.8.3 The Premier’s Council on Social Development**

The Premier’s Council on Social Development (PCSD) was set up as a consultative committee to provide overall advice to the provincial government regarding decisions and policies related to social development in Newfoundland and Labrador (Randell 2002). The PCSD was made up of eighteen individuals from around the province who were appointed by the Premier. Participants were selected based on relevant expertise and to ensure representation on a variety of issues and from different regions of the province. The PCSD was an important component of community and citizen involvement in the SSP. Ex-officio members of the PCSD included the chair of the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet and the lead minister responsible for the Plan (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 17).

#### **7.3.8.4 Regional Steering Committees**

The forty-four regional boards that operated across the province administered different geographical regions whose boundaries were not consistent and which often demonstrated considerable overlap or disagreement. This made it challenging for those who were attempting to delineate the boundaries of the new SSP regions which were meant to incorporate the various boards and subsume the other administrative divisions. Ultimately,

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<sup>89</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge Dr. David Close for his ideas pertaining to the linking mechanisms of the Strategic Social Plan as presented in an early draft of a paper provisionally entitled: “Linking Government and the Voluntary Sector: The Strategic Social Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998-2004” (2005).

<sup>90</sup> It is significant that the lead was an assistant deputy minister and not a deputy minister. It is difficult for an assistant deputy minister to have authority vis-à-vis a committee of deputy ministers.

according to Rowe and Randell, government decided to “work towards common planning boundaries, without infringing on the existing administrative boundaries of the boards” – an approach that reflected “a desire to define boundaries in such a way as to provide for the information needs of the planning process” (1999: 87).

After considerable discussion, debate and analysis, the province was divided into six SSP regions: Labrador, Western, Central, Eastern, Avalon and Northeast Avalon (see Map, page 143). Regional Steering Committees (RSCs) were established to oversee the implementation of the SSP in each region. These Committees were made up of *ex-officio* appointments of the executive directors or CEOs of the regional boards (health, education, economic development), regional staff of relevant federal and provincial governments, municipal government agents, members of Aboriginal groups, and representatives from various other organizations present in the region (the educational institutions and some VCBOs). In each region, a Regional Planner was hired by the SSP Office to coordinate the activities of the RSC and to liaise between the two entities.<sup>91</sup>

#### **7.3.8.5 The Community Accounts Database**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) had a significant role to play in compiling the social and economic benchmark data that provided the basis of the Social Audit and supported the RSCs in attempting to undertake evidence-based decision-making in the regions. In cooperation with Statistics Canada, the NLSA developed the Community Accounts database to support the implementation of the SSP and to serve the people of the province more generally. The Community Accounts is a comprehensive, web-based

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<sup>91</sup> This differs from the new Regional Councils of the Rural Secretariat which deliberately exclude government officials.

information system that presents data at the community, regional, and provincial level regarding the social and economic well-being of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The information is readily available and accessible, and is a valuable tool for measuring the progress of the province towards achieving the goals and objectives of the SSP.

### **7.3.9 Towards Implementation**

The SSP Office embraced the philosophy that “one size does not fit all,” and gave the RSCs considerable flexibility in deciding how they would implement the Plan in each region. As a result, the implementation of the Plan differed significantly from one SSP region to another. Each RSC adopted their own approach to forging partnerships, engaging the community-based sector and citizens, and determining regional priorities under the SSP. The following chapter will examine the approach taken by the Labrador Regional Steering Committee, investigating in particular the role that the VCSB played in the SSP process in that region.

## 8. SSP Implementation: The Case of Labrador

In the previous chapter, we have come to understand the original spirit and intention of the SSP according to those who were involved in its conception and in its early stages of development. We have also become acquainted with the evolution of the Plan, how it was shaped and re-shaped into a muted version of the original proposal. While it still contained innovative ideas, many of these were hidden within a document that was acceptable to the established order and which government adopted as its official approach to social policy. It was this final document, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, that was intended to offer guidelines for the actual implementation of the Plan. However, it offered no explicit direction when it came to the most critical and innovative elements contained therein – such as how the proposed *inter-sectoral* and *intra-sectoral* partnerships or collaboration should occur.

The Regional Steering Committees (RSCs) were in charge of implementing the Plan in their respective regions – they were the “key mechanism of the SSP” (Close et al. 2007: 13). The regional approach to implementation reflected an effort on behalf of the administrators to bring the Plan back down to the community level where it had its roots. The SSP had become a high-level policy instrument after passing out of the hands of the Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC), and the process needed to be grounded in order to remain true to its call for a “place-based” execution. The interpretation of “place” as region rather than community is evident in the structure and membership of

### ***8.1.1.1 Governmental and Para-Governmental Representation:***

As we can see from the above list, representatives from government departments and from PGOs – particularly those based in Central Labrador - clearly dominated the Committee. Nine RSC members were the directors of regional offices of line departments (provincial and federal), and 8 were the executive officers of key NDPBs and QUANGOs based in the region (Health and Community Services Boards, Education Boards and Regional Economic Development Boards). This heavy representation from governmental and para-governmental organizations (74%) had several implications for the RSC. In terms of its effectiveness, many of the RSC members interviewed as part of the Values Added CURA research indicated that the presence of these relatively influential people on the RSC was a key strength of the process, as they imparted a certain amount of authority upon the Committee which enabled it to take action.<sup>94</sup> An example that illustrates this advantage was when individual members were able to use their connections to leverage support for a change in the provincial policy that prevented retired teachers from working while receiving their pensions. This stipulation had been hurting small communities in Labrador that were facing serious shortages of teachers.<sup>95</sup>

One key informant also made the important observation that the process could not go over the heads of the local leadership, stressing that these key individuals had to be engaged and buy into the process from the beginning if it was to work in the long run.

The political capital that these individuals possessed imparted extra leverage to the

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<sup>94</sup> By “influential people” I am referring to people possessing a relatively high level of political capital (see Bourdieu 1977, 1989, [1982] 1991; Kauppi 2003). Symbolic capital also comprises political capital, a concept that is described by Schugurensky as “the capacity to influence political decisions” (2000: 24). These people included the highest ranking civil servants based in the region, as well as other individuals with regular access to government officials and playing an active role in policy discussions.

<sup>95</sup> This policy shift was made possible in large part due to the support of the minister of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs who, at the time, was a Labradorian based in the region.

process overall. The nature of this political capital differed from person to person. Due to the *ex-officio* nature of many of the appointments made to the RSC, much of the political capital possessed by individuals on the Committee can be said to have been acquired by delegation; that is, “through investiture by an institution” (Kauppi 2003: 780). These individuals brought with them to the RSC the political capital bestowed upon them as a result of their appointment to their particular position. Others brought individually-acquired political capital, attributable to personal characteristics and comparable in some ways to Weber’s “charismatic legitimacy” (Kauppi 2003: 780).<sup>96</sup> Ensuring the participation of these local leaders helped to ensure that the process would harness the support and efforts of the very local agents who had already proven themselves capable of mobilizing the public and advancing a cause. Their engagement helped to generate wide public acceptance of the process, and may have circumvented the risks associated with leaving them out of the process. Indeed, 38% of respondents cited leadership as an important factor leading to the successful implementation of any initiative. Several respondents referred to particular individuals in the region who they believe contributed greatly to development in Labrador. The same names would come up again and again – local people who “wore many hats,” becoming involved in several initiatives and dedicating themselves to improving the quality of life for the people of Labrador. These people had the capacity to inject legitimacy into the causes they supported and they brought a great deal of public support with them. Importantly, many of the individuals mentioned as prominent local leaders were either staff or members of the RSC.

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<sup>96</sup> In many instances, these two types of political capital coincide in one individual, thereby reinforcing and strengthening the level of influence acquired by that individual.

#### ***8.1.1.2 Community-Based Representation:***

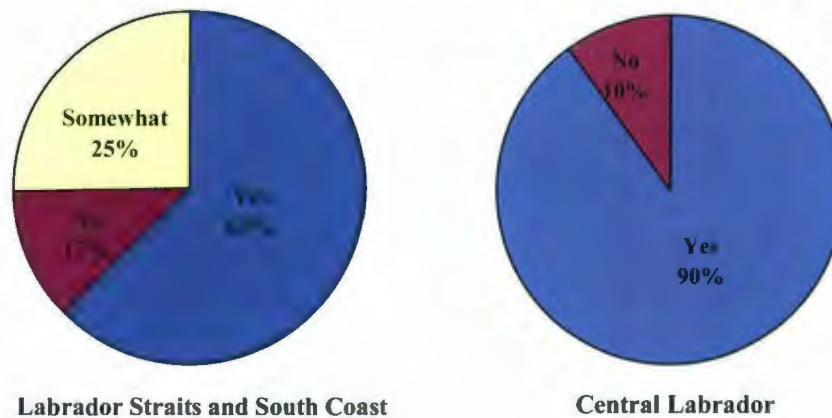
While the heavy governmental and para-governmental presence on the RSC had its advantages, several respondents criticized the process for the lack of solid representation from community-based organizations. Their criticism was founded on the fact that the regional priorities and initiatives were decided on for the most part by a set of individuals who either represented the state or, in the case of para-governmental organizations, represented organizations that tended towards that end of the state-civil society continuum (refer to Table A-1, Appendix 5). Only two VCBOs were included as full members of the RSC, one of which had just become a member at the time this research was conducted. The capacity for truly community-based ideas and priorities to trickle up was hindered by the lack of equal participation by community-based representatives on the RSC.

Several respondents also criticized the process for its Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) bias – not only was the Committee composed primarily of individuals based in HVGB, but many of the initiatives were centred in or revolved around the regional centre. Consequently, several respondents argued that the Committee lacked a truly grassroots perspective and remained out of touch with the needs of communities in Labrador. Twenty five per cent of respondents from the South Coast and the Straits indicated that the grassroots was “disconnected from the SSP process” or that there were “little or no concrete results” outside of HVGB. Figure 8.1 shows the difference between regions in responses to the question “Are you familiar with the SSP?”<sup>97</sup> The findings presented in

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<sup>97</sup> A response of “No” indicated that the respondent had no previous knowledge of the SSP or the RSC; “Somewhat” indicated a general and superficial knowledge (the respondent had “heard of” the RSC or

the figure clearly show that a VCBO based in Central Labrador was much more likely to possess knowledge and familiarity with the SSP process or the RSC in the region.



**Figure 8-1: Are you familiar with the SSP?**

#### ***8.1.1.3 The Regional Economic Development Boards:***

It is important here to mention the particular case of the five Regional Economic Development Boards in Labrador, whose executive directors all occupied seats as full members of the RSC. Some argue that the presence of the REDBs was intended to ensure community-based representation by bridging the gap between the RSC and communities. REDBs are not only de-centralized structures, representing communities in all the regions, but they are also intended to be representative of the various interests in their respective regions. In order to respond to this argument, we must examine the categorization of the REDBs along the theoretical state-civil society continuum (see Appendix 5) while considering the practical role they played on the RSC.

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knew one or more members of the RSC); “Yes” indicated a knowledge of some more detailed aspects of the RSC or the SSP process such as the composition, mandate, goals, priorities, initiatives.



The position of the REDBs along the state-civil society continuum is not easy to determine. The REDBs embody an innovative bottom-up approach to development; they were originally intended to exist as a “radical departure from traditional government programs” offering opportunities for “local control and innovation” (Task Force on Community Economic Development 1995: 73). Rather than existing as an “exclusive group,” the REDBs were meant to be “inclusive and democratic,” representing various interests in the regions (Task Force on Community Economic Development 1995: 67). Although some respondents expressed concern that the Boards have come to be dominated by tight groups of local elites (mostly male), most responses indicated that the REDBs have been relatively successful in terms of their efforts not only to represent their regions, but also to enact the bottom-up approach that had been envisioned. Forty two percent of respondents from the VCBS indicated that they would approach a REDB if they had issues or needed assistance, and fifty four percent cited a REDB as the most effective mechanism when it came to representing their needs or concerns to government, validating the REDBs’ claims to being a “voice for the regions.”

Nevertheless, despite their community-based linkages and bottom-up structure and approach, the REDBs cannot be classified as VCBOs due to their historic and institutional linkages to the provincial and federal governments.<sup>98</sup> Rather, they fit more

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<sup>98</sup> The REDBs were created through a joint initiative of the provincial and federal governments, both of which continue to recognize them as key bodies for regional economic development in the zones. The REDBs gain significant legitimacy from the official endorsement they receive from both levels of government. They are highly dependent on government for core funding, and on top of regular reporting requirements, they submit strategic plans to government for approval. Nevertheless, they exhibit many characteristics normally associated with the non-governmental or voluntary, community-based sector. For instance, REDBs rely on significant volunteer effort. Their boards of directors are composed entirely of volunteers, members are elected by the citizens in the region at Annual General Meetings open to the public, and they are accountable to the communities in the region. The Boards operate autonomously in the

accurately in the spectrum of para-governmental organizations, or, more specifically, “Quasi Autonomous (non)-Governmental Organizations (QUANGOs - see Appendix 5). This classification draws attention to “the role of embedded governance structures” and “institutional processes” that are likely to influence their actions and choices on a day-to-day basis (Tomblin 2003: 21; 14). The classification of the REDBs as “para-governmental organizations” does not, however, preclude them from having been capable of indirectly representing the views of the VCBS on the RSC.

We have noted above that several respondents not only brought their concerns and needs to the REDBs, but that they found them to be an effective mechanism through which to have their voices heard. Several VCBOs viewed the REDBs as umbrella organizations in the regions, responsible for and capable of representing the various community groups located within their boundaries. Some VCBOs indicated that their organization had representation on one of the REDBs, usually through a common member or volunteer who held a seat on the BOD of the REDB. Either way, several respondents maintained that the REDB represented their needs or concerns at the Regional Steering Committee table.<sup>99</sup>

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majority of their decisions (they hire their own staff who are accountable to the BOD, they generate their own mandate, they decide on projects and initiatives). Despite these similarities, their historical-institutional characteristics make them more adequately defined as “para-governmental.” They are, however, situated closer to the “civil society” end of the spectrum than the health and school boards.

<sup>99</sup> In analysing the real (and/or perceived) role that the REDBs in Labrador played in representing the needs and concerns of VCBOs to government, it is important to note the relatively strong focus these particular boards placed on the social aspects of community and regional development. Indeed, the REDBs in the region had been criticized by their funding partners for having placed too much emphasis on social development initiatives. Their funders argued that this was to the detriment of their economic development mandates. Representatives of the REDBs themselves indicated that the particular realities faced by communities in the Straits, South Coast and Central Labrador (many of them Aboriginal communities, and many of them – notably Black Tickle – lacking basic infrastructure such as proper roads, municipal water and/or sewer) necessitated that they pay close attention to the social aspects of development. In explaining this social orientation of the REDBs in the case study region, a gendered analysis may point to the fact that the executive directors of all three REDBs in question were female. Each of these women maintained

The question of whether the REDBs truly exist as representatives of the groups and communities in their regions was posed to the REDBs themselves. All three REDBs interviewed agreed that they do act as representatives on behalf of all the stakeholders in their zone – including the VCBS and all communities found within their zonal boundaries. They confirmed that they attempt to play this role in various settings, including around the RSC table. The representative from one REDB indicated that when they saw an opportunity to speak up on a particular issue, they would attempt to collect all the information they could and bring the issue forward. However, all the REDB representatives interviewed agreed that representing all the diverse, and often conflicting, interests in their regions was a significant challenge due to the uniqueness of different communities and different groups. They often sought compromise, and could not always guarantee that all the different concerns and needs were represented adequately. Two REDB representatives confirmed that there were some missing links in terms their capacity to represent all the interests in their regions. All three expressed the concern that the REDBs were seen as “the be all and end all” in the regions, and cautioned that community groups often assumed that they were being represented, when in reality the REDB could not “be everything to everyone.” They possessed limited resources (including knowledge of the issues, staff, time, and funding) and had to ensure that they remained focussed on their own priorities and guidelines. All three REDBs drew attention to the fact that their funding partners were pushing them to move away from

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strong ties to the voluntary, community-based sector. Also significant was that one REDB in the study region had received special recognition in the form of an award for having achieved excellence in the area of partnership and alliance-building. Maintaining strong ties with other organizations in the region was therefore a critical component of the work of this particular REDB, and it was not surprising that VCBOs in the region provided positive feedback regarding this aspect of their work.

social development initiatives and to focus on the purely economic aspects of regional development. Given these constraints, community-based organizations that relied too heavily on the REDBs and did not step up to express their particular needs and concerns themselves ran the risk of being left behind.

In sum, when it comes to the role of the REDBs on the RSC, it is clear that, while they did try their best to represent all the interests in their zones at the RSC table, it was not always possible for them to do so. VCBOs and communities were only indirectly represented on the RSC through the REDBs, and, therefore, there was no guarantee that any of their particular issues would be addressed. However, given the scarcity of community-based representation on the RSC, the REDBs came to be seen as the linking mechanism. They became one of the principal avenues through which the centralized structure and membership of the RSC could reach down into communities in an attempt to be true to the SSP's call for a "place-based" approach.

#### ***8.1.1.4 Aboriginal Representation on the RSC:***

Before examining the representation of Labrador's Aboriginal groups on the RSC, we must attempt to tackle the complex issue of the classification of their representative bodies – the Aboriginal governments or band councils. Is the Innu Nation, for instance, classifiable as a NGO/VCBO or is it more aptly described as a different level of government? Although these organizations may have their roots in local "civil society" movements in Aboriginal communities, the formation of a structured representative body often evolves as a response to externally imposed pressures from the federal government. Federal policies pertaining to Aboriginal peoples endorse the creation of local governing bodies modelled on non-Aboriginal institutions which then act as an interface between

the community and the state. Are they therefore better characterized as “para-governmental” in nature?

In order to begin to conceive of an appropriate answer to the questions posed above, we must first recognize that many of the concepts we have been employing - including *government*, *community* and *the voluntary sector* - are culturally relative. While these concepts are familiar in a Western context, it would be ethnocentric to assume that they are natural or applicable from an Aboriginal perspective (see Tanner 2001). One interview respondent from the VCBS noted that terms such as *the community-based sector* or *volunteerism* are “lost in translation” when it comes to trying to find the equivalent terms in Aboriginal languages. Following from this, institutions and structures such as the band council are not necessarily traditional Aboriginal arrangements; rather, they exist as “artefacts of white influence” (Fouillard et al. 1992: 23). As Tanner suggests, “band government” existed as a provision of the Indian Act through which “limited and token forms of decision making were gradually advanced to bands, under paternalistic supervision, to be withdrawn at any time they were not exercised to the satisfaction of the authorities” (2001: 400). In this sense, it is impossible to characterize these bodies as “autonomous;” rather, they would be better conceived of as an instrument of the federal government system – a “para-governmental” organization with historical-institutional ties to the federal government.

On the other hand, anthropologist Hedda Schuurman’s characterization of the role of the Innu Nation as mediator suggests a different possibility for the classification of these organizations. Schuurman notes that the Innu people are “much more interested in being

personally 'self'-governing, in being autonomous as individuals rather than in having power and authority vested in a single locus, whether this locus be the Canadian state or the Innu Nation" (2001: 393). She goes on to observe that this "individual autonomy [...] may be threatened by the power structure implicit in an Innu government rather than enhanced by it" (2001: 393). As a result, she proposes that Innu leaders find themselves in a position of having to act as mediators between "the demands of the state and the needs of their constituents to be recognized as distinct and self-governing individuals" (2001: 393). Following this reasoning, the Innu Nation seems to be more akin to a civil society organization, playing a mediating role between the individual and the state. Other aspects of the governance and organizational culture of Aboriginal governments also support their classification as non-governmental organizations. They certainly cannot be considered an arm of the Canadian state. Rather, they are better regarded as advocates for particular groups located within the boundaries of the state (although, interestingly, these boundaries may not necessarily apply to them or be recognized by them).

For the reasons cited above, Aboriginal governance structures were purposely excluded from Table A-1 (Appendix 5). In keeping with Plumptre and Graham, who acknowledge that "Aboriginal governance is an area of particular complexity" and propose that "the challenge is to create a "space" for new kind(s) of governments within fields of jurisdiction already occupied by national or provincial governments," there is a need to define an entirely new category in which these organizations may fit. While this research has helped to identify this gap, it is not within the scope of this paper to define this new "space," but rather to acknowledge the uniqueness of these Aboriginal structures and their organizational evolution.

In terms of representation on the RSC, although all three Aboriginal groups in Labrador were allocated seats, the members interviewed by the *Valued-Added* CURA team indicated overwhelmingly that the main barrier facing the Committee was the lack of active involvement of all the Aboriginal groups. At the time of the research, only two of the Aboriginal groups were actively participating on the RSC. One of these groups was highly inconsistent in its representation and can be said to be only “somewhat” engaged. Several RSC members commented on the lack of engagement of the Aboriginal members, stating that the failure of the RSC to establish effective linkages with the Aboriginal groups limited its overall ability to achieve success. One RSC member noted that despite the lack of Aboriginal involvement, the members were familiar with the issues facing Aboriginal communities and they would bring these issues to the RSC table themselves. As a result, despite the lack of active participation by the Aboriginal groups in the planning stages, many initiatives undertaken by the Committee targeted Aboriginal communities or peoples.<sup>100</sup> This is not to say that the Committee did not attempt to involve these groups from the start, but the process failed to adequately engage two of the three groups in the region. This could be attributable to a pre-existing distrust among Aboriginal groups towards the provincial government and a resulting reluctance on their part to participate in this provincial initiative. Conversely, the groups may not have had sufficient human resources to allocate a dedicated representative to the RSC. The Aboriginal groups in Labrador stretch themselves very thin trying to keep up with their own priorities; in particular, the negotiation of land claims and self-government

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<sup>100</sup> Initiatives targeted at the Aboriginal groups include the White Stone Suicide Prevention Program, the Inuit Nursing Access Program, the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Public Awareness Project, and the Torngat Recreation Commission.

agreements. The shortage of skilled human resources results in a need to carefully select which initiatives they will participate in. The groups may have determined that active engagement with the RSC would not further the goals of their own organizations, thereby preferring to limit or change the nature of their participation.

### **8.1.2 Vision, Principles and Strategies of the Labrador RSC**

The Values Added CURA research showed that the majority of members of the Labrador RSC felt that their work was guided in a *general way* by the overall vision and principles contained within *People, Partners and Prosperity*. In particular, when asked which components of the SSP were the most important in the region, members of the Labrador RSC emphasized partnerships, the use of evidence-based decision-making, and “a holistic approach” to planning (Powers 2005a: 10). Other strategies that were mentioned include the integration of social and economic development, prevention and early intervention, enhanced community well-being, and community capacity-building (Powers 2005a: 10).

In terms of a shift towards greater horizontality in decision-making, policy coordination, cooperation, and service delivery – aspects of the Plan that were advocated by SPAC and yet only *implicitly* present in the final SSP document – the Labrador Committee was seen as being at the forefront of all the RSCs in the province. One key informant drew attention to the Labrador Committee, observing that while “few people really understood what the Plan was about,” some members of the Labrador RSC had managed to grasp some of the subtler components. This informant referred to the Labrador Committee as “probably the most successful because those assisting with implementation in that region seemed to have some sense about the fundamental notions underlying the Plan.” Many of the members of the RSC in Labrador embraced the spirit that they perceived as



underlying the new approach, and celebrated what they called the “magic” that emanated from the new way of working that it encouraged. They appreciated the push for a unified regional vision and voice, the sharing of experiences and resources, the breaking down of barriers and divisions, and the emphasis on a cooperative and integrated approach - all of which contributed to what many described as a “synergy” that produced tangible results and would carry the region along a new and positive path into the future.

#### ***8.1.2.1 Goals and Priorities of the Labrador RSC***

When it came time for the RSCs to interpret the more general notions contained within the Plan and translate them into concrete actions, the lack of clarity within the *People, Partners and Prosperity* document had both positive and negative implications. On the one hand, the vagueness of the Plan and the lack of explicit implementation strategies left many of its critical elements and innovations shrouded in ambiguity. The SSP Office did not attempt to fill in the blanks; rather, they left the RSCs to their own devices when it came to developing regional initiatives. One key informant described this as a “lack of leadership” which left the RSCs struggling to implement some of the more complex aspects of the Plan (this weakness will be explored later in the chapter). The lack of guidance meant that those in charge of implementing the Plan were able to pick and choose (or “cherry-pick, in the words of two key informants) what to focus on and how to go about it.

One key informant suggested that the government intentionally left the Plan vague in order to avoid direct accountability for the consequences of implementation. Another informant supported this argument, stating that “the real problem was that government had no knowledge of how to give guidance to certain aspects of the process,” and they

also realized that “by offering guidance, they would also have to accept some responsibility for the outcome.” Ultimately, the vagueness did leave open the possibility for the individuals in charge to avoid having to implement the aspects of the Plan that they may have perceived as less than desirable, such as giving up or sharing authority. As one key informant stated, a big transformation that the Plan was meant to bring about was a greater sharing of authority and control both in terms of Government as a whole partnering with the VCBS, and in terms of individuals coming together and sharing information, resources and decision-making. However, people are reluctant to give up their authority and control. They find this threatening and resist incursions onto their “turf.” One key informant noted that government was nervous about inviting the VCBS to the table because they were afraid that they were “building a stick to beat their own backs.” Therefore, as another key informant insisted, “if the Plan wasn’t explicit about giving up authority, it wasn’t chosen to be given up.”

On the other hand, the lack of explicit instructions pertaining to the implementation of the plan also had positive ramifications. The broad guiding principles allowed for flexibility, which was often cited as critical to the success of the process. One key informant stressed that the SSP process was never intended to be prescriptive or to impose ideas and approaches on any level, and a second key informant observed that the flexibility allowed the people involved to “grow the process,” or to evolve the solutions that they felt were appropriate themselves. Similarly, a third key informant noted that the process was never meant to be a “cookie cutter model;” but that it was intentionally left “fluid” so that regionally-specific priorities and initiatives could be decided on by the local participants. Several representatives from the VCBS also stressed the importance of flexibility as a

factor leading to success in collaborative arrangements, with one stating that “one-size-fits-all programming developed in St. John’s does not work.”

Given the flexibility allocated to the RSCs in terms of specific goals and implementation strategies, the members set their own agenda when it came to the finer aspects of their regional approach in Labrador. Priorities were decided upon “based mainly on a consensus of the views of the SSP members themselves” (Powers 2005a: 11). The regional priorities identified by the Labrador RSC were as follows:

- Recreation
- Health
- Human development (including human resource development and recruitment and retention of professionals)
- Community safety and security.

Not only did these priorities reflect the priorities of the members’ organizations, but, in many cases, the priorities of the organizations represented on the RSC became the regional priorities of the SSP Committee (Powers 2005a: 15). Sub-committees consisting mostly of RSC members with the relevant experience or linkages were formed to address each priority item. It was these priorities that guided the actions taken by the RSC (Powers 2005a). Taken together, all these observations point to the dominant role that the members of the RSC played in determining the way in which the SSP process unfolded in the region.

### ***8.1.2.2 Partnerships and Collaboration***

*People, Partners and Prosperity* called for “a partnership approach” which entailed coordination, cooperation and integration in terms of strategic planning, policy development and service delivery. This collaborative approach to governance in the region was meant to incorporate various different players both in the region and beyond.

To start with, the federal government was to be a key partner in the process. Given the significant federal presence in Labrador – particularly in terms of social programs targeting Aboriginal populations – it was a critical player in the region. Secondly, provincial government departments were to expand and deepen their commitment to teamwork and coordination by moving away from the traditional silo approach to governance. They were expected to conduct business in a more integrated manner and work towards greater harmonization of programs and services. At the regional level, governmental and para-governmental bodies were to work together and in partnership with other provincial government structures. Finally, “community” – in particular, as represented through the VCBS – was to be involved in meaningful partnership in the regional process (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1998: 18). In some cases – particularly at the regional level – the RSC made great strides towards achieving the vision of collaboration and partnership set out in the Plan. Let us now explore how the relationships evolved in terms of the various interfaces described above.

#### ***8.1.2.2.1 The Federal Government:***

The federal government was represented on the RSC through three individuals from the more socially-oriented departments present in the region. These federal representatives were engaged to different extents in both the planning and in the coordination of

activities undertaken by the RSC.<sup>101</sup> In terms of forging partnerships and transforming the ways of working *inter-governmentally*, key informants indicated that it was difficult for SSP notions to have a real influence beyond their regional operations and regional representatives. One member of the RSC indicated that the SSP had some “soft impacts” at the federal level, particularly in terms of a broader national understanding of what it was trying to achieve in the province. This impact was apparent, for instance, in the close attention paid to the SSP by the federal government when developing the national Voluntary Sector Accord. However, as one key informant noted: it is a “long way from Labrador to Ottawa in terms of policy changes.” Overall, the impact of the SSP on the way of conducting business at the federal level was limited to the enhanced communication, coordination and understanding established between federal representatives and their provincial counterparts located within the region itself.

#### ***8.1.2.2.2 The Provincial Government:***

The SSP sought to engender various forms of collaboration among and between different players in the provincial government. The SSP Office was set up in part to play a leadership role in facilitating the development of these different interfaces and relationships. This section will attempt to trace the different linkages involving central provincial government actors that were established as a result of the SSP: the relationship between the RSC and the head offices of the provincial government; the relationship between the RSC and the SSP Office (SSPO), and, finally, the relationship between the SSPO and the central agencies and departments of the provincial government. This

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<sup>101</sup> One federal representative on the RSC, who was particularly engaged and a strong supporter of the SSP process, took a lead role in the execution of one key activity of the RSC. This particular activity was also a high priority of the federal department represented by this individual.

section will also assess the impact of the SSP on the way central provincial government bodies conducted their business.

To begin with, the relationship between the RSC and the head offices of the provincial government occurred in two ways. First, there were the *established* relationships between *individual* members and their respective head offices. Secondly, there was the *new* relationship between the RSC *as a collective* and the provincial government. As for the first set of relationships, the appointment of a high percentage of relatively influential governmental and para-governmental representatives on the RSC ensured that their established connections (their *political capital*) would play a big role in gaining necessary approvals, support and leadership for initiatives undertaken by the Committee. On several occasions, the RSC actively called on its membership to make use of these traditional channels in order to facilitate their work to expedite decision-making, have input into policy, or assist with activities and initiatives. For instance, the linkage between the RSC and the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs (DLAA), through the participation of the latter on the Committee, proved to be particularly effective. This enabled the RSC to have direct access to a minister in the region whose mandate it was to represent the particular needs of Labrador and its peoples to the provincial government.<sup>102</sup> Through this linkage, the RSC was able to influence a change in policy.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> It is important to note, however, that several informants indicated that the effectiveness of DLAA declined over the life of the SSP – according to some, this decline may have been attributable to the shift away from ministers with extensive background on Labrador issues to ministers who, from their point of view, had little experience in Labrador.

<sup>103</sup> The existence of the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs differentiated the Labrador SSP region from all the other regions and may be related to its perceived success.

In terms of the relationship between the provincial government and the RSC *as a collective*, the SSP Office was the linking mechanism, acting as an intermediary between the two. Before describing this aspect of the work of the SSPO, it is important to understand how the relationship between the RSC and the office functioned. This relationship was mediated by the SSP Planner, who, although responsible to the collective membership of the RSC, was also an employee of the SSPO and charged with liaison between the two bodies (Close et al. 2007: 13). In many ways, the role of the planner can be understood as the regional equivalent of the role that the SSPO played at the provincial level. The planner represented the SSPO to the RSC and vice-versa, while the SSPO was created, in part, to act as an interface between the provincial government and the RSCs – representing “government to the regions as well as the regions to government” (Close et al. 2007: 13). Also, in the same way that the planner facilitated communication and collaboration among regional bodies when it came to implementing the SSP in Labrador, the SSP Office was also “responsible for building and coordinating the links among government departments that were needed to make the SSP work” (Close et al. 2007: 11).

Almost across the board, the members of the RSC expressed high satisfaction with the role of the planner, stressing the instrumental role that this individual played in all aspects of the work of the RSC in the region. This research has revealed that through a combination of serendipity (i.e. the skill and ingenuity of the individual who was selected to play the role of planner in the region) and effective design (i.e. the planner as SSP mechanism in the regions – existing as the regional equivalent of a community

development officer),<sup>104</sup> the planner was a major factor in the success of the SSP in Labrador. Committee members also felt that they had a positive relationship with the SSPO.<sup>105</sup> They emphasized the critical role played by the planner in maintaining and mediating this relationship. Aside from occasional attendance by other representatives of the central SSPO at RSC meetings, all regular communication with the office occurred through this individual. Furthermore, when government consultations sought input from the RSC, members indicated that they often met solely with the planner rather than with the committee as a whole.<sup>106</sup>

One of the critical roles played by the planner was to bring regional input concerning social policy from members of the RSC to the attention of the SSPO. As the linking mechanism, the SSPO was in turn expected to channel this input to provincial decision-makers. In practice, however, it didn't generally work this way. Political scientist David Close argues that this was not because the SSPO did not have the political support and influence it required. As Close observes, the SSPO "had the clear support of the Premier and of the Minister responsible for the Plan," and it was invested with authority in that it was headed by an assistant deputy minister (ADM) who, theoretically at least, could "deal directly with the top officials in other departments" (2007: 12). However, it is noteworthy that the SSPO was not headed by a deputy minister, which would have accorded the process with even greater authority and influence within the corridors of government. Nevertheless, the question remains: Why was the SSPO not utilized as a

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<sup>104</sup> Thanks to Patti Powers for this observation.

<sup>105</sup> Some members of the RSC criticized the SSP Office for the "lack of administrative support" shown to the Committee (Close et al. 2007: 16). However, several members praised the SSP Office for the flexibility and freedom it allowed for the RSC.

<sup>106</sup> Where possible, the planner would bring the issue in question to the Committee for consideration, but, more frequently, RSC members indicated that they would be informed by the planner only after the decision had been taken (Powers 2005a: 11).



channel through which to communicate regional needs or concerns to the head offices of the provincial government?

First of all, the SSPO lacked resources – particularly in terms of staff and funding – which limited its ability to accomplish all that had been set out in the Plan (Close et al 2007). Secondly, the head offices of government did not have the formal mechanisms in place to receive, to understand, or to respond to the information brought forward by the RSCs or the SSPO (see also Helleur 2003; Powers et al. 2006). In the words of one key informant, “it is one thing to have a voice, but this is no good if there are no ears in government to hear.”<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, as Powers et al. argue “even if head office of Government could hear the request, its capacity to respond in an integrated place-based manner was minimal” (2006: 13).

Finally, conventions held strong, and the new ways of working in a more collective, horizontal manner did not replace the older, more established ways. For instance, members of the RSC continued to utilize their “traditional ways of relating to Government” rather than taking advantage of the combined mechanisms of the planner-SSPO as a new channel to communicate their needs or concerns (Powers et al. 2006: 11).<sup>108</sup> In other words, the members resorted to their standard procedures and traditional relationships to pull the right strings or oil the cogs that would further the work of the committee. This tendency of the provincial government representatives to stay “within

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<sup>107</sup> Powers et al. confirm that “Government was not organized in a manner to hear or respond to issues and requests flowed to the SSP Office by Regional Planners and / or SSP Steering Committees” (2006: 13).

<sup>108</sup> In fact, as we saw earlier in the chapter, the RSC frequently requested that individual members utilize their own contact in government to secure support for particular initiatives (see page 21).

their hierarchies” and to work “along known paths” in many ways “worked against horizontal collaboration” (Close et al. 2007: 15).

Similarly, the SSP Office encountered challenges in its effort to coordinate social policy inter-departmentally at the head office level – once again, the old ways of working within departmental silos prevailed. Powers et al. confirm that: “While the SSP Office was the mechanism that was expected to bring place-based issues to Government, its hands were tied by the lack of a horizontal management structure in head office” (2006: 12). Powers et al. go on to question where the root of this problem lay:

Leadership for SSP implementation was the responsibility of the SSP Office, so one might ask if the SSP Office neglected to undertake efforts to make the new way of working a reality or *if the complexity of such a task was overwhelming* (head office restructuring to a fully horizontal management style would have been a massive undertaking), or *if there was resistance by the Executive of Government*.

2007: 12; italics added.

Indeed, the task of transforming the way government conducted business (for instance, by instilling a new way of working together into the system) was a monumental one. Both aspects of SSP horizontality – the push for high level inter-departmental coordination of policy and programming and the leveling of the playing field to allow for regional input into decision-making – encountered roadblocks because they “went against the system’s institutional logic” (Close et al. 2007: 15; 13). One key informant noted, for instance, that the budgetary process did not provide much room for collaborative approaches. Rather, it remained firmly entrenched in the departmental silo approach.<sup>109</sup> SSP

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<sup>109</sup> This observation is echoed by Close et al., who state that “there is little evidence that bridging the various policy silos of the provincial government had been a priority of cabinet” (2007: 12). Similarly, in her report, Helleur notes that “Despite the intention to encourage collaboration and cooperation between government departments, the departmental budgeting process is not supportive of this strategy” (2003: 10).

mechanisms, the inter-departmental deputy ministers committee and the SSP ministerial committee, did improve inter-departmental understanding and knowledge-sharing, but could not override the budgetary process. While these committees did meet to discuss issues collectively, it was not possible for them to undertake genuinely holistic, collaborative planning and implementation.

In addition, there is no doubt that there was resistance to change from within the corridors of power (see also House 1999). It is not an easy task to “convince Deputy Ministers heading central agencies and big budget line departments to sacrifice some of their autonomy” (Close et al. 2007: 12). A key informant noted that, rather than looking outwards across departments, Deputies still preferred to manage their own departments and did not necessarily want to share control. As a result, “Head office departments continued to do their business in the traditional way with only minor efforts to integrate approaches across departments” (2006: 13). However, three key informants did draw attention to two departments that exhibited a commitment to some of the principles contained within the Plan. The Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment re-adjusted its income support program and introduced a new Labour Market Strategy, while the Department of Health and Community Services developed a Strategic Health Plan. Both of these initiatives were in keeping with key SSP principles: collaboration, prevention and early intervention. Both of these departments had a minister who had been directly involved with the SSP and was therefore familiar with

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She goes on to highlight the lack of attention paid to the development of models that would guide the new approach, as well as the failure to introduce “major organizational or administrative changes” that would “encourage and / or enable the new ways of working together” that the SSP called for (2003: 7).

and supportive of the Plan, which may have accounted for the leadership these departments exhibited in implementing certain aspects of the Plan.

Given their limited resources and the magnitude of the task assigned to them, SSPO officials had to choose manageable goals. They chose to focus on strengthening and supporting the RSCs. As one key informant observed, the SSP Office spent most of its time working “downwards” – supporting the work of the RSCs – rather than working “upwards” or focusing on implementing significant change within the existing government system. Close et al. confirm that “much of the Office’s work consisted of maintaining contact with the committees,” in particular, it focused on raising “the analytical capacity of the Regional Committees to let them contribute to strategic planning” (2007: 13). With limited resources and limited authority, it is not surprising that the SSPO chose to concentrate its efforts. The RSCs, being the key implementing mechanisms of the SSP in the regions, were a logical place to begin.

#### ***8.1.2.2.3 Regional Officials:***

In the case of Labrador, the biggest strides that were made in the implementation of the SSP vision of partnerships and collaboration occurred at the regional level. This is where the “magic” took place. The majority of RSC members interviewed through the Values Added CURA research expressed enthusiasm about and support for the process. Several insisted that it had transformed their knowledge of Labrador issues by providing them with valuable opportunities to learn from each other and share information. Many pointed to the advantages of being made aware of the different resources available in the region, with a number of members indicating that they had found out about certain organizations or initiatives in the region for the first time through their participation on

the RSC. Many claimed that there had never been a Labrador-wide initiative that had managed to engage such a diversity of participants.<sup>110</sup> By working together as a team – by “pulling on the same strings” – members of the RSC indicated that they were able to achieve things that they would have been challenged to achieve by acting on their own. The RSC can therefore be said to have empowered the individuals more than if they had been acting unilaterally. In some ways, the RSC – because of their collective influence as a group and their ability to synchronize their pull – had become more influential even than the individuals within the provincial government that the members traditionally reported to.

Through the RSC mechanism, regional government officials made great progress in breaking down the barriers or silos that separated their work. Close et al. acknowledge the transformations that occurred at the regional level, stating that “regional representatives of the various social policy departments were able to meet more frequently, discover they had common interests and problems, and begin building informal ties that might ease future collaboration” (2007: 15). Powers et al. also state that the RSCs “had begun to move to a horizontal management style” by “coordinating their efforts in some areas and implementing new initiatives together” (2006: 12). Examples of some initiatives undertaken by the Labrador RSC that grew out of the new collaborative approach in the region include:

- A forum entitled “Opening the Door to the North” was organized and hosted by the Labrador RSC in collaboration with several partners in the region. This initiative fell

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<sup>110</sup> Some members drew attention to the presence of all three Aboriginal groups on the RSC, a rare occurrence in Labrador. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the three groups were not engaged to the same extent.

under the Human Development/Recruitment and Retention priority of the RSC, and aimed at developing local solutions to these challenges. It brought people from across Labrador together to discuss the issues, share ideas and plan for the future.

- In collaboration with Labrador municipalities through their umbrella groups, the Combined Councils of Labrador, a tool kit was developed to support town councils in their efforts to attract and welcome newcomers to their communities. Similarly, a promotional DVD entitled “Labrador Come Work and Play” was created to assist with recruitment and retention of professionals.
- North Coast communities were brought together under the Torngat Recreation Commission in a way that had not been tried previously. This initiative was made possible through partnerships facilitated by the RSC (including provincial government departments, the Mushuau Innu Band Council, the Labrador Inuit Association, the educational institutions in Labrador, and Air Labrador).
- The Healthy Communities Project was a partnership between the two Regional Economic Development Boards in Southern Labrador, facilitated in part by the RSC. It brought together 19 communities and provided training and opportunities related to healthy living and recreation.
- The Inuit Nursing Access Program evolved through a partnership between the educational institutions in the region that was facilitated by the RSC. This program provided culturally relevant, specialized training for Inuit nurses.
- The White Stone Suicide Prevention initiative provided training for Aboriginal youth. This was made possible through RSC partnerships including the Innu Nation and the Labrador Inuit Association.

- A multi-disciplinary, inter-agency initiative was developed to raise awareness concerning Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder with the full support of the RSC.
- The issue of the shortage of housing for teachers, nurses and social workers on the North Coast was addressed at the RSC table. Through this network, recruiters were able to collaborate on hiring to cut costs and increase efficiency by, for example, sourcing teachers who were married to social workers.

Some observers have suggested that the Labrador RSC was more successful than other SSP Committees in the province. Close et al. speculate that Labrador represented “one of the rare examples of place-based governance and horizontal policy coordination,” a success that they attribute to the fact that Labradorians already exhibited a strong “sense of place” (2007: 15). Successive governments had also recognized Labrador as a distinct region, institutionalizing this recognition through the creation of a central agency and then a line department (Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs) to address the particular issues of the region. A history of periods of conflicts and divisiveness, power and turf struggles, had been punctuated by calls for greater unity and cooperation.<sup>111</sup> Starting approximately in the 1970s, Labradorians had begun to build collaborative capacity by coming together,

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<sup>111</sup> At the “Labrador in the 80s” conference, Mike Martin reflected on the previous decade in Labrador, drawing attention to an “awakening” in terms of “awareness of identity” and “awareness of cultural heritage” (1980: 1). Others referred to the 1970s as a time of “revolutionary change” and a “coming to life of the people of Labrador” (MacDonald 2001: 8). At the same conference in the 1980s, the Honourable William Rompkey lamented the “fragmentation” and “lack of harmony” among the different groups in the region, calling for a “greater degree of unity” among all Labradorians (1980: xii). At the “Labrador in the 90s” conference, Rompkey again referred to the existence of “solitudes within Labrador,” acknowledging that while Labradorians’ appreciation and understanding of each other was growing, it had “not yet blossomed” (1990: 2). Conference participants called for government to “recognize the uniqueness of Labrador” and for Labradorians to unify and “present a strong voice and political presence; for example, through pan-Labrador organizations” (1990: 84; 36). In 2001, Ron Sparkes referred to a new “sense of community” emerging in Labrador, while Senator William Rompkey commented on the “spirit of Labrador emanating from the land itself and the people who call it home,” emphasizing that Labrador is “greater than the sum of its parts” and drawing attention to the growing ability of Labradorians to come together around certain issues, and undertake productive pan-Labrador initiatives (MacDonald 2001: 14).



learning from and about each other, and creating a common vision for the future. For many, the timing was right to come together for a more formal attempt at collaboration, and the RSC presented just that opportunity. For those who were not entirely engaged in the process, a variety of factors meant that the timing was not quite right for them. For instance, more trust needed to be established with some of the Aboriginal groups, and more collaborative capacity had to be built with the VCBS. However, the coming together of regional officials to discuss Labrador-wide issues was something that many people had been ready and waiting for.

#### ***8.1.2.2.4 The Community-Based Sector:***

We have already seen above that VCBOs played a minor role on the RSC, occupying only two seats. We have also discussed the role of the REDBs as an indirect and tenuous linkage between the RSC and community groups. Can the SSP process be said to have neglected the “active involvement of community groups” as set out in *People, Partners and Prosperity* (1998: 18)? In this section, we will examine the ways in which partnerships were executed with the VCBS and the extent to which community-based organizations were engaged in the process both provincially and at the regional level.

Provincially, the voice of the “community” was channelled through the Premier’s Council on Social Development (PCSD). Many of the eighteen members of the PCSD were drawn from the community-based sector, although they did not necessarily represent this sector. To begin with, they were not *selected by the sector* to act as representatives, but rather, they were *appointed by the Premier* based on their expertise. The PCSD had no formal links to the VCBS as a collective or to the RSCs (Close et al. 2007). They played an advisory role, presenting ideas concerning various issues to



Government. As Close et al. observe, “An important indicator of the Council’s success is the fact that several departments asked for its advice on policy issues” (2007: 10). For instance, they were approached by the minister of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment to provide input concerning the best approach to supporting the VCBS and strengthening their relationship with it (Close et al. 2007: 10). The PCSD established a sub-committee to examine the voluntary sector’s role in economic development, and had a working group studying various issues pertaining to the VCBS overall. It prepared reports and provided recommendations but ultimately “remained a consultative council which rendered advice when asked” (Close et al. 2007: 11).

Regionally, while community groups did not play a big role on the RSC itself, there were other ways in which they could become involved and/or maintain a relationship with the RSC. First of all, sub-committees were formed around each of the five priorities of the RSC consisting of members of the RSC itself as well as other interested parties. Secondly, indirect linkages occurred either through common members or through a VCBO’s relationship with an umbrella organization. Thirdly, there were public meetings and information sessions which were meant to offer opportunities to raise awareness, generate discussion, and open the process to external contributions. Finally, there were organizations that received information or assistance from the RSC. Figure 8-2 below presents a breakdown of the responses given by representatives of VCBOs concerning the nature of their involvement (or lack thereof) with the RSC.

**Figure 8-2: Involvement of VCBOs with the RSC**

<b>Nature of Involvement</b>	<b>Number of VCBOs / % of Respondents</b>
Direct Involvement (RSC member)	3 organizations or 12% of respondents. <sup>112</sup>
Peripheral Involvement (participant on sub- committee)	1 organization or 4% of respondents.
Indirect Involvement (common member; umbrella group involved)	3 organizations or 12% of respondents.
<i>Ad hoc</i> , Short-term Involvement (attended public meeting or session; received assistance from RSC)	7 organizations or 27% of respondents.
No Involvement	12 organizations or 46% of respondents.

In terms of participation on a sub-committee, in cases where a VCBO was identified with a similar mandate to that of the sub-committee, a representative was invited to participate. The VCBO then decided whether or not to accept the invitation. Participation at the sub-committee level presented an interesting alternative to engagement on the RSC for VCBOs whose resources were stretched thin or for those who wanted to focus solely on their particular mandate. However, this participation still required the organization in question to commit, at the very least, the time of a staff

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<sup>112</sup> Three other organizations interviewed indicated that they were members of the RSC, but these were the REDBs which have not been classified as VCBOs and are therefore not included in this table.

person or volunteer. The process did not offer financial support to facilitate the involvement of VCBOs on either the RSC itself or the sub-committees.<sup>113</sup> For organizations facing, for instance, a shortage of staff or volunteers (as was the case for 54% of VCBOs interviewed), participation at either level may not have been possible.

As a participant on a sub-committee, a VCBO was able to influence the activities and initiatives of the RSC with regards to the particular priority being addressed.

Nevertheless, the nature of this participation was peripheral, not the equal partnership envisioned by many of the authors of the SSP. Furthermore, as one key informant noted, it seemed that many of these VCBOs who were invited to participate on the RSC or on a sub-committee were included as an “add-on” or “afterthought.” As such, despite participation on a sub-committee, or even on the RSC for that matter, the VCBS was for the most part not directly involved in determining the priorities of the Committee in the region.

An organization had *indirect* involvement with the RSC if it indicated that a volunteer with its organization (such as, for example, a member of its BOD) also occupied a seat on the RSC or a sub-committee. In such cases, although the individual *may* have brought the concerns of the organization to the table, they did not officially represent the organization and their presence did not necessarily reflect an effort to engage or form partnerships with community groups in their own right. Another form of indirect involvement occurred when an organization belonged to an umbrella group that was formally represented on the RSC. An example would be the indirect representation of a

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<sup>113</sup> A few respondents did, however, indicate that their organizations received “intangible” benefits – such as enhanced credibility – as a result of involvement with the RSC or backing from the Committee for projects or initiatives.

local anti-violence committee in a community through the umbrella of the pan-Labrador initiative *Labradorians for Peaceful Communities* (LFPC) which, shortly after this research was conducted, was allocated a seat on the RSC. If we count the addition of LFPC as a RSC member – which would bring the number of VCBOs present on the RSC up to three in total – two of these were pan-Labrador umbrella groups (the other one being the Combined Councils of Labrador). Representation was critical, and these groups ensured a linkage to several other smaller groups based in communities – they were chosen, in part, because of their ability to represent. The question of representation of the VCBS and the challenge that this posed for the RSC will be discussed further below.

Meanwhile, *ad hoc*, short-term involvement ranged from participation in public meetings and information sessions to having received some form of assistance from the RSC. In terms of public meetings or information sessions, several organizations acknowledged having either received invitations or having been made aware of these opportunities to interact with representatives from the RSC (usually the staff person), however two respondents noted that costs associated with participation had prevented their organization from attending.<sup>114</sup>

A relatively high number of respondents (seven VCBOs) indicated that they had received some form of assistance from the RSC. This type of involvement may have entailed only a short-lived, one-time relationship between the organization in question and the RSC, but it did represent an important aspect of RSC-VCBO interaction. The RSC assisted

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<sup>114</sup> One respondent criticized the RSC for having selected Battle Harbour as the location for the 2004 Planning Session, drawing attention to the distance from settled communities and the fact that it cut off the process from interested members of the community who may have wished to participate in some way.

VCBOs in several ways, such as by helping groups source and access funding, by supporting projects or initiatives, by providing training, and by ensuring that groups had access to information and various other resources that they needed. In some of these cases, it was the VCBO which sought assistance from the RSC. For example, the SSP Planner for Labrador was asked by a group in one community to facilitate the formation of a network amongst VCBOs based in the community. The organizations involved viewed the RSC as a valuable and accessible resource in the region. In other instances, the RSC was able to source funding to be used by a particular VCBO to support an existing project or to launch a new initiative. For example, the RSC was able to leverage funds and other support for an initiative that had been underway focussed on raising awareness about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. Powers and Felt recognize the role that the RSC played as a resource for VCBOs in the region and suggest that the relationship between the RSC and VCBOs “could be better characterized as a service provider-client relationship rather than a partnership” (Powers and Felt 2005: 15).

All in all, the relationships between the RSC and the VCBS were predominantly peripheral, indirect or *ad hoc* and short-term.<sup>115</sup> Powers is accurate in her observation that “many of the roles defined in the Strategic Social Plan for voluntary sector involvement in the implementation of the Plan were not realized fully” (2005b: 12).<sup>116</sup> The responses from interviews conducted with representatives of the VCBS confirm this observation. Nine VCBOs, or 35% of respondents from the VCBS, indicated that they

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<sup>115</sup> This supports the findings of the Values Added CURA research which indicated that “involvement of most organizations with the SSP Committee is indirect” (Powers 2005b: 6).

<sup>116</sup> Values Added CURA research revealed that only 30% of VCBOs contacted by researchers were familiar enough with the RSC in Labrador to be able to participate in an interview. Furthermore, members of the RSC itself told Values Added CURA researchers that they did not feel that the VCBS had been “sufficiently involved” in their activities (Powers 2005b: 4).

“felt disconnected” from the SSP process in the region, noting that they had not been consulted by the RSC and/or that there was a need for the RSC to maintain more regular contact with their organizations.

The disconnect between the VCBS and the RSC does not necessarily point to an oversight on the part of the Committee. The majority of RSC members insisted that they did attempt to reach out to and engage community-based organizations. Rather, it points to a few shortcomings inherent to the SSP process *overall*, some of which we have already touched upon in this chapter.

### **8.1.3 Overall Weaknesses of the SSP Process**

#### ***8.1.3.1 Lack of Knowledge Surrounding the SSP:***

With the launch of the SSP, Newfoundland and Labrador was “poised at the start of an unprecedented social initiative” (Williams 2000: 1). The SSP was a new, innovative and potentially ground-breaking approach that championed a fundamental shift in the way government conducted business. It was particularly important to educate the various players as to what the Plan was all about. Research was needed to shed light on some of the more complex or theoretical notions contained in the Plan – or what one key informant referred to as its more “esoteric” elements – including the linking of social and economic development and the partnership approach. Not enough attention was paid to investigating the practical application of these ideas, let alone to educating all the players (government and the community-based sector) as to their features and implications. This weakness was also noted by Helleur who observed that:

[...]front-line staff are not often fully aware of the SSP, don’t know what it means to the province and certainly have only passing knowledge of how it might affect them as they do their jobs. This becomes a problem when they are expected to

understand and deliver on collaborative programs of which they have no knowledge, and which often require them to change the manner in which they do their work.

2003: 9

In areas where research, raising awareness and education were addressed as part and parcel of the implementation of the Plan – for instance, in the domain of evidence-based decision-making and monitoring and evaluation – great strides were made. As one key informant noted, these elements of the Plan were some of the “most creative pieces in the document,” and they presented significant challenges due to the lack of experience to draw on from other jurisdictions. However, lots of work was undertaken in the area, and four out of five key informants (the fifth declined to respond due to a lack of sufficient information) agreed that evidence-based decision making and monitoring and evaluation became the most important and successful elements of the Plan. One key informant stressed that “certain individuals were instrumental” in this success, pointing to how they “worked to educate officials.” Another key informant drew attention to the key role played by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, which spearheaded the creation of the Community Accounts database and the publication of the document *From the Ground Up*, both of which generated great interest and served to educate both government and the general public about these critical elements of the Plan. This brings us to the issue of the importance of leadership – a critical weakness in the Plan that was linked to the problem of the lack of knowledge.

#### ***8.1.3.2 Lack of Leadership for Certain Elements of the Plan:***

As we have seen, RSCs were, for the most part, left to their own devices when it came to determining how to implement the Plan in their region. While this had its advantages, it

also had the negative consequence of leaving implementers with the challenge of grappling with how they could address some of the more complex aspects of the Plan. For example, when it came to integrating social and economic development, although all RSC members were adamant in their support of this strategy in theory, many felt that they had not been instructed as to how to go about actually doing this in practice. Similarly, the formation of meaningful partnerships with communities and the VCBS was fine in theory and garnered significant support from the Committee, but how to go about implementing this on the ground was much more complicated. As one key informant emphasized, “Government needed to give guidance to the process – they could not just sit back and let things go whichever way it wanted.” Leadership needed to emerge for each of the various components of the Plan, or they would risk being lost in the shuffle. Without a champion – such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency in the case of evidence-based decision making and monitoring and evaluation – certain elements of the Plan never got translated from theory to practice.

The lack of leadership shown for certain aspects of the Plan was in itself attributable in part to the lack of knowledge that those in charge of overseeing the implantation of the Plan – i.e. the SSPO – possessed in terms of what advice to offer the RSCs. How could they offer guidance if they did not know how to best address the issues themselves? The lack of leadership also points to another weakness in the SSP process: the implementers were restricted in what they could do because they had not been allocated sufficient resources.



#### ***8.1.3.3 The Lack of Resources Allocated to the SSP Process:***

With a staff of eight headed by an ADM, and a small budget (\$2 million per year), the SSPO did not have the capacity or resources that would have been necessary to properly address the vast mandate that they had been given. They were limited in their ability to undertake major research, to launch education programs both within and outside of government, and to effectively promote significant changes in the way government conducted business. As a result, they would have been extremely challenged to bring about the paradigm shift that the full implementation of the Plan would have entailed. Instead, they pragmatically chose to invest their resources in those particular elements of the Plan that they felt they could effectively manage; most notably, building capacity and supporting the RSCs, and promoting evidence-based decision making and monitoring and evaluation.

#### ***8.1.3.4 No Groundwork Laid for Collaboration:***

Knowledge, leadership and resources were only part of what would have been required for a complete and successful implementation of the Plan. There was also the need to prepare potential partners for the prospect of a new collaborative approach. This implied developing the “network capacity” of VCBOs (Phillips 2005), or laying down the foundations of a successful partnership by focussing on relationship-building (see Bentley 2004; Huxham and Vangen 1996). This critical step was overlooked during the initial stages of the SSP process.

For starters, the SSPO would have had to facilitate networking, communication and mutual understanding between potential partners. In particular, the traditionally adversarial relationship that existed between government and many VCBOs would have

had to have been transformed through extensive outreach and relationship-building exercises. Following Bentley, who claims that “the act of collaboration must begin with a dialogue,” the SSP should have included provisions aimed at creating opportunities for the different players to come together to discuss similarities and differences in terms of organizational values, goals, perspectives, abilities, approaches and so on (2004: 9). This dialogue would have encouraged the development of mutual understanding and trust – two essential elements of a successful relationship (Bentley 2004). Yet all of this would not have emerged overnight. Rather, the process would have required time, technical support (linking mechanisms), and an appropriate forum.

#### ***8.1.3.5 The Lack of Technical Support:***

Aside from adequate funding and human resources, another critical resource for the emergence of successful partnerships such as those envisioned as part of the SSP process is the provision of “technical assistance to the potential collaborators” (Bentley 2004: 11). This refers to the creation of appropriate mechanisms such as “collaboration frameworks, processes, roles and strategies” (Bentley 2004: 11). In terms of offering assistance regarding the development of mechanisms to facilitate collaboration, first of all, the SSP process neglected to offer guidance regarding strategies to employ when reaching out to the VCBS. Secondly, it did not suggest frameworks and processes to follow in order to build relationships. Thirdly, it failed to clearly define the roles of the various players. Finally, it did not establish durable linkages to ensure ongoing communication was maintained between government and the VCBS.

As a framework for relationship-building, we have seen that while the RSC succeeded in terms of bringing regional government officials together, it did not effectively or

meaningfully engage VCBOs. There were several reasons for this. As one key informant stated, although VCBOs were envisioned as a critical partner in the Plan, both their potential role and the process through which they would be engaged were not described. The RSC therefore struggled to find ways to reach out to the sector and to create a space for them to become engaged.

When it came to reaching out to the VCBS, no clear guidance was offered to the RSC as to how to go about doing this. As a result, the approach that was adopted may have been flawed or inappropriate. For example, written correspondence – which was often the method used in attempts to engage the VCBO in the various activities of the RSC – was seen as ineffective by many community-based respondents. As Powers observes, the RSC employed “informal approaches” to connect VCBOs with the RSC (2005: 7).

Powers also confirms that “no mechanisms” were established to facilitate the involvement of VCBOs in the RSC process (2005: 7).<sup>117</sup> Aside from the few groups that were engaged peripherally, in an *ad hoc* manner, or relatively late in the process, efforts to meaningfully engage VCBOs in the affairs of the RSC on an equal basis with government representatives were not successful. The RSC did not prove to be an effective interface between the two sectors, nor was it utilized as the primary mechanism to communicate the needs of the VCBOs to government. Only three VCBOs, or 11% of respondents, cited the RSC as an effective mechanism for communicating with government (all of these were organizations based in Happy Valley-Goose Bay). Rather, respondents indicated that the most effective mechanisms for communicating with

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<sup>117</sup> We have already seen that one mechanism that was suggested in the SPAC report – the Community-Based Resource Alliance, was dropped by drafters of the final Plan. One key informant insisted that this “took the bottom out of the Plan” (refer to page 201).

government were: REDBs (thirteen VCBOs or 50% of respondents); local politicians (thirteen VCBOs or 50% of respondents); or an umbrella organization or representative/coordinator (11 VCBOs or 42% of respondents).

Another part of the problem was the fact that little attention was paid to developing the policy capacity of VCBOs, that is, carving out a space in which the sector could have a policy voice (Phillips 2005). Phillips refers to VCBOs as “gifted amateurs” when it comes to policy capacity – while people within the sector know the organizations and the issues very well, they do not understand the policy process and therefore struggle to feed their insights into the system and influence change. If the VCBS was expected to have input into the policy process, it needed to have a better understanding of this process – and government needed to enable that understanding by making the process more accessible (Phillips 2005). The RSC did not succeed in this regard.

When asked how their input or participation could be enhanced, eight VCBOs, or 31% of respondents, drew attention to the need for formal mechanisms through which the VCBS could communicate their needs or become involved. However, very few indicated that the most viable solution would be for each organization to have a staff person or volunteer seated at the SSP table. One respondent noted that this would make the process “too political and cumbersome,” while others insisted that a shortage of resources meant that this was not a feasible option for many VCBOs. Rather, several respondents insisted that as long as the RSC ensured an open line of communication and strong linkages with the sector, they could have their voices heard at the table. Eleven VCBOs, or 42% of respondents, said that regular face-to-face contact with government representatives or

individuals that have influence would have been desirable. Meanwhile, seven VCBOs, or 27% of respondents, drew attention to the need for *meaningful* consultations. Nine VCBOs, or 35% of respondents, indicated that there was a need for a representative body through which the VCBS could communicate its needs and concerns to government and become involved in the decision-making process. This last suggestion points to the final weakness in the SSP process: how could the VCBS have been represented when, as one key informant put it, “there was no sector to speak of” in Labrador?

#### ***8.1.3.6 The Lack of a Collective Identity for VCBOs in Labrador:***

Another important aspect of successful collaboration is the existence of an appropriate forum where relationships can evolve (Bentley 2004: 11). We have already seen that while the RSC provided regional government officials with just that forum – a non-threatening space that allowed them to develop mutual understanding and to cultivate relationships – it was not successful at engaging VCBOs on an equal basis or in a meaningful way.<sup>118</sup> An additional factor that contributed to this lack of success was the lack of a collective identity among the VCBOs themselves, and the associated challenge of sourcing representation for such a diverse and “amorphous” sector (see Voluntary Sector Awareness Project 2005). Nine VCBOs, or 35% of respondents, confirmed that there was no regular, formal collaboration as a sector between VCBOs in the region; while sixteen VCBOs, or 62% of respondents, indicated that more collaboration between VCBOs “as a sector” was needed or would be desirable. For example, one respondent noted that “working individually causes some difficulties,” while another explained that it

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<sup>118</sup> Once again, SPAC’s Community-Based Resource Alliance was meant to act as a “forum” in which government and non-governmental representatives could come together.

would be “important to have a formal network [...] with representatives from each organization” stating that they were in need of an “effective communication tool.”

As Powers and Felt observe, the VCBS in Labrador “was not organized in a way that allowed for straightforward collaboration to happen” (2005: 19). Rather, VCBOs in the region operated much like government departments – in silos based on client group (e.g. women, youth, Aboriginal people, the disabled) or issue (e.g. violence, economic development, health, environment) (see Appendix 2). Holistic and collaborative approaches were no more prevalent among VCBOs than they were in government. There was no forum that would have facilitated the formation of “broad-based partnerships” within the sector, and therefore “it was simpler to involve individual organizations one at a time as particular issues arose at the SSP Committee” (Powers and Felt 2005: 19).

The creation of a forum for VCBOs was not solely the responsibility of those implementing the SSP. As Powers and Felt state, “there was also some responsibility by the voluntary sector itself to organize itself in a way that enabled the sector to partner with the SSP Committee” (2005: 19-20). Nevertheless, government had a role to play in “enabling” the process (Phillips 2005). As one key informant stated, “it was government’s Plan, and government therefore had an obligation to implement its own Plan and to facilitate the implementation of that Plan.” Despite the lack of direction in this respect, the Labrador RSC did recognize the need for VCBOs in the region to come together as a sector. The planner played a key role in facilitating or strengthening this process of “coming together” in two communities. In one community, the planner helped to revive a network of voluntary organizations known as the “Central Labrador Volunteer

Network” (CLVN) that had become dormant after funding for the project had run out. Although this network was loosely structured and its membership fluctuated, it represented the awakening of a sense of collective identity among the organizations involved – albeit “fledgling and fragile” (Phillips 2004: 17). By presenting these groups with opportunities to network, learn about each other, share ideas, collaborate on projects, and begin to develop a common sense of purpose, the CLVN represented the very beginnings of the relationship-building process. In a second community, the planner had been contacted to facilitate the formation of a similar network that local VCBOs referred to as the “Super-Committee”. Although this “Super-Committee” was not active at the time of this research, respondents indicated that there were advantages associated with participation on the network and several stressed that – given adequate resources (including a paid coordinator for the “Super-Committee”) – they would actively participate once again.

The attempts of the RSC to engage the VCBS in the SSP process in Labrador would have benefited from an associated effort focussed on building the capacity of VCBOs to participate in relationship-building exercises and to undertake collaborative planning. This aspect of the SSP process could have been included as an action item in the Plan and guidance and adequate resources would have been necessary in order to ensure its full execution. The existence of a certain level of harmony and cohesion within the sector seemed to have been taken for granted, contributing to the apparent assumption that representation would be easy to find and would not be challenged. In reality, turf protection, competition and conflict were all present. While organizations were accustomed to collaborating to a certain extent for particular purposes, they lacked a

viable overarching forum in which to come together and work on building their own *intra*-sectoral relationship. This would have been the first step in identifying appropriate representation that would have then been authorized to participate on behalf of the others on an *inter*-sectoral forum, such as that which the RSC was originally intended to be.

The final part of this chapter will explore the status of and attitudes towards collaboration among VCBOs in Labrador, a topic which forms a critical secondary finding of this research and which figures significantly into the overall assessment of the SSP implementation in the province. It is in this regard that capacity-building is highlighted as a critical component of the work of the RSCs. A focus on capacity-building within the VCBS would have included improving efforts at relationship-building, information sharing, leadership development, and the identification of common issues, barriers and areas of overlap so as to ensure appropriate representation and to facilitate collaboration. Capacity-building within the VCBS was therefore a critical component of the work to be undertaken by the RSC's across the province in order to ensure that community groups could play a stronger role in collaborative governance for integrated social and economic development as had been the original vision of the SSP.

#### **8.1.4 Status of and Attitudes towards Collaboration amongst VCBOs in Labrador**

In exploring the nature of existing collaborative arrangements as well as the predisposition to collaborate among VCBOs in Labrador, interview questions began with an examination of *who* respondents sought to collaborate with, *what* situations brought about collaborative approaches, and *how* the collaboration usually occurs. VCBOs were also asked to give their overall perceptions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of



collaboration, as well as the barriers to and bridges for both *intra-* and *inter-*sectoral collaboration in the region. These findings help us to better understand the sector in Labrador, and in particular, its pre-disposition to collaborate. This can help us to better appreciate the challenges that the RSC faced when it came to effectively engaging the sector in the SSP process regionally. It can also serve as a basis from which to formulate a new attempt at inter-sectoral collaboration along the lines envisioned by the SSP process, one which is better informed about the nature and character of the VCBOs and intra-sectoral collaboration in Labrador.

According to respondents, intra-sectoral collaboration usually occurred between VCBOs that operated under the same “silo” – that is, they either existed as branches of the same overarching group or their work addressed the same issue or targeted the same client group. Similarly, respondents often cited having partnered with an umbrella group in the community, region or province.<sup>119</sup> Table 8-1 below shows which bodies the majority of VCBOs indicated that they collaborate with.

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<sup>119</sup> There are three different types of umbrella groups that were identified as partners in collaborative undertakings. First of all, in some cases, individual VCBOs would be members of over-arching regional or provincial associations such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Women’s Institutes, an umbrella organization that maintained a network with branches in different communities. Secondly, umbrella groups were sometimes formed around particular issues or client-groups and would bring together different VCBOs whose mandates were related to that of the group. Rather than being branches within a network, these organizations were complementary and became linked to each other as a result of the umbrella initiative. An example would be the network that was formed through the creation of Labradorians for Peaceful Communities. Finally, organizations such as Town Councils or REDBs could be described as umbrella groups because of their comprehensive mandate to represent entire communities or regions.

**Table 8-1: Most Frequently Cited Partners in Collaborative Undertakings**

<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Who do you collaborate with?</b>
19 respondents (73%)	Counterparts in other communities
17 respondents (65%)	Organizations with similar mandates
13 respondents (50%)	Town council
12 respondents (46%)	Umbrella group
12 respondents (46%)	Other VCBO with a common member
11 respondents (42%)	REDB
10 respondents (38%)	Aboriginal group
7 respondents (27%)	Private sector organizations
5 respondents (19%)	SSP Committee

Seventeen VCBOs, or 65% of respondents, indicated that the majority of collaborative undertakings that they participated in occurred informally in the sense that they were unstructured and often short-term. As Table 8-1 shows, twelve respondents came together with other VCBOs because of a common member. This type of collaboration is not structural; rather, the linkage is informal and tenuous in that it risks dissolving if the member in question is taken out of the equation.

For those who were involved in formal networks or collaborations, only three of these cited participation in a horizontal, sector-wide initiative (e.g. the Central Labrador Volunteer Network). Five others reported participating on networks that adhered to the “silo” structure; that is, they were client group or issue specific (e.g. the Literacy

Network, the regional network of Women's Institutes, or the Healthy Communities Recreation Network).

In terms of preferences, thirteen VCBOs, or 50% of respondents, said that formal networks or collaborations were more desirable because they were "more effective." It was also acknowledged, however, that formal networks or collaborations required resources in order to function properly. Several respondents cited the need for a paid coordinator. Furthermore, it was also noted that overworked volunteers or staff may be reluctant to commit to a more formalized participation in a collaborative undertaking due to a scarcity of time. Volunteer burnout was cited by nine VCBOs, or 35% of respondents, as a challenge, with one respondent indicating that "volunteers spread themselves too thin they can't do a good job because they have too much on their plates."<sup>120</sup>

On the other hand, four VCBOs, or 15% of respondents, indicated a preference for informal networks or collaborations. They argued that informal settings are less intimidating and therefore people feel more comfortable to speak their minds. Also, some noted that with informal processes there is less risk of a few people dominating the process, and ultimately, more can be accomplished. All of the respondents who favoured informal approaches were from the smaller communities of the South Coast and the

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<sup>120</sup> Five respondents indicated a preference for informal collaboration, citing various reasons for this preference including lack of resources and time to participate in formal committees, as well as a fear that a formalized collaboration would be detrimental in that it may intimidate participants from speaking frankly. Reflecting on Habermas's separation of the lifeworld (the realm of informal, everyday interactions that take place, for example, within communities and voluntary associations) and the system (the realm of structured interactions that take place in formal institutionalized settings), and his observation that the lifeworld needs to be safeguarded against intrusions by the system, one could interpret this hesitation on the part of representatives of the VCBS to formalize their collaborative undertakings as part of an effort to resist the intrusions of formal, institutionalized means of interacting into the traditionally informal domain of community and voluntary association interaction.

Straits, where frequent interaction through overlapping social networks or organizational affiliations, unplanned encounters, and chance discussions are inevitable and often result in *ad hoc* or serendipitous partnerships or collaborations between organizations.

Collaboration between VCBOs in the region was often focused on events or initiatives outside the specific mandates of the individual organizations and had a potential impact on the community overall. For instance, many VCBOs cited frequent event-driven collaborations, such as the coming together of different organizations and volunteers to organize festivals (e.g. Mary's Harbour Crab Festival), fairs (e.g. Southern Labrador Career Fair), special days (e.g. Youth Day) or conferences (e.g. Southern Labrador Volunteer Training Conference). Community crises also led to short-term, community-wide collaborative efforts, as was demonstrated with the formation of the District Ferry Committee that brought together various groups in Cartwright who were concerned about the adverse economic impacts on the region resulting from the decision to alter the ferry schedule.

Some collaboration did take place on issues related to the mandates of individual organizations, but these were usually short-term. They often focused on providing advice or sharing information pertaining to the issue in question, or delivering a joint program or service. In other situations, organizations pooled their efforts in order to have a better chance to access resources. Table 8-2 below presents the most common examples of collaborative undertakings cited by VCBOs in Labrador.

**Table 8-2: Description of Most Common Collaborative Undertakings**

<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>What do you collaborate on?</b>
21 respondents (81%)	Activities outside mandate
20 respondents (77%)	Events in the community/region
16 respondents (62%)	To provide help/share information
15 respondents (58%)	Activities related to mandate
12 respondents (46%)	To jointly organize specific events related to mandate
10 respondents (38%)	To source funding
10 respondents (38%)	To share or access resources
8 respondents (31%)	To deliver specific joint programs/develop proposals for specific joint initiatives
7 respondents (27%)	To coordinate efforts regionally

Collaboration among VCBOs *as a sector* to address sector-wide challenges (such as recruiting and retaining volunteers; securing funding; getting insurance; building program, network and policy capacity, etc.) was not common practice, although it was recognized as being important and potentially beneficial. The sector-wide collaboration that did take place was generally limited to events focused on volunteer appreciation. Nevertheless, there was evidence in some communities of a desire for greater collaboration as a sector and some movement towards strengthening these types of associations. At the time of the research, the only *active, face-to-face*, umbrella body for the VCBS in Labrador was the Central Labrador Volunteer Network located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (the “Super-Committee” that had been formed in a South Coast



community was not in operation). Besides facilitating communication and knowledge-sharing, the CLVN had brought VCBOs together to receive training related to sector-wide issues, and it had occasioned the coordination of several events (including Volunteer Appreciation Day). Another association – the Career, Employment and Training (CET) network – was a virtual network and was used mainly to facilitate communication between different organizations and ensure a flow of information. Finally, in another initiative (that also took place in Happy Valley-Goose Bay) groups came together for “Soup Fridays” – a lunch session in which individual VCBOs were invited to give presentations focused on raising awareness about a particular issue or addressing a common concern.

Although there were few *formal, on-going inter- and intra-*sectoral collaborations in place in the region, there existed an overall positive perception of both types of collaborative efforts among the VCBOs interviewed. Eleven VCBOs, or 42% of all respondents, cited collaboration and partnership in general as a factor leading to success in helping them to achieve their goals in the community/region. Similarly, when asked specifically about their perception of intra-sectoral collaboration, fourteen VCBOs, or 54% of all respondents, indicated it is positive and/or desirable. Table 8.3 shows the most popular responses to the question concerning the perceived advantages of intra-sectoral collaboration.

**Table 8-3: Perceived Advantages of Collaboration**

<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Perceived Advantage</b>
9 respondents (35%)	Learn more about each other/ share information & experience
8 respondents (31%)	Acquire more resources/ Access to more services (E.g. funding, volunteers, training, infrastructure)
8 respondents (31%)	Synergy/unites community/ extra motivation and more power as a group
7 respondents (27%)	Emergence of new ideas
5 respondents (19%)	Get more accomplished
4 respondents (15%)	Greater efficiency and coordination/ less duplication
Various	Others: Shared responsibility/less pressure on individual organizations (3); enhanced communication (3); more sustainable (2)

Figure 8.5 shows that VCBOs in the region felt that the most important advantage associated with collaboration was the opportunity to gain knowledge. For example, one respondent noted that sharing best practices would be important; while another posed the question “why re-invent the wheel?” pointing to the advantages of learning from the experiences, successes and failures of others, and piggy-backing on lessons learned. Other respondents said that collaboration can contribute to increased productivity, it can make projects seem less overwhelming, and it can create a sense of enthusiasm and ownership (which, in turn, contributes to sustainability).

In terms of the perceived disadvantages of collaboration, these were closely associated with the barriers to collaboration, and therefore they were linked together for the purpose of the analysis. Table 8.4 offers the most common responses.

**Table 8-4: Perceived Disadvantages or Barriers to Collaboration**

<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Perceived Disadvantage/Barrier</b>
12 respondents (46%)	Conflicts/rivalries/divisions
10 respondents (38%)	Need resources to collaborate effectively (financial, human)
9 respondents (35%)	Takes time
7 respondents (27%)	Loss of autonomy
6 respondents (23%)	Difficult to engage people/ lack of interest
5 respondents (19%)	Distance between communities/ winter travel difficult
4 respondents (15%)	More rules/loss of flexibility:
4 respondents (15%)	Work not shared evenly
Various	Others: Ambiguity regarding credit & accountability (2); lack of mutual understanding (2); missing links/people left out (2)

As we can see from Table 8.4, a large number of respondents indicated that inter-personal disagreements and conflicts between partners or potential partners represented a deterrent to collaboration or represented a significant hurdle in maintaining existing collaborative arrangements. One respondent noted that it only takes one individual with a negative attitude to cause friction in a collaborative effort and make progress extremely difficult. Negative attitudes can be hard to stifle and often impact the overall motivation of the



group. A second respondent noted that interpersonal conflicts can carry over into a committee and jeopardize the overall collaborative process. This problem may be compounded in a small community, where individuals are closely interconnected and more likely to know each other outside of the work environment.<sup>121</sup> A third respondent observed that when sensitive issues are put on the table, emotions run high and consensus can often seem beyond reach.

Several respondents also noted the propensity towards competitiveness between certain communities and between VCBOs fueled by the nature of government funding processes. Communities compete with each other to be selected as the site for various social and economic development initiatives and infrastructure (e.g. conflict over the location of the arena on the Straits, or of the new airport on the South Coast). Similarly, VCBOs compete for scarce government funding and policy attention. This competition leads to turf protection, which hampers collaborative efforts. In the words of one respondent, VCBOs “play their cards close” – as they are often “pitted against each other” in a competition for funding and do not want others to gain an advantage over them.<sup>122</sup> Some organizations fear that by sharing too much information or by partnering to deliver programs or services, they expose themselves to the possibility that they will no longer be viewed as unique and that, as a result, they will be considered obsolete or their programming redundant.

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<sup>121</sup> The opposite may also be true – in small, rural and remote communities, the intimate reality of life may serve to facilitate the development of formal partnerships between VCBOs within these same communities, as trust may have already been established between individuals through relationships outside of the work environment.

<sup>122</sup> In assisting with applications to government for funding for various projects, the RSC in some ways became involved in this competitive relationship between VCBOs in the region.

Several respondents also pointed to the existence of cultural, historical, economic or social divisions in Labrador that make collaborative efforts challenging. In one community, conflict and divisions tied to historical factors emerged as a particular barrier. During Smallwood's resettlement program, the community had received families from surrounding communities that were being resettled. Families originating from different places settled in different parts of the new community, creating neighbourhoods that continued to be differentiated at the time of this research. It was apparent that the resettlement program had precipitated enduring cleavages in the community which several local respondents cited as posing a continuing challenge to collaborative efforts (see also Kennedy 1981). In another example that draws on history to explain the challenges faced in collaborative efforts, respondents from a community on the South Coast indicated that they were "stuck in a vortex," having maintained historic ties to Central Labrador for certain services, yet lumped together with other communities from Southern Labrador for the purposes of regional economic development. In a different case that highlights the presence of economic divisions, Labrador West continues to be set apart not only within Labrador, but across the province, boasting the highest per capita personal income of all the economic zones.<sup>123</sup> Finally, given the presence of three Aboriginal groups in Labrador, cultural and language barriers – not to mention complex historical and/or political animosities – often pose challenges to collaborative efforts. All of this underlines the significant amount of work that remains to be done in terms of relationship-building between different groups and communities.

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<sup>123</sup> One respondent emphasized that the reality of VCBOs based in the resource industry town in Labrador West was very different from the reality of other VCBOs across Labrador. This respondent indicated the prevalence of collaborative arrangements with the private sector in that context, which filled the void left by the retreat of government and the scarcity of state support for social programming.

In terms of challenges associated with travel distances and weather in Labrador, information and communications technologies offer interesting and innovative possibilities for networking and collaboration. At the time of the research, SmartLabrador provided a variety of ICT services to 23 communities in Labrador, offering public internet access points, video conferencing services, and an on-line Labrador news network. The ICT capacity provided by SmartLabrador contributed greatly to increasing the possibilities for both intra- and inter-sectoral collaboration in the region by overcoming the barriers associated with trying to organize face-to-face meetings.

When it came to the disadvantages or barriers related to a loss of autonomy or a lack of flexibility resulting from participation in a collaborative arrangement, this was usually cited as a problem associated with *inter*-sectoral collaboration; that is, collaboration between VCBOs and government. This research did not reveal substantive evidence to support the theory that the SSP process in the region had greatly altered the relationship between the two sectors in Labrador. Feedback from respondents concerning their relationship with government varied. Positive relationships were cited by eight VCBOs, or 31% of respondents particularly with reference to dealings with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, which was described as being flexible, and the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, which several respondents described as being “helpful.” Meanwhile, negative relationships or inter-personal conflicts were cited by nine VCBOs or 35% of respondents, particularly with reference to Human Resources and Social Development Canada, which was said to have too many rules and regulations, and

to the Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, whose management at the time was seen as being estranged from the people on the ground.

It should be noted that the timing of the research was not ideal in determining the impact of the SSP process in terms of the relationship between VCBOs and government. A new government had just come into power in the province and was undertaking a comprehensive review of all programming which left many organizations feeling vulnerable. Many respondents complained that they had been cut off from the process and were frustrated with it, and that they felt a lack of rapport with the new government. It was a period of transition, where groups were adapting to a new reality and trying to find a way to relate to the new regime. Old relationships that had been established with hard work, patience and persistence, had become obsolete. As one respondent stated, government was full of new faces, and organizations had to start from scratch – educating the new people as to their needs and concerns, and developing new relationships. Given the situation, the insecurity and dissatisfaction that was expressed does not necessarily accurately reflect the impact of the SSP process in the region on the relationship of VCBOs with government. Rather, it indicates a dissatisfaction with the political process in general, one in which communities are vulnerable if they show support for a party that is ultimately defeated, or wherein initiatives such as the SSP are halted partway through their implementation as a result of a transition to a new government. This brings our attention to the need for continuity in policy and programming despite changes in government, along the lines of the social partnership in Ireland (see House and McGrath 2004).

Altogether, eleven VCBOs, or 42% of respondents, said that they did not partner or collaborate with government. One respondent indicated that, although his organization worked with government, the word “partnership” did not accurately depict the nature of this relationship, arguing that it was based predominantly on his organization chasing funding for programs. Discounting relationships based solely on funding, eight VCBOs, or 31% of respondents, indicated that they collaborate with government. Examples given included:

- One organization was contracted by government to deliver a particular program in a community (the Adult Basic Education level one pilot project);
- One organization partnered with a regional health board on developing programs and by using government infrastructure (e.g. office space);
- One organization partnered with government through the SSP Committee on the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Awareness project;
- One organization collaborated with government by participating in a student employment program;
- One organization worked with the SSP Committee to conduct a needs assessment in their community.

Twelve organizations, or 46% of respondents, felt that the big advantage of collaborating with government was a greater ability to access resources. Some respondents indicated that these collaborations presented VCBOs with an opportunity to educate government about the local realities and local issues, while others said that it had the positive spin-off of helping them to gain a greater understanding of the requirements and functioning of government programs.

#### **8.1.4 The Overall Experience of VCBOs in the Context of the SSP in Labrador**

In sum, the research findings indicate that the presence of the RSC and the implementation of the SSP in Labrador did not have a big impact on the experience of VCBOs in the region. They continued to struggle with the same overarching challenges, with nineteen VCBOs, or 73% of respondents, listing government processes as second only to funding on their list of principal challenges. Meanwhile, 61% of respondents indicated that they did not have input into policy and planning for social and economic development in the region, despite the presence of a Plan that was supposed to facilitate that process.

Although there were flashes of insight and moments of what was often described as a sort of collective epiphany when it came to understanding the possibilities for revolutionary ways of conducting business inherent in the SSP, to a significant extent the actual implementation of the Plan deviated from the path that many felt it had been originally intended to follow. This was due, in part at least, to the fact that not all those involved in the implementation understood the potential ramifications of the approach or how to achieve it. The positive effects of the SSP in Labrador were confined, for the most part, to the regional offices of government departments. As a result of their participation on the RSC, regional government officials achieved a greater mutual understanding and realized a synergy in their efforts that contributed to increased motivation, stronger bargaining power, higher efficiency, and enhanced outcomes. Place-based became region-based in the implementation of the Plan. Meaningful partnerships and new ways of working were, for the most part, confined to that middle-level of engaged participants

and their relations with senior officials, while communities – the true “places” – were, for the most part, left out or only engaged peripherally.

Without a profound understanding of the new directions they could have taken under the auspices of the Plan or how to properly prepare all players for the potential new order, and without explicit guidance regarding how to undertake the formidable task they had been assigned or the mechanisms in place to achieve success, the RSC in Labrador went about implementing the Plan in their region in the best way they could. The decision they made in terms of how to approach the SSP was innovative and pragmatic. In many ways it did revolutionize the way that business was conducted in the region. When judged in terms of the potential impact of the Plan, their approach could have been considered a first step along the path towards an implementation of the more pioneering aspects of the Plan. However, a reflection on these weaknesses of the SSP implementation reveals that both government implementers and potential community-based partners were likely unaware of the possibility of meaningful *inter*-sectoral collaboration that many argue was implied within the pages of the SSP document. As a result, Labrador RSC members can be said to have successfully implemented “*half* of the Plan”<sup>124</sup> – they successfully took the first steps by achieving an unprecedented level of *intra*-sectoral collaboration amongst regional government departments and agencies. However, they did not make significant or sustainable progress beyond that first step. In many ways, and to their credit, their efforts transformed the governance landscape in Labrador by initiating a move towards a full implementation of an *inter*-sectoral, horizontal governance approach. The next critical steps – starting with greater capacity-

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<sup>124</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge Patti Powers for this observation.

building and laying a foundation for more *intra*-sectoral collaboration within the VCBS itself, followed by the facilitation of increased and meaningful collaboration between the sectors – were neglected or not taken, leaving the Plan only partially implemented. As one key informant stated:

What grieves me the most is that people are going to go around in five years and say ‘you see, the social plan didn’t work’. That annoys me, because they were given no support - inadequate funding, little guidance, and no clear processes or mechanisms to employ – and then the project was prematurely aborted. This needs to stop – initiatives have to be given a chance to work. The SSP was never even fully implemented, and it would be unfair to judge its accomplishments based on partial implementation.



## **9. Conclusion: Lost in Translation?**

### ***9.1 Looking Back***

As we have seen, the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador traces its theoretical roots to notions of governance and participatory democracy, and in the understanding of civil society as a potential agent of social change and an arena of social capital formation. The idea of creating a forum in which various groups can come together to debate issues and achieve consensus is also grounded in the Habermasian conception of the public sphere. However, in theory, the notion of voluntary sector involvement in public policy formulation moves beyond Habermasian ideals, touching on a post-bourgeois reading of the public sphere which describes multiple and competing publics and envisions new institutional arrangements that push the boundaries of “actually existing democracy” by forging new relationships among and between what Fraser has termed strong, hybrid and weak publics (Fraser 1991).

The original intention of those involved in the early developmental stages of the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador was for the process to enhance the effectiveness, responsiveness and fairness of policy decisions by shifting to a more inclusive, collaborative governance system that offered greater opportunities for public deliberation and empowered participation at community and regional levels (Fung 2004). These forward-thinking individuals sought to give a voice to those “weak publics” in this case, groups that formed part of the voluntary, community-based sector thereby building bridges between government institutions and citizens. The approach was meant to de-mystify the government decision-making process, and to offer community-based groups and citizens an avenue through which to share their insights and ideas with

decision-makers, and ultimately, influence outcomes. The rationale for the approach hinged on ideas championed by proponents of collaborative or participatory decision-making processes, including the notion that “central power tends to encroach on local prerogatives, to crown out civic initiative and engagement, and to disregard crucial local knowledge” (Fung 2004: 5). The approach espoused by the SSP moved away from the traditional model of centralized authority, and called for a greater degree of local involvement in the design and delivery of programs and services.

In practice, the SSP process did seek to implement a certain degree of sharing, cooperation, coordination, and consensus-building, as well as a decentralization of authority to different players who were removed to varying degrees from the traditional corridors of power. The centrifugal forces associated with the new conceptions of governance did not, however, circulate without resistance. Despite the intentions of those involved in the development of the Plan, the analysis of SSP implementation in the Labrador region indicates that meaningful collaboration and partnership formation, to the extent that had been originally envisioned, was not achieved.

Several factors hindered the ability of the Labrador Regional Steering Committee (RSC) to fully implement the collaborative vision of the Plan. For starters, clear leadership and direction regarding this new and innovative way for government to conduct business was not apparent. Those in power were reluctant to give up or share authority, and as a result, the lack of explicit direction in this regard meant that they chose to maintain the status quo. This is in keeping with observations made by Tomblin, who has noted that efforts at restructuring the way government conducts its business inevitably encounter obstacles in

the form of “embedded governance structures and processes” that continue to shape social and political outcomes (2003: 21). In his analysis of regional integration in Newfoundland and Labrador, Tomblin observes that the process encountered resistance due to the “persistence of inherited rural civil society organizations coupled with old hierarchal fiscal and decision-making structures” (2003: 29). The same situation can be said to have affected the implementation of the new approach to governance advocated by the SSP. In government, steadfast structures and processes – such as the traditional vertical lines of authority and accountability, budgeting by departments and agencies, and concentrating decision-making power within the hands of a few politicians and centralized agencies – persisted despite the presence of the SSP. Meanwhile, outside of government, voluntary, community-based organizations, for the most part, also continued operating using conventional approaches.

There was a significant amount of groundwork that would have been required to fully realize the movement towards inter-sectoral collaboration between the government and the voluntary sector. For the most part, these foundations were not laid. For instance, true inter-sectoral collaboration would have also required that close attention be paid to several issues surrounding accountability. Not enough research was conducted into the practical implications associated with shifting from a vertical to a horizontal accountability framework that would be in keeping with collaborative governance arrangements. The related issue of the autonomy of the voluntary sector also needed more attention. Partnerships between voluntary organizations and government must leave room for voluntary, community-based organizations (VCBOs) to maintain their independence from the state, to advocate for change and to challenge government on

matters of concern (Phillips 2003). As Kathy Brock observes, these are “delicate dances” – as relationships become more complex, so do the issues that arise. These issues needed to be discussed and the appropriate protocols developed.

This leads us to another key challenge that emerged: that is, the issue of representation. Not everyone can be represented in a collaborative arrangement, and, therefore, how do we determine who should be included? To what extent are they representative? Should membership on collaborative governance structures such as the SSP be fluctuating in order to ensure that all parties have a say? Should only those groups affected by a particular decision be included in the process of addressing the issue? As Van Ham asks: “whose consent is required to produce democratically legitimated decisions?” (2001: 166). Attempts at inter-sectoral governance such as that proposed by the SSP must tackle the question of how to engineer new structures and processes that enable a convergence of the “thousand points of light” that make up the VCBS into a single, “focused prism of policy” (Van Ham 2001: 158). The Labrador RSC was challenged to find a solution to this question of representation. Its members were unable to identify appropriate or effective mechanisms of engagement or a mode of articulation that would ensure the equal and full representation of the diversity of VCBOs present in the region and thereby render their decisions legitimate.

In order to fully implement the SSP vision of partnerships in the Labrador region, a greater focus on capacity-building among VCBOs would have been required. In particular, the networking and policy capacity of the sector needed to be developed. Phillips (2005) has pointed to the need to build policy capacity among voluntary

organizations, who tend to be “gifted amateurs” when it comes to understanding and impacting the policy process. Meanwhile, network capacity would have included efforts at building what Putnam terms “bridging social capital” – relationships of trust that cut across the diversity of publics and interest groups that make up the VCBS (Putnam 2000). While there did exist a certain amount of established trust between community groups in the Labrador region, as well as some information sharing, collaboration and partnership formation, most of this was short-term, task-oriented and informal. Turf protection, competition and conflict were also present, and, with a few notable exceptions, individual VCBOs in Labrador had little sense of belonging to a “sector”. For the most part, they lacked a strong and pervasive collective identity, and in practice, bringing the diversity of independent voluntary organizations together under an umbrella of coordination and consensus was not as easy as had been implicitly envisaged. Sufficient attention had not been paid to laying the groundwork required to accomplish an effective *intra*-sectoral collaboration, let alone an *inter*-sectoral collaboration. Without a “sector” in place, the RSC could not find an appropriate body to act as an interface. As a result, forging meaningful partnership with the VCBS proved to be more difficult an endeavour than had been planned for in the development of the SSP. More attention to capacity building would have helped address the issue of representation, and better equipped VCBOs to participate effectively in the collaborative undertaking.

There were indications that the RSC in Labrador had begun to understand the nature of the challenge it faced, and had begun to explore possible solutions to issue of building capacity among VCBOs. For example, initial attempts were made to enhance what Phillips has termed the “network capacity” of the sector within and between communities

(2005). Efforts were made to strengthen existing relationships and to establish new linkages through the creation of new umbrella associations. Also, the SSP Committee in Labrador had begun to initiate outreach to the VCBOs in various ways in an attempt to keep them at the very least informed about the SSP and associated activities in the region. These efforts should be seen as the first steps towards greater integration. They helped to plant the seeds that would ideally have transformed the nature of the relationship between government and VCBOs from “adversarial” to “cooperative” and, eventually, grown into deeper and more mature partnerships (Peters 2003). With more time and resources, these fledgling efforts would have likely evolved and enabled a deeper and more effective inter-sectoral partnership approach. Furthermore, in terms of raising knowledge and awareness, a critical first step in any endeavour, those implementing the SSP in Labrador were beginning to grasp the critical relationship- and capacity-building within the VCBS.

Although initial efforts were made by the Labrador RSC to begin addressing this issue and to focus on building linkages both within the VCBS, and between the VCBS and government, the resources that would have been required to thoroughly accomplish this task were not available. As with the process of regionalization, the SSP saw the persistence of old structures and processes which made “incremental changes more likely than radical ones” (Tomblin 2003: 29). Nevertheless, considering the magnitude of some of the changes to the established governance system that were prescribed by the SSP process, even the incremental progress towards change was significant. If the process had not been halted pre-maturely, perhaps we would see these efforts paying off today.

With the implementation of the SSP process in Labrador, incremental changes were indeed apparent. Furthermore, there was evidence of more significant transformations in some areas. When it came to breaking down the barriers between government and the voluntary sector to undertake collaborative governance, progress was slow. However, great strides were made in terms of enhancing intra-sectoral collaboration among and between regional government and para-governmental organizations. Taken together, all the changes that did occur, incremental or otherwise, comprised the necessary first steps towards a full implementation of the SSP in all of its facets.

When it came to enhancing intra-sectoral collaboration among regional government and quasi-government officials, the Labrador case provided substantial evidence to support the argument that significant changes occurred. Relationships between regional officials were cultivated and innovative collaborative undertakings between regional offices yielded results that convinced many of the players of the merits of working together, sharing resources, and articulating a united vision for the region. Several noted the “magic” that emanated from the new way of working together. While this middle-level or “meta-governance” approach disappointed some who had hoped for the process to reach further down into communities, many saw it as pragmatic and effective. I would agree with the latter, and argue that this was the first logical step towards a deeper realization of the more substantive transformations – in particular, the notion of inter-sectoral collaboration – contained within the Plan. Furthermore, engagement of the high-ranking regional officials at the RSC table helped to ensure that the committee had the authority or influence required to move forward with new ideas and initiatives. These same individuals could have emerged as roadblocks had they been left out of the process.

Another key finding of the research was the light it shined on the role of the Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) in the Labrador region. Although the majority of community-based organizations interviewed felt disconnected from the SSP process overall, over half of respondents drew attention to the role that the REDBs in their respective regions played as mechanisms through which they were able to find a voice or to represent their needs and concerns to the RSC or to government more generally. The research has shown that the REDBs in the study region focussed much of their energy on the social aspects of community and regional development, supporting the efforts of community-based organizations in a variety of ways, including, when possible, bringing their needs and concerns forward at the RSC table. With a few exceptions, the REDBs were seen as effective representatives of communities and the community-based sector. The members of the RSC also characterized the REDBs as the key linking mechanisms, acting as the principal avenues through which the Committee could reach down into communities.

Many of the successes of the SSP were attributable in no small part to the strong and effective guidance of the regional planner, who implicitly understood the communicative and reflexive demands of post-modern leadership (Larsen 2001). The planner enabled the creation and oversaw the development of public deliberative spaces (both weak, in the case of the community-based “Super Committee” for the voluntary sector; and hybrid, in the case of the Regional Steering Committee table itself) where different groups could meet, debate important issues, and, ideally, achieve consensus and work to influence higher-level policy decisions affecting the region. The critical role that the planner



played in the process draws attention to the importance of dynamic individuals and leadership in the successful implementation of collaborative undertakings. As Peters notes, when “policy windows” open, it depends on the people around the table and the agendas that have been set to determine if the issue will be addressed or the opportunity exploited by a “policy entrepreneur” (2002: 13). Although Peters acknowledges that action is often the result of a “serendipitous confluence of opportunities, individuals and ideas” rather than based on decisions that are “structured, orderly and ‘rational’,” he also emphasizes that “individual involvement and entrepreneurship are crucial for generative collective action” (2002: 7; 14). Both serendipity and leadership played significant roles in the actions taken by the RSC in Labrador.

A major criticism of the SSP process is that it neglected to recognize or draw explicit attention to the potential impact of relations of power on the outcomes of decisions achieved through consensus. Similarly, the process held up the Habermasian assumption that the many disparate and even conflicting groups in the region could come together freely and as equals to deliberate highly sensitive social and economic issues. This notion is considered by many – among them feminist thinkers such as Nancy Fraser – to be unrealistic. Power differentials would inevitably infiltrate the purportedly “neutral space” of the SSP table. As Fraser states, “it is not possible to insulate special discursive arenas from the effects of societal inequality [...] where social inequality persists, deliberative processes in public spheres will tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates” (Fraser 1991: 66). Furthermore, “subordinated social groups usually lack equal access to the material means of equal participation” – and in this way “political economy reinforces structurally what culture

accomplishes informally” (Fraser 1991: 65). This would explain why, for example, certain community-based groups – particularly those that demonstrated strong political connections – were able to become directly involved in the activities of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC), whereas other groups – such as those located outside of the regional centre of Happy Valley-Goose Bay – were often unable to achieve that equivalent level of participation.

Analyzed in the context of power, collaborative governance in the SSP incarnation could be seen as the state surrounding itself with affiliated or likeminded organizations that ultimately serve to revalidate the values of the state or the associated dominant public. In other words, it could be interpreted as the “persistence of domination” with the appearance of greater participation or a deeper democratic process. This would make it akin to Weber’s “formal rational dominance” which Larsen describes as the “tendency for a single or few leaders to assemble a group of individuals who are used to following orders around them, individuals for whom their part of the spoils of ruling lies in the system’s survival” (2001: 281). Thus, Peters speaks of the “Faustian bargain” of collaborative governance, pointing out that the “loose structuring and seemingly participatory nature of the arrangements [...] can hide [...] the exercise of power, and the ability of a limited number of actors to shape outcomes” (Peters 2002: 14). The result is a potential paradox also described by Peters in which “a system of governance that is assumed to be (and in the case of multi-level governance is designed to be) open, inclusive and indeterminate may be more determined by power than are more structured systems” (Peters 2001: 14). On the one hand, formal rules can assure accessibility and work to protect the rights of minorities and those with relatively less access to power and

influence. On the other hand, the flexibility and freedom inherent in new governance processes, and the preference for “negotiations, networking and bargaining” in place of formal rules and regulations, mean that the “actors themselves make most of the decisions about involvement” (Peters 2001: 15). The question is: Where does this leave those with weaker voices, whether they be Aboriginal groups, women’s groups, voluntary groups, or organizations whose mandate focuses on an issue that is not identified by a priority by those in power? As Peters speculates, ultimately the governance model may favour more powerful actors – it “may be a natural locus for bureaucratic politics” rather than “the locus for more open and effective participation by societal actors” – and thus the opposite of what was anticipated, or at least hoped for (Peters 2002: 15).

These readings are important to take into consideration when examining a collaborative process that involves not only government and non-government actors, but also when dealing with a region such as Labrador which exhibits significant socio-cultural diversity. In particular, these are important considerations when examining the involvement of Aboriginal groups in collaborative undertakings, given their history of marginalization and oppression, as well as their differential access to the resources and capital (economic, social, cultural and other) which impact their ability not only to participate as equals, but to have their voices heard. The RSC of the SSP, being made up predominantly of government or para-government officials, can be said to have been “tainted” with the baggage of “embedded institutional processes, sources of power, systems of knowledge creation and societal traditions” that undoubtedly made it difficult for non-governmental or other less powerful or marginalized groups to break in or to exist as equal partners due to the dominant discourse of the group (Tomblin 2003: 21). As Archon Fung observes:

Scholars who have examined participatory small-group decision processes have found that they are often no more fair than other kinds of governance and decision-making [...]. Voices of minority, less educated, diffident, or culturally subordinate participants are often drowned out by those who are wealthy, confident, accustomed to management, or otherwise privileged. Liabilities such as parochialism, lack of expertise, and resource constraints, may impair the problem-solving and administrative capabilities of local organizations relative to centralized forms.

2004: 5-6

This does not imply that a process of collaborative governance, such as that demonstrated by the SSP, is necessarily ineffective or undesirable. Fung describes a compromise between the two, proposing that “a judicious allotment of power, function, and responsibility between central authorities and local bodies can mitigate these pathologies of inequality, parochialism, and group-think and so better realize the ideals [of] empowered deliberation and participation” (2004: 6). In keeping with Fung, I would suggest that a combination of local decision-making authority and service delivery, as well as some degree of centralization, is desirable. Similarly, I would recommend that those groups that may be labelled as “weak publics,” or those that have traditionally struggled to have their voices heard, should carefully consider all options before choosing to participate in collaborative processes which may only result in their further marginalization. If participation in a deliberative or consensus-building process such as the RSC table merely succeeds in achieving “discursive assimilation” rather than true consensus, then perhaps this approach is not the right way to go (Fraser 1991). Once again, to draw attention to Flyvbjerg’s observation, “power struggles and conflicts” rather than “rational consensus” have often better served the needs of weak, marginalized or oppressed groups (1998: 226). Like the feminist and ecological movements, the

Aboriginal movement may achieve greater results by sticking to a more Foucauldian approach, using conflict rather consensus as a means of having its voice heard.<sup>125</sup>

## ***9.2 Looking Forward***

In 2004, following the process of program renewal undertaken by the new Conservative government under Danny Williams, the Strategic Social Plan was re-invented as the Rural Secretariat. Like the SSP, the Rural Secretariat represents a new and integrated approach to development that focuses on well-being in regions. It maintains an overarching vision for the province that is similar to that of the SSP, and is guided by principles that reflect many of the values and objectives contained within *People, Partners and Prosperity*. Nevertheless, certain critical aspects of the SSP approach did not find their way into the new articulation presented by the Rural Secretariat. As a result, some of the major successes associated with the SSP process may have been lost.

In a departure from the SSP, the Rural Secretariat places a greater emphasis on citizen engagement rather than the engagement of communities and the voluntary, community-based sector. The Rural Secretariat also differs from the SSP in terms of its structures and processes. The old structures of the SSP have been replaced with a new set of structures, composed of a very different set of individuals. This, in effect, transforms the

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<sup>125</sup> Movement towards this approach is evident among Aboriginal groups in Canada. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007, groups across Canada participated in the National Day of Action. Many individuals and groups organized peaceful events and presentations. Others were criticized for having chosen to erect blockades or participate in other acts of civil disobedience in efforts to raise the profile of issues affecting Aboriginal communities. Prior to the Day of Action, National Chief Phil Fontaine made the following comments, inviting all Canadians to participate in peaceful activities: "Numerous studies and commissions over the years [...] have called for change but the majority of their recommendations are sitting on shelves collecting dust. These are the reasons why First Nations people are frustrated. This has been going on for decades. Where does it all stop? [...] It is time for Action." In Labrador, the Innu Nation has utilized action-oriented approaches to garner support worldwide to meet the social and economic challenges faced by its people.

process. The effect is that some of the strengths associated with the SSP process that were identified as a result of this research can be said to have been lost in translation. While the new structures offer the possibility of significant new opportunities and the potential for improvement in areas that had been identified as weaknesses in the SSP process, the dismantling of critical SSP structures such as the Regional Steering Committees runs the risk of losing ground in areas in which significant advances were made. In the case of Labrador, the “magic” that had been achieved as a result of the coming-together of regional government and para-government officials was lost. A brief overview of the new approach adopted by the Rural Secretariat will offer a glimpse at the present status and future possibilities in terms of governance in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Like the SSP, the Rural Secretariat emphasizes greater coordination across government departments, collaboration with community partners, the linking of social and economic development and the importance of research and measuring progress. It is housed under the Executive Council, and headed by an assistant deputy minister who reports to the minister of the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. Like the SSP, the Rural Secretariat operates according to a regional model, rejecting the “cookie-cutter approach” and stressing instead the unique needs and concerns of distinct regions across the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007). The first guiding principle of the new Rural Secretariat stresses the importance of sharing responsibility. Building on notions set out in the SSP, this principle draws attention to the need for “individuals, communities, regions and governments” to work together to develop ideas, identify solutions, and make decisions that impact “social, economic, cultural and

environmental aspects of regional development” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2005: 3). According to the 2006 Annual Activity Report;

The Rural Secretariat focuses on the sustainable development of all regions of the province. It promotes information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within government and between government and communities. It facilitates horizontal thinking on regional issues and is focused on the long-term sustainability of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. The secretariat conducts research, develops processes and tools, and engages citizens to enhance the consideration of regional issues in public policy development.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2006: 1

Despite the semblance of continuity evident in this passage, the Rural Secretariat exhibits several points of departure from the SSP. For starters, the SSP map was re-drawn and the province divided into nine Rural Secretariat regions that have replaced the five SSP regions. The delineation of the new regional boundaries represented an effort to better reflect “natural clusters” in the province (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007). These clusters are described as consisting of a constellation of small communities associated with larger service centres that, taken together, exhibit “natural linkages and the ability and interest to work together for a shared future” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007). The nine regions are represented by nine Regional Councils, Labrador continues to comprise one entire region onto itself. Membership on the Regional Councils is determined by a process of open nomination followed by appointment by the minister. Councils are meant to exhibit diversity in membership in terms of the backgrounds of individual members. Efforts are made to select representatives with diverse backgrounds, experience, cultural identity, and social characteristics. Each Regional Council chooses a representative to sit on the Provincial Council, which also includes several Members-at-Large who are also nominated and then

appointed by the minister. The Provincial Council is charged with representing the needs and concerns of the regions to policy-makers. Twice per year, members of the Provincial Council meet with cabinet ministers and deputy ministers to provide input into public policy. The open dialogue between regional representatives and government officials is intended to ensure open lines of communication, a shared vision, feedback concerning programs and services, and regional advice into the process of setting priorities and decision-making.

A major shift evident with the new Rural Secretariat process is that it places a greater emphasis on direct citizen engagement, with little or no mention of the voluntary, community-based sector or civil society (Close et al 2007). It also establishes mechanisms to ensure that these citizens become involved and have opportunities to exchange ideas and concerns with government officials. Individuals may be drawn from voluntary, community-based organizations, just as they may be drawn from the private sector. However, as members of the Regional Council, they are asked to “leave their hats at the door and bring their collective experiences of living and working in a region to the table” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2007).

By creating opportunities for greater citizen participation in public policy deliberation and decision-making, the Rural Secretariat addresses a critical weakness of the SSP. However, it is doubtful that the Rural Secretariat builds on the strengths of the SSP. For instance, the new structures of the Rural Secretariat do not include a forum for regional government (and para-governmental) officials to come together, share information, and collaborate. This research revealed that the engagement of regional government officials



was a critical strength of the SSP process. Working together not only enhanced the efficiency and effectiveness of each individual member organization, but the officials were able to exert more influence and accomplish more as a team than they could acting independently. By removing this critical “meta-level” of the collaborative governance process, one could predict that the new structure will suffer from a disconnect. How will the voices of the community, as represented by the appointed citizens, reach those in power? Much depends on the effectiveness of the Provincial Council, a body that attempts to fill the void left behind as a result of the removal of the Regional Steering Committees of the SSP. Whether the voices of these citizens will reach those in power through this channel more effectively than would have been possible via the regional government and para-government officials is a research question that has yet to be answered.

Furthermore, by neglecting to build capacity within the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS), the Rural Secretariat also ignores the lessons that were learned through the SSP process. Building capacity within the VCBS includes focussing on enhancing intra-sectoral collaboration, a lesson that the RSC in Labrador had just begun to understand. The initial, fledgling efforts that had been made by the SSP planner were left behind in the translation to the new Rural Secretariat, and the VCBS left to its own devices to determine how to best move forward with efforts to build an identity as a sector, to work together to achieve common goals and realize a shared vision for their communities, regions, and for Labrador overall.

The Rural Secretariat could be seen as offering an alternative approach, one perhaps more rooted in community – and thus more “place-based” – and focused on forging partnerships with groups of citizens. Its focus on rural areas of the province is also unique. The Rural Secretariat stresses the need to apply a “rural lens” in the assessment of all new policy and programming across government, requiring all Cabinet papers to detail potential impacts on rural regions in order to facilitate informed decision-making. However, in terms of implementing a vision of collaboration that involves “inter-sectoral” partnerships between government and the VCBS, the Rural Secretariat moves away from the vision espoused by the SSP. In Labrador, the progress that was made by the RSC – in breaking down barriers and building relationships among and between government departments, among and between VCBOs, and between government and the VCBS, risks being lost. The structures and processes established as part of the Rural Secretariat (i.e. the Regional Councils made up of citizens, and an umbrella Provincial Council with direct access to those in power) may well have been the other half that was needed in order to achieve a full implementation of the SSP process. If the Regional Councils can be seen as the “legs” that were missing from the SSP process that would have enabled it to reach down into communities and draw on the energy and expertise of citizens, then it will be critical to follow the evolution of the new process and assess its strengths and weaknesses. I would venture, however, that by cutting out the structures and processes that were implemented as part of the SSP process (particularly the Regional Steering Committees), the Rural Secretariat will succeed only in achieving half of what it could have achieved. Nevertheless, just as the SSP offered important lessons that should inform future processes, the Rural Secretariat also offers an important case

study in a different process of governance – one still rooted in notions of integrated and collaborative governance, but of a very different variety than that proposed by the SSP.

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## **Appendix 1: Interview Questionnaire: Labrador Component**

**First I am going to ask about your organization.**

1. What is the mandate of your organization?
  - a. What are your goals and objectives?
  - b. What client group do you serve?
  - c. What types of initiatives do you undertake?
  - d. What underlying values/principles are central to the work of this organization?
2. What is the structure of your organization?
  - a. Do you have an elected board of directors? If not, how are the board members selected?
  - b. Do you have any paid staff? If yes, how many?
  - c. What is the role of volunteers in your organizations (aside from the BOD)? How many volunteers are with your organization?

**Now I am going to ask about how you network or collaborate (work together) with other organizations in your community or region**

3. Are there other groups in the community or in the region that work towards similar objectives as your organization?

*If yes:*

- a. What are these groups?
4. Do you ever come together with other organizations in your community or region to inform each other of the activities or initiatives you are undertaking?
5. Do you ever come together to coordinate initiatives or activities together?

*If yes:*

- a. Can you give examples? (i.e.: What were the initiatives or activities, who came together, and how did this happen)
  - b. Do you only collaborate on specific initiatives, or do you maintain contact with these other organizations on a regular basis?

- c. Do you ever come together to collaborate on an activity or initiative that is outside of the particular mandate of your organization (for example, to address issues faced by the community or region more generally – like transportation, etc...)?
    - i. *If yes*, can you give examples?
6. Do you ever come together or network with other community-based organizations in the community or in the region to share information, or simply to communicate and find out what everyone is up to?
7. Do you ever come together with other community-based organizations to discuss or coordinate activities related to the issues facing community-based organizations in general (i.e.: issues facing the community-based sector)? Examples of these issues could be things like recruiting volunteers, accessing funding, getting insurance, preparing proposals, making recommendations to government, or other issues)?
  - a. *If yes* How did this networking or collaboration among community-based organizations *as a sector* happen?
8. Do you (or would you) see any advantages in coming together in the ways mentioned above – i.e.: in coming together to organize activities or to collaborative on particular initiatives, to share information, to address other more general issues in the community/region, or to address issues facing community-based organizations more generally?
  - a. *If yes*, what are these advantages?
9. Do you (or would you) see any disadvantages in coming together in the ways mentioned above?
  - a. *If yes*, what are these disadvantages?
10. Is there a formal network of community-based organizations in your community or in your region? By formal I mean with ongoing, regular meetings, a coordinator, etc...).
  - a. *If yes*, can you describe what the purpose of this network is and the role that it plays?
  - b. *If no*, would you see any advantage in having a formal network like this?
    - i. *If yes*, what would the purpose and role of a formal network like that be?
11. Is there any informal network of community-based organizations in your community or in your region? By informal, I mean that, for example: the same people may be active in different capacities – i.e., wearing different hats, so there would be automatic communication between organizations in this way, or communication and collaboration may happen automatically due to the small size of the community.
  - a. *If yes*, are there any advantages to maintaining this kind of network informally versus formally?

**Now I want to ask about your organization's role in the overall social and economic development of your community/region.**

12. Do you feel that your organization and/or other community-based organizations in the community or region have a seat at the table when it comes to the development of policy or planning for the overall social and economic development in the community and in the region?

*If yes:*

- a. Is this participation in the development of policy and planning for social and economic development in the community/region regular or ad hoc? (i.e.: are the regular meetings or consultations, or are they few and far between? Is it formal or informal?)
- b. What contribution do you make?
- c. How do you make this contribution?
- d. How is your input received (i.e.: Are your recommendations acted on? Do you feel like an equal partner in the development of policy and planning for social and economic development in the community/region?)

*If no:*

- e. Do you think your organization or other community-based organizations should have a seat at the table in the development of policy and planning for social and economic development in your community/region?
- f. What do you think is the best way for your organization and other community-based organizations to make this contribution?
- g. Do you ever come together as a larger group to discuss your individual or collective contributions to development of policy and planning for social and economic development of your community/region?

**Now I want to ask you about the relationship of your organization to government.**

13. Does your organization have dealings with any particular department or departments of the provincial or federal government?

*If yes:*

- a. Can you describe the nature of these dealings that you have with this government department or departments?

14. Is government aware of your organization's needs, concerns, ideas, and challenges?

*If yes:*

- a. How does government become aware of your needs and concerns?

15. What is the most effective mechanism that you use to communicate the needs of your organization or your client group to the provincial government?
16. Do you ever partner/collaborate with the different levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal) on particular projects, initiatives, etc?
17. What are the advantages associated with partnering/collaborating with the different levels of government?
18. What are the disadvantages associated with partnering/collaborating with the different levels of government?
19. Is there or should there be any formal structure or mechanism in place to help your organization communicate its needs to the provincial government?
  - a. *If there is no formal structure or mechanism and you think there should be, what would it look like?*
20. Is there or should there be any formal structure or mechanism in place to help the community-based sector as a group communicate its collective needs to the provincial government?
  - a. *If there is no formal structure or mechanism and you think there should be, what would it look like?*

**Now I want to ask you about the ability of your organization to achieve your goals and objectives in the region.**

21. What do you see as being your barriers to success in achieving your goals in the community/region?
  - a. What are the opportunities or the factors leading to success?
22. What are the challenges that you face as an organization?
23. What are the barriers to participation and/or collaboration with other community-based organizations in the region?
  - a. What are the opportunities or factors leading to success?
24. Does your organization work with Aboriginal groups in the region?
  - a. *If yes, what is the nature of the partnership/collaboration?*
25. What are the barriers to partnership and/or collaboration with Aboriginal groups in the region?
  - a. What are the opportunities or factors leading to success?
26. What are the barriers to partnership/collaboration with the provincial government?

- a. What are the opportunities or factors leading to success?

**Now I am going to ask you questions about how you might see the future of your organization and of the community-based sector more generally.**

- 27. Do you think that the level of networking and/or collaboration happening within the community-based sector should be improved?

*If yes:*

- a. How should it be improved?
  - b. Why should it be improved?
  - c. What would be the purpose of the networking and/or collaboration - i.e.: Would it be for sharing information? Sharing resources? To access funding? To influence policy and planning for social and economic development in the community/region?
- 28. Do you see any advantages associated with coming together or collaborating within the community-based sector for any of these purposes mentioned in the previous question?
  - 29. Do you see any disadvantages associated with coming together or collaborating within the community-based sector for any of these purposes mentioned in the previous question?
  - 30. Do you think that the provincial provides adequate support to your organization or community-based organizations in general?
    - a. *If yes*, What kinds of support do they provide?
    - b. How might the provincial government improve its support of organizations such as your own?



## Appendix 2: Classification of Organizations Interviewed

Table A-1: Organizational Classification of Groups Interviewed

	Straits	South Coast	Central	Other
Youth	1		1+1	
Women	1		1	
Economic Development	1	2	4	
Persons with Disabilities	1		1	
Family	1	1		
Literacy	1	2+1	1	
Recreation	1	1		1
Seniors		1		
Health			1	
Aboriginal			1	
Other	2	1	2	

\*Interviews conducted by the researcher independently

\*Interviews conducted as a member of the Values Added CURA team

**Table A-2: Organizational Classification of Groups Interviewed (using ICNPO Categories)**<sup>126</sup>

	Straits	South Coast	Central	Other
Group 1: Culture & Recreation	3		3	1
Group 2: Education & Research	1	2+1	1	
Group 3: Health	1		1	
Group 4: Social Services	1	1	1	
Group 5: Environment				
Group 6: Development & Housing	2	2	1	
Group 7: Law, Advocacy & Politics	2		3+3	
Group 8: Philanthropic Intermediaries & Volunteerism Promotion			1	
Group 9: International				
Group 10: Religion				
Group 11: Business & Professional Associations & Unions				
Group 12: Not Elsewhere Classified		1		

<sup>126</sup> International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations. (See Salamon and Anheier 1997).

## Appendix 3: Interview Consent Form

As part of the requirement for a Master's degree in Sociology from Memorial University of Newfoundland, I, Allison Catmur, plan to examine the new policy direction of social and economic development in the province as exhibited by a particular provincial government initiative – the Strategic Social Plan. In particular, I am interested in the move towards collaboration in terms of program development and delivery between the province and the community-based sector (also referred to as the voluntary sector) as exhibited in this initiative. Through this research, I will attempt to determine the nature of collaboration within the community-based sector itself, as well as between this sector and the provincial government. Finally, I will aim to investigate the perspective of the community-based sector as well as the provincial government regarding these various levels of collaboration, and associated advantages and/or disadvantages.

The interviews I am conducting will help me to understand more about the provincial Strategic Social Plan and how this plan envisioned and/or impacted the relationship between the voluntary, community-based sector and the provincial government. If you consent to this interview, your answers will be analysed and my interpretations of your views will be presented in a final thesis paper that will be presented to the sociology department in fulfillment of the requirements for the master's degree. Before finalizing my interpretations, I will give you an opportunity to assess them and point out any misunderstandings I may have had or any adjustments that you feel are necessary. You are free to decline the interview if you like, to refuse to answer any question that you feel is inappropriate or uncomfortable, and to end the interview at any time. If you permit, the interview will be tape-recorded and you can indicate what should be done with the tape after I have analyzed the material. All material will be kept confidential; only myself and possibly my thesis advisors (unless you specify otherwise) will have access to your comments. If I refer to your ideas or comments in my final paper you can choose to remain anonymous. Read each question that follows carefully and feel free to ask me for any clarification before answering.

This research has been approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland (ICEHR). If you have any concerns about the research, you may contact the Chairperson of ICEHR at [icehr@mun.ca](mailto:icehr@mun.ca) or by telephone at 737-8368. Please feel free to contact the researcher (Allison Catmur) with any questions or concerns at [allison.catmur@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:allison.catmur@nf.sympatico.ca) or by telephone at 738-2891. You may also choose to contact the research supervisor (Doug House) at [jdhouse2000@yahoo.ca](mailto:jdhouse2000@yahoo.ca) or by telephone at 739-5892.

1. Do you consent to being interviewed for the purposes stated above? Circle the appropriate answer:

YES

NO

2. If you answered YES to question 1 above, then do you consent to having this interview tape-recorded? Circle the appropriate answer:

YES

NO

3. If you answered YES to question 3 above, then what do you want me to do with the tape when I am finished with the analysis of your comments? For example, would you prefer that I destroy the tapes or return them to you? Please give your instructions below.

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4. Would you like all your comments to remain anonymous if cited or referred to in the final paper?

YES

NO

5. If you answered NO to question 4 above, specify how you would like to be referenced should your comments appear or be reference in the final paper.

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6. Sign below to indicate that the information on this form is accurate and that you feel that you were able to answer the questions to the best of your ability without any form of coercion or incentive.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 4: Interview Questionnaire: Key Informant**

**First I am going to ask a few questions about your involvement with the Strategic Social Plan.**

1. When did you first become involved with the development of the Strategic Social Plan?
  - a. For how long were you or have you been involved?
2. What was the nature of your involvement with the Strategic Social Plan?
  - a. Did you play a role in the development of the plan? If so, what was your role?
    - i. Did you play a role in the drafting of the plan?
  - b. Did you play a role in the implementation of the plan? If so, how?

**Now I am going to ask you a few questions about your perspective regarding the different factors that led up to the development of a Strategic Social Plan for the province.**

3. What was the original impetus for the creation of the Strategic Social Plan for the province? For example, were there key social/economic and/or political factors that drove the development of the SSP?
4. Were there any external factors that influenced the development of the SSP provincially? (i.e.; factors external to *government*, or factors external to the *province* such as lessons from other jurisdictions, federal climate, etc?) If so, what were the key external factors?
5. How would you describe the evolution of the Strategic Social Plan? (i.e.: The different phases of development and the various ideas that influenced the final document; People, Partners and Prosperity?
6. Do you have any other thoughts about the development of the SSP?

**Now I want to ask about your thoughts regarding the SSP itself.**

7. To what extent did People, Partners and Prosperity build on or reflect the visions of the individuals or processes involved in the development of the plan (for example,

how did it reflect the vision of SPAC? What about the Strategic Social Plan Committee under Clyde Wells?) Why do you say this?

- a. In Volume 2 of their report (“Investing in Communities and People”), SPAC recommended specific strategies to be adopted in order to achieve their new framework for social development. I am now going to list these strategies and ask you to rank them in terms of how much you think they were emphasized within the final SSP document, People, Partners and Prosperity (from “Very Much” to “Not Much”). If you want me to elaborate on any one of these strategies, please ask.

- Policy impact analysis:

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Prevention and early intervention:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Integration of policy development and program delivery:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Client-focused, family-centred approaches to service delivery:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Strengthening community capacity:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Research, analysis and evidence-based decision-making:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Strong, balanced partnerships and alliances:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Public participation and collaboration:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Optimizing the use of resources:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don’t Know

- Access to services:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Accountability through social auditing:

Very Much / Quite a Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- b. In your opinion, were there important elements identified in the development of the Plan (through SPAC, for example, or through the Strategic Social Plan Committee under Clyde Wells) that were left out of the People, Partners and Prosperity document? If yes, why do you think these elements were left out and how did it impact the effectiveness of the SSP?

8. What do you feel were the most important elements of the SSP as set out in People, Partners and Prosperity? Why are these elements so important in your opinion?

- a. Now I am going to list the specific action items within People, Partners and Prosperity and ask you to rank to what extent you think that they were emphasized in the implementation of the SSP:

- Government/community partnerships, client-centred delivery and flexible programs and services (i.e.: effective partnerships).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Joint regional planning and development process (i.e.: involvement of communities in planning and delivery).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Coordinated local action, expenditures and funding of community-based sector (i.e.: coordinated service delivery).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Coordinated regional infrastructure investment, consolidation of services and access standards for key services. (i.e.: regional investments linked to development opportunities).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Develop a labour market strategy which promotes opportunities in the private and community-based sector (i.e.: labour market which supports economic and social development).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Integrate provincial and federal investments and agreements and address youth unemployment (i.e.: employment generation in the private and the community-based sectors).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Invest in and adapt social programs to enhance economic development and reduce barriers to employability (i.e.: a qualified labour force).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Develop and ensure standards of access to community-based and multisectoral delivery approaches (i.e.: improved access and quality of services).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Redesign of income support programs, alleviate poverty and provide basic education and literacy (i.e.: citizens able to meet basic needs and achieve self-reliance).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Develop regional prevention strategies, continue new program options and coordinate investments (i.e.: Reduced social and health problems).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Coordinated policy impact analysis across departments, enhanced evidence-based decisions and gender-based analysis (i.e.: Integrated, evidence-based policy development).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

- Departmental planning to design programs and services to meet the SSP goals and objectives (i.e.: consistency between policy and delivery).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know



- Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes using a performance measurement framework and indicators (i.e: effective monitoring and evaluation).

Very Much / Quite A Bit / Somewhat / Not Much / Don't Know

9. How committed do you feel government was to the plan?

Very Much

Quite a Bit

Somewhat

Not Very

Don't Know/Not Sure

a. Can you explain your answer?

b. Can you give examples of government's commitment or lack thereof?

10. What elements of the plan do you think were the most important according to the government?

a. Why do you think these elements were so important to government?

11. What elements of the plan do you think were most important to the Steering Committees in general? (If necessary, specify which Committee is being referenced).

a. Why do you think these elements were so important to the Steering Committees?

12. Do you feel that there were elements of the SSP as set out in People, Partners and Prosperity that were de-emphasized or neglected in the process of implementation?

a. Which ones and why do you think they might have been de-emphasized and/or neglected?

13. What do you feel were the strengths and weaknesses of the SSP?

**Now I am going to ask you about your opinion regarding a particular aspect of the plan which I have been interested in – i.e., “collaboration” or “partnership” within government, and between government and communities and the voluntary, community-based sector.**

14. In your own words, can you describe your understanding of the vision of “collaboration” and “partnership” outlined in the SSP?

- a. For example, who were to be the main players in this collaboration/partnership?
- b. What was the purpose of this collaboration and/or partnership?
- c. Was there any notion of how collaboration would take place or how the partnerships would be formed and maintained?

15. To what extent was “community” or the “voluntary, community-based sector” envisioned as a partner in the collaboration stressed by the SSP?

Very Much

Quite a Bit

Somewhat

Not Much

Don't Know/Not Sure

If it was not stressed:

- a. To what extent do you think community or the VCBS *should* have been stressed as a partner?
- b. What purpose could this type of “intersectoral” collaboration (between government and the VCBS) serve?
  - i. Could it be a way for community/the VCBS to have input into government policy/decision-making in the region?
  - ii. Could it be a way to provide government services more efficiently/appropriately by utilizing existing structures within the community and the VCBS?
  - iii. Could there be any other reasoning/purpose behind this type of inter-sectoral collaboration/partnership?
- c. What would be the advantages/disadvantages and challenges associated with this type of inter-sectoral collaboration?
- d. What would be the role of government, and what would be the role of the VCBS in this collaboration?

- e. Which groups would represent community or the VCBS in this collaboration/partnership? How would they be engaged?
- f. Do you think greater emphasis should have been placed on collaboration/partnership between government and the VCBS? Why or why not?

If this was stressed:

- a) How was this inter-sectoral (i.e. between government and the VCBS) collaboration to take place? (i.e.; how was the partnership to be formed and maintained?)
- b) To what extent was this collaboration or partnership with community and the VCBS stressed in the *actual implementation* of the plan by the Steering Committees?
- c) What purpose did this collaboration between government and the VCBS serve?
  - i. For example, was it meant to be a way for community/the VCBS to have input into government policy/decision-making in the region?
  - ii. Was it meant to be a way to provide government services more efficiently/appropriately by utilizing existing structures within the community and the VCBS?
  - iii. Was there any other reasoning/purpose behind this inter-sectoral collaboration/partnership?
- g. What were the advantages/disadvantages and challenges associated with this type of inter-sectoral collaboration?
- h. What was to be the role of government, and what was to be the role of the VCBS in this collaboration?
- i. Which groups were to represent community or the VCBS in this collaboration/partnership? How were they to be engaged?
- j. Do you think greater emphasis should have been placed on collaboration/partnership between government and the VCBS (i.e.; communities and community-based groups)?

16. In your opinion, what are the advantages/disadvantages for government of partnering/collaborating with the VCBS?
17. In your opinion, what are the advantages/disadvantages for the VCBS of collaborating/partnering with government?

**Now I am going to ask you about the new Rural Secretariat**

18. To what extent does the Rural Secretariat stress the formation of partnerships and collaboration with communities and the VCBS?

Very Much  
Quite a Bit  
Somewhat  
Not Much  
Don't Know/Not Sure

a) Can you explain your answer?

19. What are the main elements of the SSP that influenced and were carried over into the new Rural Secretariat?
20. What do you think of the shift to the Rural Secretariat?
21. Do you think there still is a provincial strategic social plan in some shape or form?
22. Now that we have had the experience of the SSP and can reflect on it, what advice would you give in terms of what we can learn from this experience and how we can move forward and make the new Rural Secretariat successful?

Those are all the questions that I had to ask. In your opinion, are there important issues or elements that I have not covered? If so what are they? Do you have any general questions or comments?

Thanks for participating in this interview.

## **Appendix 5: Conceptual Categories and their Properties**

The delineation of the boundaries of the different Conceptual Categories presented in the table below was informed by the governance and public administration literature (see for example Flinders and Smith 1999; Greve, Flinders and Van Thiel 1999; Hall and Banting 2007; Huard 2005; Koppell 2003; Macleary and Gay 2005; Moe and Kosar 2005; Thynne 2003; Wettenhall 2003). Although this literature offers several useful descriptions of the different sectors in society as well as general characteristics or basic features of organizations found within these sectors, there is a lack of “clear rules or conventions” when it comes to definitive classification (Wettenhall 2003: 230). This leads to confusion and a “disorderliness” which becomes challenging for those trying to understand the “machinery of government” (Wettenhall 2003: 225; Hood, quoted in Wettenhall 2003: 230). In particular, public bodies that are located outside of the central or core apparatus of the state have, as Street so eloquently describes, “grown as variously and profusely and with as little regard to conventional patterns” as “flowers in the spring” (1960; quoted in Wettenhall 2003: 230). The flourishing of this “new species” of public body has given rise to a “new genus,” the boundaries and typologies of which remain imprecise (Street 1960; quoted in Wettenhall 2003: 230). As Hall and Banting observe, there exists “substantial ambiguity in the language that is employed and the boundaries of the subject” (Hall and Banting 2000:7). Organizations located in this grey area have been variously labeled as “para-governmental organizations” (PGOs), “quasi autonomous non-governmental organizations” (QUANGOs), non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), or “hybrid organizations”. This ambiguity extends into the non-governmental, or voluntary, community-based sector, which similarly consists of a plethora of organizations which

are not only subject to a range of classifications (see previous table), but which, upon close inspection, do not always fit neatly within the broadly defined sectoral boundaries.

All of this confusion is related to four key factors. First of all, there is the issue of autonomy, which is central to the problem of situating organizations that seem to straddle the sectoral boundaries. Greve, Flinders and Van Thiel (1999) identify different forms of autonomy, drawing distinctions between political autonomy, autonomy from the state, and autonomy from the market. In either case, they suggest that a workable approach to defining organizations located in “quangoland” should focus on *practical* autonomy (actual independence in day-to-day activities), versus legal or formal autonomy (theoretical independence which may not be realized in practice) (1999: 144). They go on to link the question of autonomy to a second factor that I include on this list; that is, the “historical-institutional” aspects of an organization (1999: 140). Not only can organizations be constituted either “from the bottom-up or sideways across,” (i.e.; their origins can be traced to the grassroots or to government initiatives) but they are not permanently fixed into any given category. At different times in their history, organizations may enter into or terminate various inter-sectoral contracts or agreements that affect their practical autonomy, at least for a certain period or in relation to a particular project (Greve, Flinders and Van Thiel 1999: 140).<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, an

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<sup>127</sup> Examples of organizations constituted by “bottom-up” or “grassroots” initiatives include the Snowmobile Clubs in various communities in Labrador, as well as the District Ferry Committee that emerged in Southern Labrador out of local citizen advocacy surrounding the changes to the coastal ferry service. Meanwhile, the province’s Community Youth Networks (CYN), and many Family Resource Centres (FRC), are good examples of organizations constituted “sideways across” if not “top-down” by a government initiative (both CYNs and FRCs fall under a package of provincial initiatives funded through the targeted federal grant known as the National Child Benefit). In terms of contractual arrangements between NGOs/VCBOs and government (and the associated question of loss of autonomy – be it temporary, program-specific, or otherwise), the Adult Basic Education Level 1 pilot project in the province was an initiative in which the government contracted a service out to the non-governmental sector.

organization may “shift along the continuum” as a departmental unit is “hived off” or transformed into a public body, while a voluntary organization is “hived in” or brought into the family of public bodies (Greve, Flinders and Thiel 1999: 143).

The third factor highlights an associated confusion: the varying understandings of “public,” which presents another hurdle that makes it difficult to precisely classify many “fringe bodies” (Wettenhall 2003). Many equate the term “public” with the institutional public; i.e., the state or “governmental”. Cariño and others, however, identify a non-institutional public, separate from the state and linked instead to the notion of citizenship. Citizenship in this sense is not limited to “membership in a state,” but refers to “members of a political community” and thus comprises civil society and/or the voluntary sector – (Cariño 2001: 57; 64). This conception of public as “citizen” implies both public *and* private linkages. For instance, VCBOs are “public in origin” and “public in effect” in that “their presence and action seek to promote public gain” (Cariño 2001: 70). As Cariño observes, they play a role in civic engagement, public representation and civil leadership, thereby contributing to the expansion of the public realm (2001).<sup>128</sup> However, due to the plurality of interests represented in this non-institutional conception of the public sphere, individual VCBOs often speak on behalf of a minority within the larger sphere of the public or publics. As Cariño argues, “the public a [VCBO] purports to serve may carry a private rather than the public interest” as they may be “biased by their private interests,” show “intolerance of the views of other publics,” and “attach purity of

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<sup>128</sup> There is also the public role attributed to these voluntary organizations (or civil society more generally) by de Tocqueville, who emphasized the way in which they support the development of a vibrant and healthy democracy, not to mention the way in which they contribute to the formation of Putnam’s social capital.

motives only to themselves” (2001: 66; 70).<sup>129</sup> He goes on to conclude that voluntary organizations can therefore be said to be “private and public at the same time,” an ambiguity that, not surprisingly, aggravates the problem of classification of these types of organizations (2001: 70).

All the items outlined above point to the fourth factor that complicates the effort to demarcate the boundaries between conceptual categories; that is, the existence of “sectoral overlap” (Thynne 2003: 1). These overlapping are grey areas that are subject of conflicting sectoral categorization and “public-private blurrings” (Thynne 2003: 1). As Wettenhall aptly describes, the categories have permeable borders, and rather than existing as “watertight compartments”, they are better conceptualized as comprising occasionally shifting points along a continuum (2003: 226).

Taking into consideration the challenges outlined above, I created the final Conceptual Categories presented in the table below in an attempt to reflect the terminologies and general descriptions offered in the literature, the definitions of public bodies according to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the information gained from key informants. I offer some general properties to help guide the process of classification, and give some examples taken from my research. The dotted lines separating the different boxes illustrate the existence of blurred boundaries and the permeability of the categories, and the continuum is illustrated by the double-ended arrow to the left of the table.

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<sup>129</sup> This “plurality of interests” is what gives rise to Nancy Fraser’s multiplicity of publics – a concept which Cariño also apparently supports.



**Table A-3: Conceptual Categories and their Properties**

	Category		Properties	Examples
Public (State)	Governmental Organization <sup>130</sup>		1. Core government bodies or local authorities serving as the decentralized branches of core bodies. 2. Usually headed by a minister or equivalent.	Department of Health and Community Services; SSP Office; Health Canada.
	Para-Governmental Organization (PGO)	Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)	1. Decentralized or “outside the apparatus of central government” (Wettenhall 2003b: 230) for functional (versus territorial) purposes. <sup>131</sup> 2. Semi-autonomous; i.e., has some delegated authority so it can operate independently in day-to-day decisions. Ministers are, however, ultimately responsible (Gov. of the UK 2006: 2). 3. Mandate directed by government. 4. CEO/BOD members appointed by minister.	School Boards; Health and Community Services Boards; Premier’s Council on Social Development (advisory NDPD) <sup>132</sup> ; SSP Regional Steering Committees (also classifiable as an advisory body).
		Quasi-Autonomous (Non-) Governmental Organization (QUANGO) <sup>133</sup>	1. Same as 1 (NDPB) above. 2. Operate independently in majority of decisions, but ability to be self-governing is not absolute (Hall et al 2005). Government may exert strong influence over them; e.g., government “remains able to interfere with their work, override their decisions or abolish them” (Flinders and Smith 1999: 210). 3. CEO and/or BOD members hired/elected by members of the community. 4. Although they may be incorporated as non-profits, for practical purposes, they are better described as “quasi-government”.	Regional Economic Development Boards
	Public (Civil Society)	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) or Voluntary, Community Based Organization (VCBO)	NGO/VCBOs with historical-institutional ties to government	1. An organization that is “formally constituted; nongovernmental in basic structure; self-governing; non-profit-distributing; (and) voluntary to some meaningful extent” (Salaman & Anheier 1997) 2. Demonstrates an on-going, formal historical-institutional link to government which compromises the practical autonomy of the organization, although it is “institutionally separate” from government (Hall et al 2005).
Grassroots NGO/VCBO			1. Same as 1 (NGO/VCBO with historical-institutional ties to government) above 2. May receive funding from government (usually project-based) but maintains organizational autonomy.	Snowmobile club, Recreation Committee, Book club, Heritage society
Private	Private Organization		1. Nongovernmental and autonomous, for-profit. 2. Owned/managed by private individuals or corporations.	Air Labrador, Eagle River Credit Union, Labrador Fishermen’s Union Shrimp Company Limited, INCO.

<sup>130</sup> The properties of this category have been informed by descriptions offered by Wettenhall (2003b) and Scott (2003).

<sup>131</sup> For more on territorial versus functional de-centralization, see Macmahon (1961).

<sup>132</sup> For more on the different types of NDPBs, see Government of United Kingdom (2006).

<sup>133</sup> Many understand the term "NDPB" to be synonymous with "QUANGO" (see Greve et al 1999; Government of the UK 2006). I have employed these terms to describe different points along the spectrum of para-governmental organizations. I recognize that the term "QUANGO" may be misleading as these organizations may be more akin to governmental, rather than non-governmental (see Government of the UK 2006). For this reason, some prefer to use the term "Quasi-governmental organization" or "QUAGO".



