

7-1-2017

# The Applicability of British Columbia's Regional Districts as a model of Regional Governance for Newfoundland and Labrador

Jennifer Crowe  
Western University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/lgp-mrps>

 Part of the [Public Administration Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Crowe, Jennifer, "The Applicability of British Columbia's Regional Districts as a model of Regional Governance for Newfoundland and Labrador" (2017). *MPA Major Research Papers*. 166.  
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/lgp-mrps/166>

This Major Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Local Government Program at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in MPA Major Research Papers by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact [tadam@uwo.ca](mailto:tadam@uwo.ca), [wlsadmin@uwo.ca](mailto:wlsadmin@uwo.ca).

The Applicability of British Columbia's Regional Districts as a model of Regional Governance  
for Newfoundland and Labrador

MPA Research Report

Submitted to

The Local Government Program  
Department of Political Science  
The University of Western Ontario

Jennifer C. Crowe  
Aug 2017

The Applicability of British Columbia's Regional Districts as a model of Regional Governance  
for Newfoundland and Labrador

**ABSTRACT**

Adequate service delivery, equitable representation, and efficient financing have been at the forefront of local government issues in Newfoundland and Labrador since before confederation. A means to achieve more efficient service provision, better representation of rural interests, and a stronger financing model, is through regional governance. This paper asks; in designing a model of regional governance for Newfoundland and Labrador, to what extent can the British Columbia Regional District model be applied to the Newfoundland and Labrador context? Applying a historical, qualitative-inductive form of data collection, this paper will focus on providing the reader with an understanding of the regional governance issues currently faced within Newfoundland and Labrador. The paper will then delve into an analysis of the origins, history, and evolution of the Regional District model in British Columbia. Through this analysis, the author will argue that Newfoundland and Labrador is currently positioned for the development of a regional governance model, based on many of the same issues faced by British Columbia prior to the creation of Regional Districts. Finally, this paper will narrow in on three separate case studies of regional governance, including: 1) the Capital Regional District, 2) the Cariboo Regional District, and 3) the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District. These three regional districts will be compared to regions within Newfoundland and Labrador that are similar in geographical location and population density. The aim is to compare how more efficient and effective governance, servicing, and financing could be provided in Newfoundland and Labrador through the Regional District model, and what constraints and opportunities would be presented in applying this model.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

ABSTRACT .....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	3
CHAPTER 1 Introduction .....	4
1.1: Developing a Model of Regional Governance: Why British Columbia? .....	7
1.2: Research Methods .....	8
CHAPTER 2 A need for regional governance: Newfoundland and Labrador.....	12
2.1: Defining Regional Governance .....	12
2.2: The History of Regional Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador .....	13
2.3: Where are we now? Newfoundland and Labrador’s Current System of Regional Governance.....	16
CHAPTER 3 The Utility of British Columbia’s Regional District Model.....	18
3.1: History and Evolution of BC’s Regional District model .....	18
3.2: The Structure of the Regional District system .....	21
3.3: Implementing a Regional District Model: Financing and Representation Models .....	22
CHAPTER 4 Regional Applicability of the BC model within Newfoundland and Labrador .....	27
4.1: Methodology and Context.....	27
4.2: Case Study #1: the Capital Regional District and the Avalon Peninsula .....	30
4.3: Case Study #2: the Cariboo Regional District and Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region .....	32
4.4: Case Study #3: The Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District and the St. Anthony- Port Au Choix region.....	34
CHAPTER 5 Conclusion .....	37
CHAPTER 6 Policy Recommendations.....	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	41

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to the second smallest population of any Canadian province, with the 2016 census putting the provincial population at approximately 530,000 people (Statistics Canada, 2016). However, the population is spread out among 453 communities, ranging in size from 217,454 people to 4 people. Not all of these communities have local governments, with 177 of the communities being considered unincorporated municipalities, meaning that they are not formally governed by elected officials (Statistics Canada, 2016; Keenan, 2010). With no way to administer property tax, residents of these 177 unincorporated municipalities must rely on other means to acquire basic services, and alternative ways to pay for these services. Within Newfoundland and Labrador, the number of residents not paying property tax currently sits at about 10% of the current population (Keenan, 2010: 10). This accounts for 53,000 people whose services, including water and waste management, snow clearing, garbage collection, and road upkeep, must be provided through other means. The result is that these services are provided through a number of different agreements, including Local Service Districts and Regional Service Boards who aim to create economies of scale in order to provide limited services to residents of some municipalities. These services, when provided by Local Service District and Regional Service Boards, are limited to select categories, including water supply, street lighting, snow clearing, among others (Regional Service Boards Act, 2012: s.19). Furthermore, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador plays a large role in securing infrastructure for unincorporated regions, and in providing many services that cannot be provided through unincorporated municipalities and Local Service Districts. For example, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador pays \$80 million dollars on roads alone to unincorporated regions who do not have the ability to fund road construction and upkeep within

their regions (CBC, Sept 19 2013). For municipalities, the question is how to ensure that services are being provided that meet the needs of citizens living in these regions. For the provincial government, the question, in part, is how in the midst of a \$1.9 billion dollar deficit, the government can cost-save while continuing to ensure that services are provided equitably to all regions of the province (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2016: 4). Effective service delivery has long been discussed as a growing concern in Newfoundland and Labrador. It forms the foundation of most arguments for (or against) regional governance. However, in conceptualizing how to develop an effective model of regional governance for Newfoundland and Labrador (as a solution to service delivery), one must first develop an understanding of the historical events that brought the province to its current context of local governance.

The 1974 Royal Commission of Municipal Government in Newfoundland and Labrador established seven characteristics of a desirable local system within the province (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974). These characteristics were further detailed in the Finn Commission, a 2008 study of self-governance in New Brunswick. These characteristics included access, service, identity, representation, efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance, simplicity, and accountability (Finn, 2008). If we are to acknowledge local government as a “proper government”, then we must also hold their ability (and requirement) to effectively represent their citizens, and finance their servicing to as high a regard as we do any other level of government. In other words, an effective local government should not only be able to provide services for its citizens, but it should also offer effective and accountable financing (to pay for these services), and strong representation of its residents (through service delivery and leadership). This paper will build on

the argument that a regional governance model must be built around the need for effective service delivery, equitable financing, and effective representation of citizens.

Within Newfoundland and Labrador, the goals of effective local government are difficult to achieve due, in part, to the nearly 180 existing unincorporated municipalities. While there have been attempts to tackle this issue via local service districts, regional service boards, and regional councils, all of these local government vehicles have limited capacity and power. An argument has been made for the use of Regional Service Boards as a way to provide regional governance, however these boards are provincially managed, governed by a provincial chairperson, and integrating additional powers into their mandate would serve to expand provincial power over a region (Keenan, 2010: 36). Ultimately, there is a need to provide a system of regional governance that has the ability to effectively provide for the comprehensive needs of local citizens. Sancton and Young, argue that in order for a local governing body to be effective, it must be granted legitimacy (2009: 2). In other words, in order for local governments to achieve the practical goals of service delivery, financing, and representation, there must be an institutional framework, and the necessary legislative power, that enables all of these goals to be achieved. Utilizing existing structures such as Local Service Districts and Regional Service Boards, which are not built to serve democratic principles, will only result in failure to provide sustainable and responsive community governance. Ensuring that the institutional framework for regional governance reflects the goals of good governance, is an integral first step in developing a system regional governance that is accountable to citizens.

## **1.1: Developing a Model of Regional Governance: Why British Columbia?**

While regional governance models can be found in Nova Scotia, Ontario, and throughout the United States, the system that draws the most parallels to the Newfoundland and Labrador context is that of British Columbia's Regional Districts. British Columbia, in the 1960's, was in a similar situation that Newfoundland and Labrador is in today. Since the early 1920s, British Columbia attempted to better serve geographically diverse and rural regions through a variety of institutional frameworks. Similar to the Newfoundland and Labrador context, British Columbia had major planning issues when it came to servicing incorporated and unincorporated regions. In 1924, the BC government legislated Sewage and Drainage Boards, as a way to provide basic services to unincorporated and rural regions (Collier, 1972: 29). These are similar to Regional Service Boards in Newfoundland and Labrador, which aim to serve a similar purpose today. From these Sewage and Drainage Boards evolved other forms of governance, including Community Planning Areas, which were formed to tackle development issues in rural and fringe regions (1972: 30). The major shortcomings of these two institutional frameworks is that they had limited staff and enforcement powers. Ultimately, it was a regional governance institution without the political power to back it up (30). Furthermore, local municipalities did not respect the policies that emerged from these provincially legislated boards that weren't receptive of local interests and needs (30). There was a growing need to solve issues of planning and service delivery through an institution whereby the province was not the sole bearer of authority. There was also a growing need to address a plethora of other issues, including long-term capital borrowing for municipalities, and hospital financing (British Columbia, 2006: 2-5).



In 1965, legislation was created enable the creation of regional districts (2006: 6). These regional districts were created through what can best be described as a system of gentle imposition. Over the next five years, one at a time, 28 regional districts were incorporated, based loosely on the existing school districts boundaries (6). Championed by Deputy Minister James Everett Brown and Minister Dan Campbell, the 1965 proposed legislation was presented as an empty vehicle. This meant that while the boundaries of the regional district were fixed, the services that it provided were not. The result was that the imposition of Regional Districts was met with little backlash, as they had no specific, prescribed purpose, yet they had a lot of potential. To this day, while Regional Districts are mandated to provide a few key services, including general administration, land use planning in electoral areas, and solid waste management planning, there are about a dozen additional services that the regional district has the option of providing, depending on the needs and wants of the residents that it serves (Government of British Columbia, 2017).

## **1.2: Research Methods**

In a recent 2017 article, Harold Wolman explored the transferability of the British Columbia Regional Governance model to regions in the United States. His analysis followed that of Mossberger and Wolman in their discussion of methods of policy transfer (Wolman, 2017: 18). Utilizing his method of policy transfer, this paper will first examine whether the problems and objectives in Newfoundland and Labrador are similar to that of British Columbia. Secondly, it will analyze the British Columbia model, and its effectiveness and constraints in carrying out its objectives in British Columbia. Thirdly, it will consider the constraints for transfer to the Newfoundland and Labrador context, focusing on the geographical, cultural, and historical

context of the region.

In conceptualizing a new model of regional governance for Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia is a strong place to start. First of all, the British Columbia model has demonstrated its sustainability. It has been around for over fifty years in British Columbia, and while services it provides has evolved, the model itself has remained consistent. Scholars agree with near unanimity that British Columbia's Regional Districts have been successful in achieving goals of increased efficiency and stronger service delivery through inter-municipal collaboration (Wolman, 2017: 19). While there have not been in-depth outcome studies of the success of British Columbia's Regional Districts, their longevity and consistency speaks for itself. It has remained relatively unchanged over the years, because it's service delivery mechanism "works" for the people it serves.

In addition to the strong track record of the BC Regional District model, it also has applicability to other regions. First, the Regional District model is both voluntary and flexible. Apart from the couple of legislated services that it must provide, it has the autonomy to provide whichever services it sees as needed. Second, it is a part of the broader municipal system, meaning that it does not serve as a second level of municipal government, but instead is an extension of the existing local government as representatives are already elected or appointed leaders within the community (British Columbia, 2006: 8). Ultimately, it is viewed as an effective and transferable system of regional governance. In applying the British Columbia model of regional governance to Newfoundland and Labrador, it is important to understand the similarities and differences that forms the basis for comparison. Newfoundland and Labrador, like British Columbia, is a geographically large province with hundreds of small communities

and a select few urban centres. Both provinces are coastally located, with similar rural histories. Along with the province-wide similarities, this paper will employ a case study analysis, focusing on three similar regional districts in British Columbia, and comparing them to three different regions in Newfoundland and Labrador. These three regions have been chosen based on population and geography, and will be analyzed from a historical, geographical and cultural context. It will compare the types of governance and servicing systems used within each of these regional districts and how they might apply to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Using qualitative-inductive reasoning, this paper will compare the British Columbia Capital Regional District with the Avalon Peninsula region of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Capital Regional District is home to a population of 383,360 people, and includes the coastal urban centre of Victoria (Statistics Canada, 2016). Newfoundland and Labrador Avalon Peninsula is home to 270,346 people, and includes the province's most urban region, St. John's (Statistics Canada, 2016). Second, the British Columbia Caribou Regional District will be compared to the Grand-Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton region. The Caribou Regional District has a population of 61,988 and is located in central British Columbia, and is an in-land area (Statistics Canada, 2016). Also a centrally-located region of the province, 47,305 people live in the Grand-Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012: 3). Finally, the comparison will be made between two northern, primarily rural regions; the British Columbia Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District and the St. Anthony- Port au Choix region in Newfoundland. By looking at historical, geographical, and cultural contexts, this paper will analyze how the three regional district models could compare to similarly geographically and populated regions in Newfoundland and

Labrador. The aim will be to use this comparison to draw a broader set of recommendations as to how a regional district model could be implemented in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **A need for regional governance: Newfoundland and Labrador**

#### **2.1: Defining Regional Governance**

The term “regional governance” is often used to describe a system of structures, institutions, and processes through which groups organize and act in the pursuit of joint purposes on a regional scale (Hutchison, 2009: 138). Regional governance is a general term, which can describe a service agreement between two neighboring municipalities, a metropolitan governance system, such as that of the Montreal Metropolitan Community, or a provincially or state-mandate form of governance for a particular region. Ultimately, regional governance serves the purpose of being able to create scalability in service delivery. Barnes and Foster define regional governance as “deliberate efforts by multiple actors to achieve goals in multi-jurisdictional environments” (2012: 2). Through this definition, regional governance is defined through its ability to facilitate the achieving of joint goals among multiple actors. Walker describes regional service delivery approaches as being conducted through a continuum (1987: 14). He argues that regional service delivery mechanisms can be classified within a 17-level typology, ranging from “easiest” to “hardest” (2012: 16). The “easiest” forms of regional governance here are classified as being forms of informal cooperation and interlocal service agreements (2012: 16). The most complex governmental arrangements include multi-level restructuring and reforms (2012: 16). This chapter will explore the various forms of governance that currently exist within the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Through this chapter, an argument will be built that in order to address the prevailing issues of inefficient service delivery, inequitable rural representation, and disorganized financing, a provincially legislated model of regional governance must be implemented.

## **2.2: The History of Regional Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland and Labrador's history of regional and local governance is often perceived to be 50+ years behind many other regions in North America. This can be partially explained by the province's geographic separation from the rest of Canada, and by the disperse separation of communities from one another (Keenan, 2010: 8). In addition, the province was somewhat disconnected from regional governance movements happening elsewhere across the country in the early 1900's. Furthermore, the economic situation in Newfoundland and Labrador meant that local government was slow to develop, as there was a lack of public will to develop local governments. Rooted in the fishery, most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were too focused on their survival to be concerned about local government. The economic outlook within the province improved when the province became the last province to join Canada in 1949. Joining Canada meant that the province could access national benefits including old age pensions, baby bonuses, and most importantly, unemployment insurance (Keenan, 2012: 10). The provision of unemployment insurance meant that fisherpeople did not have to live in severe poverty for half of the year. This also created time and financial leverage to consider community betterment. Upon joining confederation in 1949, the provincial government passed the Local Government Act, which established the responsibilities of municipal government, along with set out powers of taxation (Keenan, 2010: 13). The Local Government Act heavily encouraged municipal incorporation through financial incentives, and led to the incorporation of a total of 53 municipal governments just six years after confederation (Keenan, 2010: 13). Today, there are 276 incorporated municipalities within the province, a number that has been relatively stable since 1962 (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974: 35). While there was rapid incorporation of municipalities until 1962, there remains 177 communities that did not incorporate, and it is

within these communities that residents do not pay property tax. Many of the financial, servicing, and representation issues that the province faces today are impacted by this large number of unincorporated municipalities.

The 177 unincorporated communities throughout the province face significant barriers to effective representation and services delivery, as they do not have a formal council, or governance system. They are run, if at all, by a group of volunteers who chair various committees that take care of essential needs of the community. There is no governing system, and while there are sometimes ad hoc service agreements with neighboring municipalities for waste disposal, for example, there is no effective means of service delivery for these municipalities. In the 1970s, after about twenty years of provincial incentives to incorporate, the provincial government began discussions on how to provide effective governance, service delivery, and financing to these unincorporated regions. The first real exploration into regional governance came out of the 1974 Royal Commission on Municipal Government in Newfoundland and Labrador (Newfoundland and Labrador, 1974). The report focused on the need to address current inefficiencies in service delivery through the creation of a regional governance system which would include unincorporated municipalities (1974: 495). The argument was that the implementation of a regional governance system would help develop economies of scale, and allow for unincorporated municipalities to steer away from the often ad hoc and sometimes ineffective systems of volunteer committees. The policy action that resulted from the 1974 Royal Commission on Municipal Government came with the creation of the 1979 Municipalities Act (Keenan, 2010: 21). Under the Municipalities Act, the province was granted the power to create regional councils, however to date only one has been created, The Fogo

Island Regional Council (2010: 21). Under the Municipalities Act, the provincial government has the power to create a regional council, however they have never chosen to use this power. In fact, the only Regional Council that exists was created out of joint interest from the regions involved, and was locally created (2010: 21). The 1974 Royal Commission on Municipal Government lay the groundwork for regional governance, granting power to the province in creating governance systems that helped empower regions to share knowledge and create economies of scale. However, due to real or perceived push-back from municipalities and provincial government officials alike, regional councils were never formed by the provincial government.

During the time that the Municipalities Act was created, so too was the Department of Rural Development. This department focused on the funding of Regional Development Associations (RDAs), which were formed as committees to focus on economic and community development (Vodden et al., 2014: 4). This new department provided funding, notably for RDA coordinators in various regions across the province, which resulted in an increase of the number of RDAs from 15 in 1974, to 59 in 1994 (2014: 4). While RDAs were perceived as a step in the right direction in terms of regional governance, their powers were limiting and their structure was not uniform. It was suggested in the 1980s that RDAs were mechanisms for the provincial government to create short-term jobs, and that ultimately, they did not encourage long-term planning (2014: 5). RDAs were increasingly seen as unsustainable mechanisms for short term employment, and were further challenged by the emergence of other economic development organizations, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) (Keenan, 2010: 22). Furthermore, with the implementation of Regional Economic Development Boards by the provincial government in the 1990s (which were backed by provincial and federal government funding), the need for RDAs began to decline (Vodden et al., 2014: 10). Regional Economic



Development Boards were formed with the intention of bringing together local input and skills with provincial and federal government funding. However, less than a decade after their inception, Rural Secretariat Councils were created, with staff designated to each region, along with appointed boards of volunteers (2014: 12). In 2011, the funding to Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) was cut, and to date only 2 of the original 20 REDBs that once existed, continue to exist (2014: 15).

### **2.3: Where are we now? Newfoundland and Labrador's Current System of Regional Governance**

What exists today is a disjointed system of service delivery, governance, and financing. This system has been born out of a fragmented history which has been highly contingent on the provincial government direction of the day. Members of this system include 276 incorporated municipalities, and hundreds of local service districts (LSDs) and unincorporated municipalities (Vodden, 2014: 16). Many of these municipalities have service agreements with neighboring communities, and some have formed joint councils to deliver services and address local needs (2014: 16). Along with these ad hoc service agreements, Regional Waste Management Authorities exist across the province, and provide some regional services (Vodden and Hall, 2013: 135). Some of these regional authorities also manage non-waste management services, including fire servicing. They are governed by a board of directors that represents the incorporated, unincorporated, and LSDs that it serves (2013: 135). While these authorities have helped minimize the number of waste management disposal areas across the province, they do have limited authority, and certainly do not have the governance structure to carry out services much above and beyond their currently mandated authority of waste management (135). Ultimately, where services are not being provided locally, the municipality either has service

agreements with neighboring municipalities (largely essential or emergency services), or the provincial government steps in to provide services. The provision of these services is provided, in part, with the help of Rural Secretariat Councils, who aim to “identify priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which consider economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects” (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2014: 3). These councils do not provide services directly, but they do help bring together individuals, non-profit organizations, private industry, and various levels of government in order to identify and tackle local priorities (2014). The bill for other necessary services in unincorporated areas are footed by the provincial government. For example, the provincial government spends \$80 million a year on roads that go through municipalities where the people do not pay property tax (CBC News, Sept 19, 2013). The current fragmented system not only creates a fragmented system of governing, but it also means that service quality is highly contingent on where one lives. In 2011, 25% of the province was affected by a boil water advisory (Statistics Canada, 2011). This is the highest statistic in all of Canada for boil water advisories. Coupled with the issue of service delivery, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has reached a debt load of 2 billion dollars (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2017). Much of the expenditures that the provincial government makes are on service provision for regions that could be otherwise financed through property tax or user-based fees. The question, however, is what kind of system would adequately address issues of governance, financing, and service delivery, while appealing to the provincial government, and municipalities alike?

## **CHAPTER 3** **The Utility of British Columbia's Regional District Model**

### **3.1: History and Evolution of BC's Regional District model**

This paper aims to highlight the extent to which British Columbia's Regional District model could be applied to Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador in present day draws close parallels to British Columbia in 1965. At that time, there were three main issues with local governance in British Columbia. This included: 1) a lack of planning ability in rural regions, 2) difficulty for rural regions to access basic services (i.e. fire protection and water supply), and 3) free rider circumstances, whereby residents of rural regions rely on the use of municipal facilities (in neighboring communities), without paying fair share of the costs (British Columbia, 2006: 4). Overall, there was no uniform way of managing issues and delivering services beyond municipal boundaries. As is currently the case in Newfoundland and Labrador, those services that were provided in rural regions were often provided by (and at the cost of) provincial ministries (British Columbia). Furthermore, as is the current context in Newfoundland and Labrador, there was no ability in British Columbia to acquire economies of scale. The economies of scale that did exist came from inter-municipal service agreements, and special purpose regional service agencies (2006: 4). Where Newfoundland and Labrador has spent the past 60 years struggling with models of regional governance and means to produce economies of scale, British Columbia spent the first sixty years of the century doing the same. Like Newfoundland and Labrador, most of the province's population occupied the coast of the province. The population in British Columbia was spread out among 156 communities, some being very isolated (British Columbia, 2017). While Newfoundland and Labrador struggled with rural communities borrowing services from neighboring rural communities at no cost, British

Columbia struggled with urban fringe issues, where there was no way to provide a service delivery model to regions that were outside the main metropolitans, despite them benefitting from close proximity to municipal services (British Columbia, 2017). There were many early attempts to address the issues of local governance that British Columbia faced through a regional approach towards planning in the Lower Mainland area of the province (British Columbia). The Lower Mainland region included twenty municipalities. In 1948 the Fraser River flood, drew political attention to the need to implement regional flood planning that spanned municipal boundaries in the region (British Columbia). Community Planning Areas also existed as a provincially implemented system to assist areas of the province that were struggling with various development related issues (Collier, 1972: 30). These regions were often used in urban-fringe areas, and covered both incorporated and unincorporated communities within the province. However, as with Regional Development Associations in Newfoundland and Labrador, the challenge was their lack of enforcement power, lack of staff, and conflict with other inter-municipal organizations and boards at the time (Collier, 1972: 30). While these early attempts set the groundwork for regional cooperation, it wasn't until the 1960s that regional governance was seriously considered.

Along with the issue of planning, there was a need to address issues related to the functioning of hospitals in British Columbia (31). While hospitals are a function of the province, their development was guided to an extent by local advisory committees across the province, with wide discrepancy in representation from one region to another. The Provincial Government saw an opportunity to use a form of regional governance to bring together health and local government as a way to enable stronger regional representation (31). Along with the need to address issues of planning, service delivery, and healthcare, there was a clear policy window

which was seized by key political leaders in British Columbia at the time. Between the years of 1931 and 1961, the share of the population living in or on the fringes of urban regions grew from 45% to 75% of the provincial population (British Columbia). Furthermore, the mass production of the automobile in the 1950s meant that individuals had the ability to live in fringe (often unincorporated municipalities), and commute to their places of work (British Columbia). It also meant that there was an increased need for local governments to jump in and provide sewage and roads in rural regions that formerly did not require them (Brown, 1968). In response to these emerging issues, as well as the more prevalent issues of planning and service delivery, a new Local Services Act was introduced in 1957 by Wesley Black in an effort to address regional issues (1968). This was the start of attempts to develop a regional governance model, and through the legislation of a new Local Services Act, the Department of Municipal Affairs was granted the power to establish any unincorporated municipality as a Local Area, with the Ministry having the ability to act in governing the region, as any local Council would (British Columbia, 2017). This would entail granting the Ministry of Municipal Affairs the power to “impose regulations, provide services, and through the Ministry of Finance, collect taxes” (2017). This act began the process of regional governance for British Columbia. The new Local Services Act was created with the idea in mind that establishing these unincorporated areas as Local Areas, with the provincial government having the ability to tax local regions, and provide services in return. This was considered an interim measure until these municipalities decided to seek incorporation. Between the years of 1957 and 1963, the Department of Municipal Affairs established 28 local areas (British Columbia, 2017). Within these services areas, an abundance of services were provided, including nursing care, fire protection, a highway rest stop, and

ambulance servicing, with the provincial government collecting taxes and providing governance to these regions in return (2017).

The implementation of these Local Services Areas demonstrated the need for a local solution to local problems. There was a significant amount of local push-back to the imposition of these areas, and the administration of these areas proved difficult because there were limited (or no) public servicing agencies available on the ground in these regions (British Columbia). When other regional servicing issues, such as garbage disposal became apparent, the government, under the leadership of Deputy Minister Everett Brown, began to look at alternatives to these Local Service Areas (British Columbia). This began with an exploration of the option of leveraging the current school district boundaries, and using them to create a rural county model.

### **3.2: The Structure of the Regional District system**

The British Columbia regional governance model was so successful because it had to be the solution to so many problems. It had to create a regionalized method of service delivery, while not alienating municipalities. As within the Newfoundland and Labrador context, the province walked a fine line between attempting to find solutions to problems that spanned regional boundaries, without further isolating the municipalities that were most affected. In developing what would become the Regional District model, it was also emphasized that the model would have to give municipalities the authority to opt in or out of services, as they had been given this right when joining single purpose boards for water, sewer, and health (British Columbia, 2017). By 1964, Dan Campbell (Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs),

and Everett Brown (Deputy Minister), were able to work together to build political buy-in from other MLAs and mayors, and draft legislation for Regional Districts. The legislation was presented on October 20th, 1964, with the suggestion of 23 regional districts, which were divided based on the geographical regions of school districts (British Columbia, 2017). The plan was presented as an empty vessel approach, whereby regional districts would not *have* to provide any services, but would instead be provided with a list of services that they could provide (2017). Furthermore, the legislation gives power to unincorporated municipalities to petition the Regional District to provide basic services (i.e. water supply, and garbage disposal). This legislation was paramount, as it also addressed the financing structure (based on the mill rate and leveraging of property tax), and the governing structure of the regional district (whereby representatives on the regional district are appointed or elected from the municipalities that they comprise) (British Columbia, 2017). The voting power of each municipality on the Regional District would be contingent on the population of the municipalities that it represents (2017). Perhaps the most important aspect of this legislation was that it explicitly states that “the more generalized this legislation... the better” (2017). The goal was to be able to implement an empty vessel, whereby additional services could be carried out via Letters Patent. The amendments to the municipal act were accepted unanimously in 1965 (2017). Shortly thereafter, regional governance administrations began to crop up in a total of 21 regions.

### **3.3: Implementing a Regional District Model: Financing and Representation Models**

While the Regional District model seems simple in practice, the two major changes (along with the institutional set-up of a regional district), are the financing and representation model for individuals living in incorporated and unincorporated municipalities across British

Columbia. When developing an understanding of the applicability of the model to Newfoundland and Labrador, it is important to comprehend how representation and financing worked through this new model. Regional Districts finance their operations primarily through property tax (British Columbia, 2017). Each Regional District is responsible for setting out its annual budget through a five year plan. The amount that is needed is then collected via property tax, which is divided between member municipalities, unincorporated municipalities, and service areas (British Columbia, 2017). While municipalities have the power to levy and collect taxes directly from residents, regional districts cannot. Instead, the Regional District must submit to the Ministry a detailed account of the amount that will be needed for each service that their regional district provides, and the proposed division of this amount among residents within the Regional District (British Columbia, 2017). Within municipal boundaries, the regional district bills the municipality for the services that are being provided to the region, and the municipality levies the property tax from its residents. Outside of municipal boundaries (i.e. unincorporated regions), the same process follows, but the Surveyor of Taxes levies and collects taxes from these properties (British Columbia). The Regional District is also able to follow the same process for user fees if it so desires (British Columbia). In applying a model of Regional Governance to Newfoundland and Labrador, the same process could be followed, however some regions would have to first be assessed for property value in order for a property tax to be leveraged. There is an existing Municipal Assessment Agency, which is a crown-owned corporation which does property assessment for property-owners and municipalities (Municipal Assessment Agency, 2017).

In terms of representation, the Regional District is divided into electoral areas, whereby each electoral area elects a representative to sit on the regional board, and each municipality can



elect a council to sit on the regional board. Ultimately, the number of directors on the board from any given area, is determined by the population of the given electoral area or municipality (British Columbia, [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional\\_district\\_governance.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional_district_governance.htm)) .In addition, normally only those regions that are participating in a service have the authority to vote on it. Depending on population, some regions get more votes on issues than others. Furthermore, depending on the number of directors that are representing a given region, certain directors may have multiple votes (British Columbia, 2017). Otherwise, regional districts work the same way that a municipal council does, in establishing committees and commissions, with the corporation being led by a CAO, and with the board members being accountable to the citizens that it governs.

### **3.4: Regional Districts: have they been successful?**

In exploring the literature, Regional Districts are generally understood as being very successful, even more than fifty years after their creation. While it is perhaps impossible to objectively measure the level of their success, many academics agree that British Columbia's Regional District model is among the best forms of regional governance in the world, and it has been applauded by administrators and academics, worldwide (University of Victoria, 2009: 2). In 2009, the University of Victoria brought together academics and practitioners of local government in British Columbia to assess the evolution of Regional Governance since 1965. In the report that followed, these successes and challenges of the system were highlighted. Participants in this symposium all agreed that Regional Districts provided, and continue to provide, an effective structure for the delivery of regional services (2009: 12). Within British Columbia, and around the world, the Regional District model has been seen as an un-matched

model in providing economies of scale, and this is largely rooted in the “voluntary” aspect of the Regional District system, whereby municipalities and unincorporated regions have the capacity to opt in or out of services that they need (12). This has been largely tied to a cultural and historical need to respect local autonomy. Regional Districts cater to this need that perhaps no other forms of regional governance do (13). This is very much the case within Newfoundland and Labrador, whose populations are heavily tied to localities. Again, this makes the regional district model one that has potential within Newfoundland and Labrador.

Academics and practitioners alike agree that the Regional District model has demonstrated long-term success and resilience. Fahim (2009), argues in reference to regional districts that “there is no denying that local governments in British Columbia achieve the benefits of larger scale while preserving those of local autonomy and control”. Furthermore, Bish and Clemens (2008), argue that Regional Districts are superior when compared to other forms of regional government, because in most other forms of regional government conflict occurs when one group of officials govern at the regional level, and another group governs at the local level (62). The Regional District model ensures that representation comes directly from the existing local government (through appointment), or through the election of a representative within unincorporated regions.

While the resilience of the regional governance model and its continued success as a model of service delivery speaks for itself, these have been challenges with the regional governance system over the years. While regional districts have been widely viewed as being successful in addressing regional service delivery problems that cannot be delivered under other service agreements, there are limits to this success. For one, the system can promote free-

ridership, whereby municipalities are tempted to free-ride regional services without opting-in (and hence paying for their delivery) (Wolman, 2016: 27). Because the system is based primarily on property tax, there may also be instances whereby a new service would benefit the entire region, but the financing would land disproportionately on a certain community or municipality, and hence could be rejected to the detriment of the entire region (2016: 27). Despite its challenges, perhaps the biggest way to demonstrate the overall success of the Regional District model is the interest in applying it elsewhere.

Part of the success of the regional district model is that it feels familiar. From elected council members, to (for most) an unchanging model of taxation, the model involves a relative lack of disruption to the current municipal system. The reason that the regional district model has been seen as effective is likely the same reason it received very little push-back when it was implemented. It is truly a local solution to local problems, with both rural and urban municipalities and regions being fairly represented through the model, with the administrative system to support the servicing of their needs. The following chapter will explore the regional applicability of the British Columbia Regional District model in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Regional Applicability of the BC model within Newfoundland and Labrador**

Thus far, this paper has aimed to paint a picture of the Newfoundland and Labrador context by examining the struggle of service delivery, financing and representation that has existed in Newfoundland and Labrador since pre-1945. A picture of British Columbia's struggle to meet the same needs has been provided as well; one of a battle with various forms of regional service provision since the turn of the twentieth century. At this point, it has been demonstrated that Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017 looks a lot like British Columbia in 1960. Faced with a multitude of regional issues and an inability to provide economies of scale, the provincial government and municipalities alike, are left looking for an answer. This section will aim to further demonstrate the applicability of the British Columbia Regional District model to the Newfoundland and Labrador context by focusing on three separate case studies. These case studies include: 1) the Capital Regional District and the Avalon Peninsula region, 2) the Cariboo Regional District and the Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region, and 3) the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District and the St. Anthony- Port Au Choice region. The intention of making this comparison is to demonstrate the ways that these regions are similar and/or different, and based on this assessment, analyze how each specific Regional District could be applied to the region in questions, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### **4.1: Methodology and Context**

Regional Districts were legislated in 1964 with the intention that they would be flexible, open vessels, that could equally service urban and rural regions, alike. Their creators at the time envisioned that they would take a multitude of forms, from providing a couple of key services, to providing almost a dozen. Through more than fifty years of evolution, Regional Districts have

indeed taken a multitude of forms. They service populations from 3,248 people in the Central Coast Regional District, to 2,558,029 people in the Metro Vancouver Regional District (British Columbia, 2016). The variety and types of services provided reflects the rural and urban needs of the populations that are served. This paper will examine three separate regional districts, and compare their geography (including population and environment), history (including how regional governance developed in that area), and culture (including how the existing culture of the region affected the evolution of regional districts in the region, and whether it lead to push-back or not). The aim will then be to apply this analysis to similar regions in Newfoundland and Labrador in order to assess the same characteristics in determining whether this form of government could be applied in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Because Newfoundland and Labrador currently does not have a formal system of regional governance, boundaries had to be drawn in order to form a basis for comparison. The author chose to compare Regional Districts in British Columbia with Rural Secretarial Regional Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador. Regional Councils aim to engage regional organizations and citizens alike in order to understand issues at the regional level, provide policy advice, and to help bring various stakeholders together in addressing key issues through regional cooperation (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015: 2). These Regional Councils serve a very different purpose than any form of Regional Government would. Their purpose is to offer a way for the Provincial Government to gain an understanding of regional challenges and opportunities, These Regional Councils include one staff member, and several volunteer committee members that are appointed by the provincial government (Vodden et al., 2014: 12). While these Regional Councils don't have any legislative power, they do act as a useful tool for the Provincial Government to keep their finger on the pulse of regional issues. These Regional Councils were

designated in 2004 based on the economic, community, and social activity being conducted across the province (2014: 2). Since 2004, these Regional Councils have undergone re-organization, however the boundaries and mission of the councils have stayed the same. In developing a system of regional governance, it is useful to look at existing structures. While British Columbia used school zones as a simple way to divide the province based on population and geography, Newfoundland and Labrador would likely use a smaller scale of division in dividing their population for regional governance. British Columbia has a population of over 4.7 million, whereas Newfoundland and Labrador has a population of approximately 550,300 (Statistics Canada, 2016). In applying British Columbia's model of Regional Governance, it is necessary to consider how the same system could be applied while still maintaining the opportunity to provide economies of scale. One major way to do this is through creating boundaries with large enough populations to accommodate this kind of scaling, along with a strong enough property tax base. Currently, citizens are used to the regional council set-up and associate with the regions that are designated through them. No other comparable form of recognizable regional division currently exists in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Through an examination of the historical, cultural, and geographical similarities and differences between the three aforementioned regions, the author will draw conclusions on the extent in which the British Columbia model can be transferred to Newfoundland and Labrador, and what constraints and opportunities would exist through this transfer. Drawing from the literature, this is called a policy transfer, which can simply be defined as a form of "decision making by analogy", whereby we use one entity's experience as a way to inform another's (Mossberger and Wolman, 2003: 428). In developing a framework for analyzing the

transferability, one is attempting to develop a framework for prospective policy evaluation, in other words, an assessment of the effects of a policy transfer (2003: 428). At this point in the paper, it should be clear that the provincial contexts in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2017 are similar to British Columbia's in 1964. This includes the turbulent history of regional governance structures, the push and pull of the provincial government to provide servicing to rural and unincorporated areas, and overall the municipal landscape of a combination of rural and urban municipalities, unincorporated regions, and various service areas. What will follow is a more specific regional analysis of the applicability of the regional district model.

#### **4.2: Case Study #1: the Capital Regional District and the Avalon Peninsula**

The Capital Regional District includes 383,360 people, across 2,340 km, hailing from 13 different municipalities and three unincorporated electoral areas (Statistic Canada, 2016). The Capital Regional District is the second largest regional district in British Columbia, and is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors (Capital Regional District, 2017). The Capital Regional District has more than 200 intermunicipal agreements with municipalities and unincorporated areas, which are either a) regional, b) sub-regional (where two or more jurisdictions are served), or c) local (in the electoral areas where the Capital Regional District acts as the local government (Capital Regional District, 2016). The Capital Regional District works to provide services in 21 different areas; everything from public health, to drinking water, to libraries and theatres (Capital Regional District, 2016). In comparison, the Avalon peninsula area of Newfoundland and Labrador includes 280,410 people living across approximately 120 incorporated and unincorporated municipalities (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006). As with the Capital Regional District, the Avalon Peninsula is home to urban and rural regions. The

Avalon region is comprised predominantly of coastal communities, including the province's capital and economic hub, St. John's.

Similar to the Capital regional District, the bulk of the Avalon Peninsula's population comes from the St. John's metropolitan area. The population of the St. John's metro region is 211,724, whereas the population of Victoria is 358,685 (Statistics Canada, 2016). The St. John's metropolitan area represents 75% of the total population of the Avalon Peninsula region, whereas Victoria constitutes 94% of the total population of the Capital Regional District. In terms of urban to rural population dispersal, the Capital Regional District and the Avalon Peninsula are quite similar. From a regional governance perspective, this, in a way facilitated the development of a regional governance system in this region, as many of the services were already being provided by the municipality of Victoria. However, it also did, and continues to pose challenges. As with the Avalon Peninsula region of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is disparity between the urban centre of Victoria, and rural regions which often lie on the fringes of the predominant metropolitan area (University of Victoria, 2009: 7). Like Victoria, St. John's developed as the urban hub for the area, and in both places, the economic activity became focused around public services (such as hospitals, government, schools), along with the university, arts and culture hubs, and tourism. In fringe communities, economic development was not as accessible.

While both Victoria and St. John's developed as hubs for the region, it is important to note the differences. The Capital Regional District in British Columbia is geographically much smaller than the Avalon Peninsula. Occupying approximately a quarter of the landmass that the Avalon Peninsula region does, the Capital Regional District has been historically utilized



(informally) as a region (pre-1965), whereby citizens would be just as likely to use the services of a neighboring municipality as they would their own. Outside of the St John's metro region, this is simply not the case due to the geographical disparity of communities. Furthermore, while the concentration of urban versus rural residents in the region are similar between the Capital Regional District and the Avalon Peninsula regions, there are seven times more municipalities in the Avalon Peninsula region of the province, in comparison to the Capital Regional district. Furthermore, there is a history of isolationism among communities within the Avalon peninsula region, whereby communities were insular in order to protect their fishery. This culture was quite different in British Columbia, and hence there would likely be push-back from communities in the Avalon region of the province that didn't exist within the Capital region. Overall, however, the system of representation and service delivery that exists in the urban and rural fringe Capital Regional District can certainly be applied to the Avalon Peninsula region of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. This should be done keeping the culture of rural communities within rural Newfoundland and Labrador in mind.

#### **4.3: Case Study #2: the Cariboo Regional District and Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region**

The Cariboo Regional District is located in the centre of British Columbia, and is home to 61,988 people (Statistics Canada, 2016). The regional district spans 12 electoral (unincorporated) areas, and four incorporated municipalities. The Regional District is governed by 12 electoral area directors, and 4 municipal directors, who are directly elected in the case of unincorporated regions, and appointed in the case of incorporated municipalities (Cariboo Regional District, 2017). As with the Capital regional district, the Cariboo Regional District provides services on a region-wide, sub-regional, and local scale (Cariboo Regional District,

2017). The Cariboo Regional District and the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region are similar geographically. Both centrally located, most of the communities that are incorporated within the region are small and rural. The Cariboo regional district includes two small cities, with approximately 10,000 people, and the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region has one community of a similar size, Grand Falls (Statistics Canada, 2016). The Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region serves 47,205 people (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012).

While both regions are similar geographically in terms of both population and urban-rural divide, these regions have some other notable similarities. Both regions have land-locked communities, and both were historically forestry hubs for the province (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007). Because of the isolated nature of the communities in the region, the population sometimes experiences out-migration contingent on the prosperity of industry (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007: 23). The challenges of both regions are similar, and very different than the previously mentioned Avalon and Capital regions. The Cariboo regional district serves a population within a 80,625 km area, whereas the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region serves communities within a 33,180km area (Statistics Canada, 2001; Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010: 3). While both large regions with similar populations, the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region serves eighty communities within this region, while the Cariboo regional district serves 16 entities (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012). Furthermore, while many of the larger communities in the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region are based in forestry and agriculture, there are dozens of smaller communities in the region that exist on the coast as traditional fishing communities.

The economy today in the Cariboo regional district is based off of ranching, agriculture, mining, forestry, and tourism (Fraser Basin, 2017). The region was settled by indigenous groups before Europeans arrived in the 1860s during the Gold rush (2017). The region has recently attempted to diversify its economy by capitalizing on adventure tourism, including mountain biking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing (Fraser Basin, 2017). While the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region is more heavily focused on forestry and the fishery, there has also been a strong need to diversify economically and attract new industry. The Cariboo Regional District provides over 100 services for its taxpayers, and serves as the local government for many of these taxpayers. These services include everything from community development to arts and culture, to garbage collection (Cariboo Regional District, 2017). Currently, the Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton region is home to a mismatch of service agreements that are contingent largely on the size of the community, whether they are incorporated, and where they are located. Where the community is unable to provide servicing, they either go without, or the province steps in. Having a uniform method of service delivery would be incredibly beneficial to the residents of this region, and the region could learn from the Cariboo Regional District in terms of how to most effectively deliver these services to a geographically dispersed population.

#### **4.4: Case Study #3: The Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District and the St. Anthony-Port Au Choix region**

The Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District and the St. Anthony- Port Au Choix regions are both northern, coastal regions of British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador. The Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District is home to 18,133 people, a number that is on the

decline (decreased 3.5% from 2011) (Statistics Canada, 2016). The Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District occupies 19,775 square kilometers, and the Regional District is responsible for five municipalities, and 4 unincorporated electoral areas (Statistics Canada, 2016; Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District, 2017). The St. Anthony- Port au Choix region has a similar geographical area as the Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District, with a land mass of 17,484 squared kilometers. The region is home to 12,240 people, which is rapidly declining (it represents a 7.3 percent decrease from the 2006 census) (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2015: 53). Both regions have historically been hubs for fishing and forestry. As with the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District, there is an understood need to diversify the economy in order to discourage out-migration. Both regions have aimed to develop their tourism industry, and attract new industry.

While both regions are similar, the St. Anthony- Port au Choix serves many more, smaller communities than the Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District. As of the most recent statistic, the region was home to approximately fifty communities (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006). However, as with the Skeena Regional District, the communities are almost all coastally-located, and relatively Northern and isolated. The Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District provides far fewer services than other more populated regional districts, however it does provide waste management, water services, recreation, and economic development. The St. Anthony-Port au Choix region of Newfoundland and Labrador is more at risk of out-migration than perhaps any other region of the province. There is a sense of urgency for the kinds of services that can be delivered through a regional governance. The Northern tip of the province is also home to L'Anse aux Meadows Historic Site, and a network of hiking trails (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007: 11). There is an opportunity for economic development based on the existing

natural assets, however there is no strong local government to support that function. Applying the model of small-scale service delivery with a focus on planning on economic development that the Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District provides could have huge growth potential for the region of St. Anthony- Port au Choix.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Conclusion**

This paper makes an argument for the applicability of the British Columbia Regional Governance model to Newfoundland and Labrador. By using the model of policy transfer development using by Wolman (2017), the paper first examined whether the problems and objected in Newfoundland and Labrador are similar to that of British Columbia (18). Second, it analyzed The British Columbia model, including its effectiveness and constraints in carrying out its objectives in British Columbia. Finally, it considered the constraints for transfer to the Newfoundland and Labrador context, with a focus on the geographical, cultural, and historical context of the region. The picture that is painted is of two coastal provinces, a country away from each other, and with fifty years between then in terms of regional governance development. Both provinces with over one hundred geographically dispersed rural regions, and a few urban centers, both British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador have a history of provincial government struggle to create a model of service delivery, representation, and financing within these diverse regions. In the early days, British Columbia aimed to overcome issues of servicing and planning to fringe and rural areas by developing community planning areas (Collier, 1972: 30). The purpose of these areas was to designate authority to the provincial government to provide community plans and development assistance to 28 regions of the province as needed. Newfoundland and Labrador aimed to rural development and planning issues by implementing Regional Development Associations, which were formed as committees to focus on economic development in (what would become in 1994), 59 different regions of the province (Vodden et al., 2014: 4). Furthermore, British Columbia attempted to tackle issues of waste management and water provision to fringe regions through the creation of Greater Vancouver Sewer and Drainage District (British Columbia, 2006: 3). Newfoundland and Labrador aimed to develop the same

economies of scale through the creation of Regional Waste Management authorities which continue to exist throughout the province (Vodden and Hall, 2013: 135).

The British Columbia provincial government finally created legislation for the implementation of regional district in 1964, as the province looked for a flexible model of service delivery and governance that could fit both rural and urban regions alike. Presented as a voluntary, empty vessel, the British Columbia regional district legislates only a couple services (ie. land use planning, waste management, and emergency planning), and provides a list of about a dozen optional services that the regional district can provide (British Columbia, 2006: 9). The British Columbia Regional District model has stood the rest of time, and it's voluntary structure has served the diverse needs of rural and urban populations within British Columbia since 1965. As Newfoundland and Labrador looks towards creating a model of regional governance for the project, it is important that they not re-invent the wheel, but instead look to models which have stood the test of time, demonstrated transferability, and serve the demographics and needs of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Focusing on a general historical analysis, as well as a case study analysis, this paper has aimed to demonstrate that the British Columbia Regional District model has significant potential for policy transfer, to Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Policy Recommendations**

Following up on the research presented in this paper, there is certainly more exploration that should be conducted before implementing a Regional District model in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador should work with the existing Provincial Government Regional Governance Advisory Committee to create an implementation strategy for a Regional District model in Newfoundland and Labrador. In developing this implementation plan, recommendations for consideration are as follows:

1. The working group should work towards the development of regional governance boundaries for a Regional District model by working from an existing provincial boundary model (i.e. the Regional Councils boundaries).
2. The working group should evaluate the process for property assessment of unincorporated regions by the Municipal Assessment Agency.
3. Consideration should be made to the voting function of each region in terms of weighing votes based on population and geography. Newfoundland and Labrador has more municipal boundaries than British Columbia, and hence giving each community a vote may pose more challenges than it currently does in British Columbia.
4. The working group should establish which essential services should be provided by the regional districts, and which services will be voluntary through the model, keeping in mind that the fewer mandatory services, the easier it will be to create municipal buy-in.



5. Drafting amendments to the Municipalities Act to include the power of the provincial government to impose Regional Districts. Included in these amendments should be stipulations on the financing, representation, and servicing model
  
6. Developing a plan for creating provincial and municipal buy-in to a British Columbia Regional District model. This would include making a strong case to Members of the House of Assembly, as well as municipal politicians, before conducting public engagement and educational initiatives to create public buy-in to the initiative.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barnes, William R., and Kathryn A. Foster. 2012. *Toward a More Useful Way of Understanding Regional Governance*. California: University of Berkeley.
- Bish, Robert L., and Eric G. Clemens. 2008. "Local Government in British Columbia". *Union of British Columbia Municipalities* 4.
- British Columbia. 2017. *Mini Histories: Regional Districts Part 1-3*. [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/history/mini\\_histories/regional\\_districts\\_part\\_one.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/history/mini_histories/regional_districts_part_one.htm) (Aug 1, 2017).
- British Columbia. 2017. *Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development*. [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional\\_district\\_services.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional_district_services.htm) (Jul 2, 2017).
- British Columbia. Ministry of Community Services. 2006. *Primer on Regional Districts in British Columbia*. Victoria: Ministry of Community Services.
- British Columbia. Ministry of Community, Sport & Cultural Development. 2017. *Regional District*
- Brown, James E. 1968. "Regional Districts in British Columbia". *Municipal Finance* 41: 82-86.
- Capital Regional District. 2017. *About CRD*. <https://www.crd.bc.ca/about> (Aug 3, 2017).
- Cariboo Regional District. 2017. *Cariboo Regional District*. <http://www.cariboord.bc.ca/government/about-us> (Jul 22, 2017).
- CBC News. 2013. "Province not Ready to Tackle Unincorporated Communities". *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Newfoundland and Labrador*, September 19, 2013.
- Collier, Robert W. 1972. "The Evolution of Regional Districts in British Columbia". *BC Studies* 15: 29-39.
- Fahim, Mayrai. 2009. *Multi-Tier Local Government Systems Adopted in Many Parts of the World*. <http://www.citymayors.com/government/british-columbia.html> (Aug 2, 2017). *Finance*. [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional\\_district\\_finance.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/regional/regional_district_finance.htm) (Jul 22, 2017).
- Finn, Jean-Guy. 2008. *Building Stronger Local Governments and Regions: An Action Plan for the Future of Local Governance in New Brunswick*. New Brunswick: Report of the Commissioner on the Future of Local Governance.
- Fraser Basin Council. 2017. *About the Cariboo- Chilcotin Region*. [http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/ccr\\_about.html](http://www.fraserbasin.bc.ca/ccr_about.html) (Jul 24, 2017).
- Hutchison, Ray. 2010. *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies*. Sage Publications Inc.
- Keenan, Robert. 2010. "Continuities and Discontinuities: A Brief History of Local and Regional Government in Newfoundland and Labrador". *Municipalities NL*.

- Keenan, Robert. 2010. "Searching for a Purpose: A current Assessment of Municipal Government and Regional Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador". *Municipalities NL*.
- Mossberger, Karen and Harold Wolman. "Policy Transfer as a Form of Prospective Policy Evaluation". *Public Administration Review* 63: 428-40.
- Municipal Assessment Agency. 2017. <http://www.maa.ca/> (Aug 1, 2017).
- Municipalities NL. 2013. "The Next Steps in the Regional Government Process". *Municipalities NL*.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 1974. *Royal Commission on the Municipal Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador*. St. John's: Office of the Queen's Printer.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2006. Department of Finance. *CA Local Areas of the Avalon Peninsula Rural Secretariat Region*. [http://www.communityaccounts.ca/SESA/nl\\_mapcentre/avalonlocalarea.pdf](http://www.communityaccounts.ca/SESA/nl_mapcentre/avalonlocalarea.pdf) (Jul 11, 2017).
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2006. Department of Finance. *Rural Secretariat Regions: Newfoundland and Labrador*. [http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/Maps/pdfs/RS\\_NL.pdf](http://www.stats.gov.nl.ca/Maps/pdfs/RS_NL.pdf) (June 20, 2017).
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2007. *Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Rural Secretariat Region*. <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2007/grandfalls-windsor/baieverte-harbourbreton.pdf> (Jul 20, 2017).
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2007. *Rural Demographic Profiles Newfoundland and Labrador*. <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/pdf2007/regionaldemographicprofiles.pdf> (Jul 27, 2017).
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2010. *Grand Falls- Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat*. Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2012. *Avalon Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council: Annual Activity Report 2011-2012*. Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2012. *Grand Falls-Windsor- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat Executive Council: Annual Activity Report 2011-2012*. Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2012. *Regional Services Boards Act, 2012*. Newfoundland and Labrador: Queen's Printer.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2015. *Regional Councils & Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat*. Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Newfoundland and Labrador. 2017. *Our Fiscal Future: Starting the Conversation*. <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ourfiscalfuture/> (Jul 15, 2017).
- Sancton, Andrew, and Robert A, Young. 2009. *Foundations of Governance: Municipal Government in Canadian Provinces* University of Toronto Press.

- Sancton, Andrew. 2009. "A Review of Canadian Metropolitan Regions: Governance and Government". Paper presented at the Symposium on Regional Government in the Vancouver Regional, Richmond, British Columbia.
- Skeena- Queen Charlotte Regional District. <http://www.sqcrd.bc.ca/> (Jul 27, 2017). Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2001. *Community Highlights: Cariboo Regional District*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Boil Water Advisories, by Province*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Cariboo, Regional District [Census Division], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province]*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Census Profile, 2016 Census: Avalon Peninsula [Economic Region], Newfoundland and Labrador and Newfoundland and Labrador [Province]*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Census Profile, 2016 Census: Newfoundland and Labrador [province] and Canada [country]*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Grand Falls- Windsor [Population centre], Newfoundland and Labrador*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Population by year, by province and territory (number)*. Ottawa:
- Statistics Canada. 2016. *Skeena- Queen Charlotte, Regional District [Census Division], British Columbia and British Columbia [Province]*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- University of Victoria. 2009. *40 Years: A Regional District Retrospection*. University of Victoria: School of Public Administration.
- Vodden, Kelly, Heather Hall and David Freshwater. 2013. "Understanding Regional Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Survey of Regional Development Organizations". *Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation*.
- Vodden, Kelly, Ryan Gibson, and Jen Daniels. 2014. "Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Regional Development Policy". *Canadian Regional Development* 18.
- Walker, David B. 1987. "Snow White and the 17 Dwarfs: From metro cooperation to governance". *National Civic Review* 76: 14-28.
- Wolman, Harold. 2017. "Looking at Regional Governance Institutions in Other Countries as a Possible Model for U.S. Metropolitan Areas: An Examination of Multipurpose Regional Service Delivery Districts in British Columbia". *Urban Affairs Review* 1-37.