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**Local Governance, Creativity and Regional Development in Newfoundland and Labrador  
Lessons for Policy and Practice from Two Projects**

**Celtic Rendezvous, Bauline East, Irish Loop, Newfoundland and Labrador  
June 10th - 12th, 2010**





# Local Governance, Creativity and Regional Development in Newfoundland and Labrador: Lessons for Policy and Practice from Two Projects

Celtic Rendezvous, Bauline East,  
Irish Loop, Newfoundland and Labrador  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
THE TWO PROJECT OVERVIEWS – FUNCTIONAL REGIONS & ISRN .....	5
Functional Regions .....	8
Functional Regions and Regional Governance.....	9
Innovation and Creativity in City-Regions.....	10
Innovation and Creativity in Small Cities on the Periphery .....	11
PROJECT PRESENTATION – FUNCTIONAL REGIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR .....	15
Alvin Simms –Functional Regions, Regional Economic Capacity & Labour Markets .....	15
Kelly Vodden – Functional Regions and Regional Governance: Implications for Policy, Planning and Dialogue.....	16
<i>Questions and Discussion for the Functional Regions Project</i> .....	16
PROJECT PRESENTATION - ISRN IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR .....	18
Greg Spencer – Social Dimensions of Creativity and Innovation in Canadian City-Regions: A Brief Overview .....	18
Ann-Marie Vaughan – Theme I – St. John’s Region .....	18
Rob Greenwood and Josh Lepawsky – Themes II & III – St. John’s Region.....	19
Ken Carter & Damian Creighton – Themes I, II & III – Labrador West, Corner Brook, Clarenville .....	19
<i>Questions and Discussion for the ISRN Project</i> .....	20
DAY 1 EVENING SESSION.....	21
PANEL DISCUSSION – INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FROM DAY ONE.....	22
Bruce Gilbert .....	22
Sheila Downer .....	22
Kevin Morgan.....	22
Susan Drodge.....	22
<i>Questions and Discussion for Day One Panel</i> .....	23
LESSONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE BREAK-OUT SESSIONS.....	24
Groups 1&2: Lessons for Industry (Business and Labour) .....	24
Groups 3&4: Lessons for Municipal Government .....	24
Groups 5&6: Lessons for Federal and Provincial Governments.....	25
Groups 7&8: Lessons for NGOs .....	25
CLOSING PANEL.....	26
Bill Reimer .....	26
Craig Pollett.....	26
Richard Shearmur .....	26

Lisa Browne.....	26
Kevin Morgan.....	27
<i>Questions and Discussion for the Closing Panel</i> .....	27
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS .....	28
REFERENCES.....	29
APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ATTENDEES.....	33
APPENDIX 2: SPEAKER AND PANELLIST BIOS .....	35
APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUAL INPUT FORMS ROLL-UP.....	40
APPENDIX 4: CERTIFICATE IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT PRESS RELEASE .....	43

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on findings from two significant research projects presented at the Celtic Rendezvous Workshop from June 10-12<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The first project, *Rural-Urban Interaction in Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding and Managing Functional Regions* considers regional labour market development, governance and the need for planning to be based on ‘functional’ rather than simply ‘administrative’ regions. The second project, *the Innovation Systems Research Network (ISRN)*, is part of a \$2.5 million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada – Major Collaborative Research Initiative (SSHRC – MCRI) exploring the social dynamics of economic performance in fifteen city regions across Canada. This research, led nationally by David Wolfe at the University of Toronto, has three major themes: (1) the social dynamics of innovation; (2) talent attraction and retention; (3) and governance and inclusion.

Day One of the workshop included presentations on the Functional Regions Project by Alvin Simms and Kelly Vodden and presentations on the ISRN Project by Greg Spencer, Anne-Marie Vaughan, Rob Greenwood, Ken Carter and Damian Creighton, with time set aside for lively debates and discussions. The following day started with a panel discussion on the insights and lessons from day one, including Bruce Gilbert, Sheila Downer, Kevin Morgan, and Susan Drodge. This was followed by break-out groups examining the key lessons from this research for policy and practice in Newfoundland and Labrador from the perspective of industry, municipal government, the federal and provincial governments, and NGOs. The workshop concluded with a five-member panel discussion on the implications of these findings involving Bill Reimer, Craig Pollett, Richard Shearmur, Lisa Browne and Kevin Morgan.

## **THE TWO PROJECT OVERVIEWS – FUNCTIONAL REGIONS & ISRN**

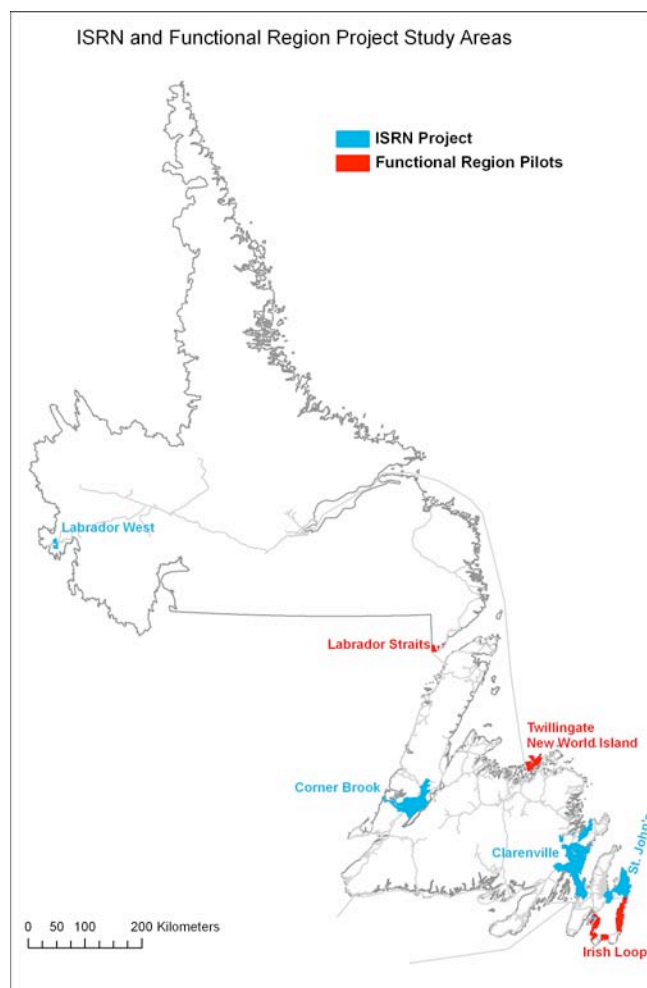
The Functional Regions project is focused on understanding and managing functional regions in Newfoundland and Labrador. The project was developed in response to calls for more research and policy development in Canada related to rural-urban interactions or “the urban-rural footprint.” The need for research on rural-urban dynamics has grown alongside trends such as urbanization, increased awareness of the economic competitiveness of clusters, and population and growth in rural areas adjacent to urban centres. These functional regions can be based on service areas, natural resources and amenities, or a combination of all of these and other factors. In particular, labour flows are an important form of rural-urban inter-community interaction. Further, rural-urban dynamics are one of the primary influences on labour market outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador. Evidence suggests there is a growing divide between urban areas and rural communities with respect to these outcomes, and related indicators of community and regional health and sustainability. The project builds on research identifying local workflows, collaboration in planning and municipal service delivery and other forms of interaction between communities and within regions in the province, undertaken by the Municipalities Newfoundland & Labrador (MNL), Community Cooperation Office, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and researchers at Memorial University. Funding support for the project has been provided by Canada/Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement. The project was led by the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF).

The project began in 2007 and has four major components: 1) delineate and, where possible, map using GIS, the range of linkages between communities in regions within the province, particularly those between urban and rural communities; 2) assess existing governance mechanisms developed to manage these relations, identify gaps and make recommendations to enhance planning and decision making; 3) develop a regional economic capacity index (RECI) tool for use by community, regional and other stakeholders (considering which communities are most connected through multiple linkages, and which combinations of linkages contribute the most to sustainable regions); and 4) collaborate with the membership of the provincial municipal association (Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador) and other partners to ensure transfer of learning and best practices, pilot new approaches and communicate lessons learned to inform policy and programs for all orders of government.

Delineation of functional regions and development of the RECI decision support tool has been led by Alvin Simms of the Department of Geography at Memorial University in collaboration with David Freshwater of the Department of Agricultural Economics and joint appointee at the Martin of the School of Public Administration and Public Policy, University of Kentucky. The 2006 Canadian Census journey-to-work (JTW) data were used to delineate “functional labour regions” whereby communities that exhibit strong journey-to-work (JTW) linkages are used to identify clusters of communities that form a functional region. JTW linkages were analyzed using the INTRAMAX method and FLOWMAP software tool (see Van der Zwan *et al*, 2003). The RECI tool is an adaptation of multiple criteria evaluation methods (MCE) designed to assess the demographic structure, location, economic structure, and governance and service characteristics of a community and assign a relative score to reflect its labour market and economic capacity. In addition, the RECI tool provides a pseudo-comparative analysis whereby one can assess at which of four levels (Provincial, Rural Secretariat Region, Regional Economic Development Board (REDB) and Functional Region) a community has a comparative advantage.

Kelly Vodden of the Department of Geography at Memorial University, together with David Freshwater led the regional governance component of the project. Data collection for the governance component of the project included surveys, workshops and focus group sessions in three “pilot regions” (see Figure 1 for map of locations of pilot regions), a province-wide survey of regional non-government development organizations, interviews with local labour market service providers and provincial and federal government officials. In total, 21 individuals participated in business focus groups, 204 questionnaires were completed by business and non-government organizations, and over 30 interviews were conducted in addition to literature review on labour market development and regional governance alternatives. Finally, the project’s knowledge mobilization efforts were directed by Craig Pollett of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador and included a project website, newsletter, workshops, articles, and local, national and international presentations.

**Figure 1: Newfoundland and Labrador ISRN and Functional Region Project Study Areas**

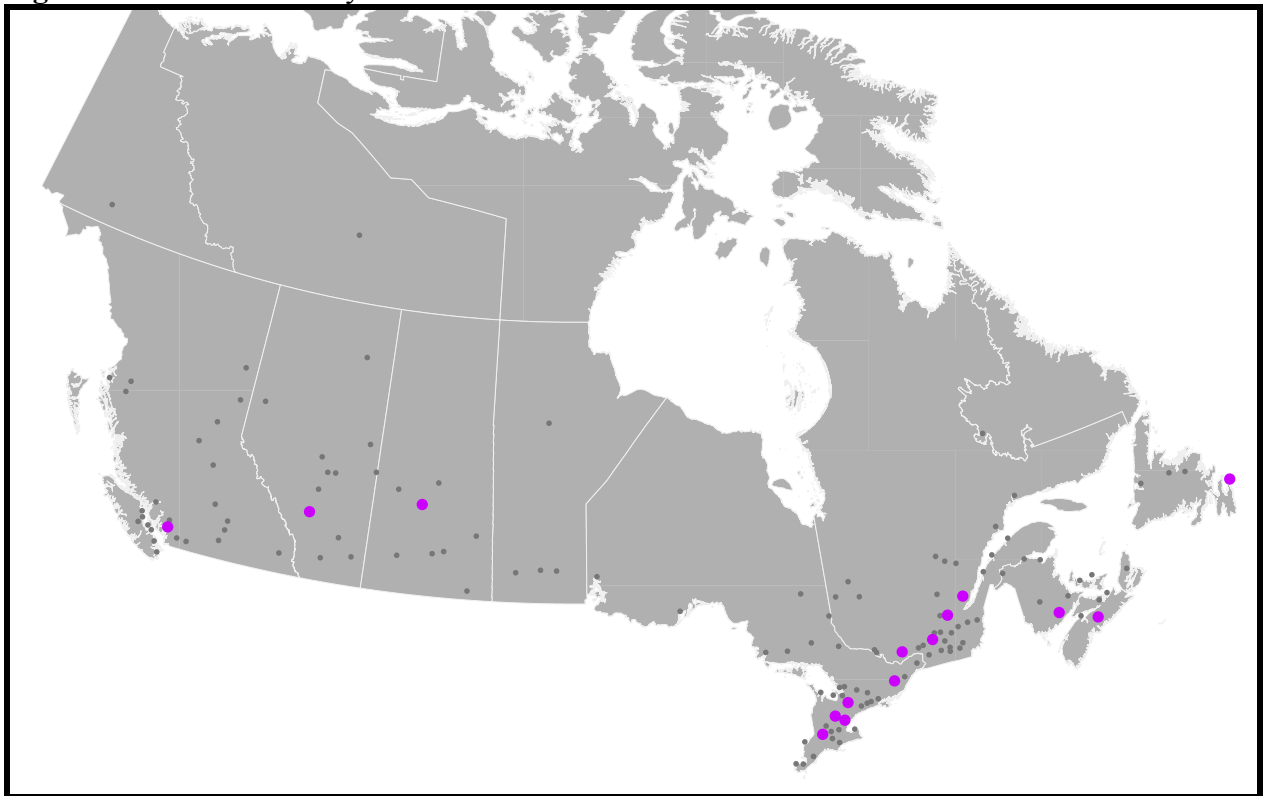


**Source:** Simms, 2010



The Innovation Systems Research Network (ISRN) project is part of a \$2.5 million Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada – Major Collaborative Research Initiative (SSHRC – MCRI) exploring the social dynamics of economic performance in fifteen cities across Canada (see Figure 2). The project started in 2006 and is spearheaded by Meric Gertler and David Wolfe at the University of Toronto. It includes twenty-two investigators across the country determining: how knowledge flows within cities, within sectors, and across sectors; why certain cities attract and retain creative and innovative individuals; and how this contributes to social inclusivity, civic engagement, and a dynamic economy. This research has three major themes: (1) the social dynamics of innovation; (2) talent attraction and retention; and, (3) governance and inclusion. The Newfoundland and Labrador section of this project is led by Rob Greenwood, Director of the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development at Memorial University. Additional funding has been obtained from the Industrial Research Innovation Fund (IRIF), the office of the Memorial University Vice President (Research) and the Provincial Rural Secretariat, to extend this research outside the St. John's city-region to include the Clarenville, Corner Brook, and Labrador West regions.

**Figure 2:** ISRN Case Study Cities



Source: Spencer, 2010

In St. John's, Ann-Marie Vaughan, Director of Distance Education Learning Technologies (DELT) at Memorial University, is leading Theme I – the Social Dynamics of Innovation. A total of twenty-six interviews were conducted from July 2009 to February 2010 in a variety of sectors including: oil and gas; oceans; information technology; culture; education; and health. Josh Lepawsky of the Department of Geography at Memorial University, is spearheading Theme II – Talent Attraction and Retention. Twenty-five interviews were conducted with a variety of creative

workers in music, film and research along with representatives from intermediary organizations (eg. unions, immigration organizations, research organizations, etc). Theme III – Governance and Inclusion – is led by Rob Greenwood, and a total of twenty-five interviews were conducted with a number of government and community actors. Dr. Reeta Tremblay, Vice-President (Academic) *pro tempore* at Memorial, is leading the research for all three themes in Clarenville, Corner Brook, and Labrador West. Ken Carter, of the Provincial Rural Secretariat is assisting with the research in Clarenville, Corner Brook and Labrador West (See Figure 1.)

This report is based on findings from these two significant research projects presented at the Celtic Rendezvous Workshop from June 10-12<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Alvin Simms and Kelly Vodden presented on the *Functional Regions Project*. This was followed by presentations from the ISRN Team including, Greg Spencer, Anne-Marie Vaughan, Rob Greenwood, Ken Carter and Damian Creighton. Day Two opened with a panel discussion on the lessons from Day One. This was followed by a series of break-out groups looking at the lessons of this research for policy and practice from a variety of perspectives. The workshop concluded with a panel discussion on the implications of these findings.

The remainder of this report is divided into seven major sections. The first section provides a short summary of the functional regions concept. The second section provides a brief overview of the innovation and creativity literature while the next section looks at innovation and creativity in smaller, more peripheral cities. This is followed by presentation reviews on the functional regions project and the ISRN project. The remaining sections detail the panel discussion on lessons and insights from Day One, the lessons for policy and practice break-out session, and the closing panel discussion. A summary of the findings and future directions conclude this report.

## **Functional Regions**

There are various ways to conceptualize and identify regions. For example, early regional geography research designated regions based on homogeneous characteristics like environmental or geographic features (Brodie, 1990). Other more theoretical conceptualizations include Paasi (2003) who defines regions as “... historically contingent processes, related in different ways to political, governmental, economic and cultural practices and discourses” (481). Agnew claims that regions, “are intellectual constructs that are used to order the world in a meaningful way” (Agnew, 2002: 17 quoted in Jones, 2004: 163). In Newfoundland and Labrador, administrative regions like Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs) and Rural Secretariat Regions are commonly used to identify and attempt to intervene in regional economic issues. However, this approach may overlook local socio-economic characteristics that are critical to regional economic performance like labour markets, unemployment issues, demographics, economic structures, geographic location, and services.

One approach to overcoming these shortcomings is a *functional region* approach which offers an alternative understanding of intra-regional variation of socio-economic factors within existing administrative regions (Simms, 2010). As Karlsson and Olsson explain “[a] functional region is characterized by a high frequency of intra-regional interaction” (2006: 1). As Simms (2010) describes, “a functional region is a geographical area which reveals a certain functional coherence, an interdependence of parts, when defined on certain criteria. The functional relationships are defined in terms of flows, such as socio-economic criteria like journey to work (JTW) trips linking employment centres with other communities in the region”. Analysis of JTW data provides information on the spatial structure and strength of intra- and inter-regional JTW linkages. This

allows for identification and ranking of local employment centres as well as communities that supply the labour to these centres. Overall, the functional region concept provides an alternative approach to understanding intra-regional dynamics and, together with the Regional Economic Capacity Index tool, can assist with identifying economic development potential and the development of policy and governance options.

### **Functional Regions and Regional Governance**

Governance is the process by which a group of people, which may include public, private and/or civil society or non-government groups and citizens, guide and control their collective activities, plan and organize, make decisions, resolve conflicts, establish and enforce rules, allocate rights and resources, and hold decision-makers accountable. In the past, governance has been considered the task of governments and the legal system but today governance is understood to encompass a wide range formal institutions and more informal social arrangements that operate within networks of interdependent government and non-government interests (Vodden 2009, Phillips and Orsini 2002, Plumptre and Graham 1999, Peters and Pierre 1998, Young 1994). As this shift reflects, governance is in part about the evolving ways that people relate to their governments and decisions about what citizens should rely on government to do and what can/should be done outside or in partnership with government.

Governance has a spatial and territorial dimension, which is also in flux. Swyngedouw (1997) and other authors argue that decision-making power and influence is shifting away from the national to both larger (global) and smaller (local) scales. Within the multiple levels of governance, increasing attention has been paid to the scale of the sub-provincial region where residents live, work, shop and/or play in a web of relationships and interdependencies (Partridge 2007). Awareness of these interdependencies suggests that benefits exist from working together to make decisions related to common interests, to gain critical mass, create regional growth clusters for economic development, better manage natural resources, provide government services and so on – to govern regionally. But at what scale is regional governance best designed? Under what circumstances? What governance mechanisms are most effective in differing contexts?

To investigate these questions the *Functional Regions Project* sought to better understand existing approaches to regional governance in Newfoundland and Labrador, including the extent to which governance boundaries consider functional regions, as well as alternatives for future regional governance, particularly within the critical realm of labour market development. While both the functional regions and governance aspects of the project were provincial in scope, three “pilot regions” were selected to be engaged in all aspects of the project, to provide a more in-depth understanding of regional dynamics and to ground-truth emerging findings and new tools. The three predominantly rural and small town regions differ in their population size, proximity to urban areas and level of natural resource dependency. Adjacent to the St. John’s metropolitan region, the Irish Loop region has the largest and most stable, although still declining, population, while the remote Labrador Straits region has the fewest residents, and is experiencing the greatest rate of population decline and the highest rate of unemployment (see Table 1). Primary sector dependency is highest, however, in the Twillingate-New World Island region, which is located 90-120 km from the urban centre of Gander (depending on community location within the region).

**Table 1: Pilot Region Characteristics**

<b>Pilot Region</b>	<b>Irish Loop</b>	<b>Twillingate-New World Island</b>	<b>Labrador Straits</b>
<b>Type of Rural Region</b>	Urban adjacent	Rural non-adjacent	Rural remote
<b>Min. Distance to a Community 4000+</b>	16 km	90 km	335 km
<b>Partner Organization</b>	Irish Loop Development Corp. (Regional Economic Development Board)	Twillingate-New World Island Dev't Assoc. (Regional Development Association)	Labrador Straits Development Corp. (Regional Economic Development Board)
<b>Population, 2006</b>	8,410	6,280	1,825 (in NL - 3,088 including Que. communities);
<b>Population Change, 2001-2006</b>	-4.1%	-7.1%	-8.8% (NL portion)
<b>Employment Rate (2005)</b>	64.6	60.4% Twillingate Is. 57.2% New World Is.	66%
<b>Unemployment Rate (May 2006)</b>	23.8%	24.0% Twillingate Is. 30.6% New World Is.	33.1%
<b>% Primary Sector Employment by Occupation</b>	13.0	25.2	12.4
<b>Functional Region?</b>	No - 3 functional regions within the pilot region/economic zone	Yes	Yes - with some "orphan communities" outside the functional region

Statistics source: NL Community Accounts

### **Innovation and Creativity in City-Regions<sup>1</sup>**

In the economic geography literature, much has been written about the importance of clusters, regional innovation systems, localized learning, and global pipelines for innovations and economic growth (Gertler, 1995; Porter, 1998; Holbrook and Wolfe, 2000; Wolfe, 2003; Bathelt, Malmberg, and Maskell, 2004; Gertler and Wolfe, 2005; Wolfe and Lucas, 2005; Cooke et al., 2007). This literature stresses the importance of geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions engaged in competition and cooperation. Innovation is now argued to be a social process that depends on interaction and learning, and the city-region is thought to be the key space for this to occur (Wolfe, 2009). David Wolfe (2009) argues, that city-regions are the dominant sites of economic and demographic growth. More importantly, "... they are also the leading edges of innovation that will generate the new ideas, new products, and new industries that will drive the

<sup>1</sup> This section is from the Kingston Innovation Systems Study: Hall, H.M. and Donald, B. 2010; The Social Dynamics of Innovation in the Fractured City – Kingston, ON. *Working Paper ISRN*; and Hall, H.M. and Donald, B. 2010; Clarifying Creativity and Culture in a Small City on the Canadian Periphery: Challenges and Opportunities in Greater Sudbury. In A. Lorentzen and B. van Heur (ed.), *Cultural Political Economy of Small Cities*. Routledge. In progress.

economy in the future” (Wolfe, 2009: 14). The city-region thus provides the spatial proximity that encourages knowledge flows between economic actors and the key institutions that support their activities (Wolfe, 2009).

The importance of highly skilled and creative-workers for economic growth has also been stressed in the literature. This is largely due to the work of Richard Florida and his contemporaries on the creative class. In the creative economy, Florida emphasizes the importance of occupations in media, film, fashion, music, advertising, architecture, and design along with various high-technology sectors like information and computer technology as significant economic generators. He also argues that economic inputs are now dependent on the talent of a ‘creative class’<sup>2</sup>, “whose economic function is to generate new ideas, new technologies and/or creative output” (Florida, 2002: 8). The creative class is also said to be attracted to places that offer diversity; a wide range of natural, cultural and recreational amenities; as well as tolerance. The importance of place to economic prosperity is thus seen to be paramount for creativity and innovation in the contemporary economy (Florida 2002; 2005; Donald and Morrow 2003).

### **Innovation and Creativity in Small Cities on the Periphery<sup>3</sup>**

Given the renewed interest in place as a key attribute to the contemporary economy, it is not surprising that most of the research has tended to focus on large metropolitan areas as the obvious spaces where creativity and innovation thrives (Florida, 2005; Mcgranahan and Wojan, 2007; Sands and Reese 2008; Stam, et al. 2008). In the regional innovation systems and clusters literature, for example, the majority of academic attention is paid to advanced regions like Silicon Valley, Toronto, Montreal and Waterloo (Morgan and Nauwelaers, 2003; Virkkala, 2007; Lagendijk and Lorentzen, 2007; Holbrook and Wolfe, 2000). As Virkkala (2007) comments “[p]eripheral and more distant areas have largely been ignored, as they have seldom been the target of innovation studies” (511). In addition, Johnstone and Haddow (2003) add that peripheries, like Cape Breton, are seen as ‘inauspicious’ spaces for the dynamic and innovative preconditions in the ‘new economy’.

Polèse et al. (2002) further argue that the overwhelming amount of innovations that are produced in large metropolitan areas “... sometimes leads to the assumption that almost all innovation occurs in large cities... but this can blind us to the innovations occurring outside these regions” (133). In fact, examples of innovation in the periphery are often overlooked because they occur within ‘old’ traditional sectors like mining or forestry rather than sectors at the forefront of technological developments (Polèse et al., 2002; Rutherford and Holmes, 2007; Lagendijk and Lorentzen, 2007). For example, in Northern Ontario we discovered that companies and institutions within a mining supply and services cluster are producing new technologies or methods to improve the efficiency, safety and sustainability of the mining industry. A number of companies involved in forestry are also creating or adapting processes for pest management, reforestation, and carbon sequestering (Hall and Donald, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> The creative class is defined as a group of occupations “...including science, engineering, arts, culture, entertainment and the knowledge-based professions of management, finance, law, healthcare and education” (Florida, Mellander and Stolarick, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> This section is from: Hall, H.M. and Donald, B. 2009; Innovation and Creativity on the Periphery: Challenges and Opportunities in Northern Ontario. Paper and Policy Report for the Martin Prosperity Institute and their Provincial Project, *Ontario in the Creative Age*; and Hall, H.M. and Donald, B. 2010; Clarifying Creativity and Culture in a Small City on the Canadian Periphery: Challenges and Opportunities in Greater Sudbury. In A. Lorentzen and B. van Heur (ed), *Cultural Political Economy of Small Cities*. Routledge. In progress.

In the creative economy, the Kingston ISRN Team discovered that variables like talent, tolerance, and technology are biased by design to favour large, core metropolitan areas (Lewis and Donald, 2010). For example, in Canada, it is not surprising to discover that so-called creative and high-tech industries are concentrating in and around large metropolitan areas like Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver (Polèse et al., 2002; Gertler et al., 2002; Beckstead and Gellatly, 2003) or that these large core areas are attracting higher proportions of ‘talented’ individuals who are highly educated (Polèse et al., 2002; Gertler et al., 2002). In the creativity script, size is an advantage and larger cities are more likely to rank on top of the indexes (Dreher, 2002). Meanwhile, smaller, peripheral places often end up at the bottom of these league tables (Gertler et al., 2002) creating a perception that these places are devoid of talent or creativity.

Recent interest into the applicability of creative-led economic development for more rural, mid-size, and peripheral places has had mixed results. In their work on rural counties, McGranahan and Wojan (2007) discovered that the rural creative class is older and more likely to be married. Thus, strategies geared at improving the quality of local schools may be more critical in rural areas. In addition, Sands and Reese (2008) determined that there is no clear evidence that a creative class strategy will work for mid-size urban areas in Canada. A common complaint in the academic literature is that “... the ‘creativity script’ does not take into consideration the variability of places or the applicability of large city strategies for other geographic contexts.” (Rantisi et al., 2006: 1793; Gibson & Klocker, 2004). In other words, as Sands and Reese (2008: 9) enquire, “are such strategies appropriate for seriously distressed cities such as Detroit and smaller and more isolated places such as Nanaimo, British Columbia?” In the end, economic growth strategies are also needed for the economic foundations of smaller, more peripheral cities.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the ISRN project looked in particular at one city-region (St. John’s) and three clusters of communities centred around the smaller urban centres of Clarenville, Corner Brook and Labrador City. As seen in Table 2, the population of the St. John’s city region in 2006 was 181,115 representing a 4.7 percent increase from the previous census period. The city has a higher percentage of creative and science and technology occupations when compared to Canada. However, the percentage of foreign born is significantly lower when compared to the Canadian average. Five industrial clusters are evident in St. John’s: Oil and Gas; Maritime; Information and Communications Technology Services; Business Services; and Higher Education.

In 2006, the town of Clarenville had a population of 5,274. This was a 3.3 percent increase from 2001. Over the years, the town has attracted some immigrants but during the last census period there were no new immigrants in Clarenville (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Corner Brook had a population of 26,625 in 2006. As seen in Table 3, 1.9 percent of the population were foreign-born which is one-tenth lower than the Canadian average. Corner Brook has a slightly higher percentage of people working in creative occupations when compared to Canada. The city has no industrial clusters based on the ISRN statistics.

Meanwhile, Labrador West is a collection of three towns, including: Labrador City, Wabush, and Churchill Falls. The economic history of the region is tied to natural resource development. The two dominant mining companies are: Rio Tinto, which operates as the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC), in Labrador City; and ArcelorMittal in Wabush (Rolls, 2010). Churchill Falls is dependent on hydroelectricity. The 2006 population of Labrador West was 9,660. This is a 6.1 percent decline from the previous census (Community Accounts, 2010). Comparable data for creative occupations and clusters are not available for Clarenville and Lab West.

**Table 2: Summary and Highlights for St. John's city region (CMA)**

<b>Key Indicators</b>	<b>St. John's</b>	<b>Canada</b>
Population, 2006	181,115	31,612,890
Population Change, 2001-2006	4.7%	5.4%
% Foreign Born	2.9%	19.8%
% BA Degree or higher	18.8%	18.1%
# Employed	87,890	15,958,195
Employment Growth 1996-2006	17.3%	19.8%
Employment Rate	58.7%	62.4%
Unemployment Rate	10.0%	6.6%
% 'Creative' Occupations	38.6%	33.2%
% Science & Tech. Occupations	8.0%	6.6%
'Bohemians' per 1,000 Labour Force	11.3	14.2
Number of Industrial Clusters	5	255
% Employment in Clusters	19.9%	22.1%
Average FT Employment Income	\$ 48,392	\$ 51,221
% Change Average Income 2000-2005	7.4%	5.5%

**Source:** Spencer and Vinodrai, 2009.

**Table 3: Summary and Highlights for Corner Brook region**

<b>Key Indicators</b>	<b>Corner Brook</b>	<b>Canada</b>
Population, 2006	2 6,625	31,612,890
Population Change, 2001-2006	1.8%	5.4%
% Foreign Born	1.9%	19.8%
% BA Degree or higher	12.4%	18.1%
# Employed	10,885	15,958,195
Employment Growth 1996-2006	0.4%	19.8%
Employment Rate	49.2%	62.4%
Unemployment Rate	15.2%	6.6%
% 'Creative' Occupations	32.4%	33.2%
% Science & Tech. Occupations	4.2%	6.6%
'Bohemians' per 1,000 Labour Force	8.4	14.2
Number of Industrial Clusters	---	255
% Employment in Clusters	0.0%	22.1%
Average FT Employment Income	\$ 43,052	\$ 51,221
% Change Average Income 2000-2005	-0.3%	5.5%

**Source:** Spencer and Vinodrai, 2009.

As the following report on the preliminary findings in Newfoundland and Labrador depicts, a big-city script for economic development can provide some interesting insights for smaller cities. However, it also portrays larger cities and their strategies as the norm while smaller, peripheral cities look like economic failures. What small cities need is a new policy mentality that recognizes place-based challenges and opportunities. The preliminary work in Newfoundland and Labrador is a testament to the importance of place-based policy-making and the role of smaller, peripheral cities in the contemporary economy. The following sections provide a summary of the keynote address, presentation and panel discussions from the Celtic Rendezvous workshop.



## **PROJECT PRESENTATION – FUNCTIONAL REGIONS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

As mentioned, the *Functional Region Project* is looking at labour market development, governance, and the idea of planning on a ‘functional’ rather than an ‘administrative’ basis. The project has four major components: 1) delineate, and where possible, map using GIS, the range of linkages between communities in regions within the province, particularly those between urban and rural communities; 2) assess existing governance mechanisms developed to manage these relations, identify gaps and make recommendations to enhance planning and decision making; 3) develop a regional economic capacity index tool for use by community, regional and other stakeholders (considering which communities are most connected through multiple linkages, and which combinations of linkages contribute the most to sustainable regions); and 4) collaborate with the membership of Municipalities NL and other partners to ensure transfer of learning and best practices, pilot new approaches and communicate lessons learned to inform policy and programs for all orders of government. The remainder of this section summarizes the presentations and the discussion period on the Functional Regions Project.

### **Alvin Simms – Functional Regions, Regional Economic Capacity & Labour Markets**

Alvin Simms started his presentation with an explanation of a functional region defined as a geographical area formed by clusters of communities where “the functional relationships are defined in terms of flows, such as socio-economic criteria like journey-to-work trips linking employment centres with other communities in the region” (J. Glasson quoted in Simms). He then compared Functional Labour Regions (based on journey-to-work data) with the REDB Boundaries. They found 28 functional regions versus the 20 Economic Zones, meaning that a number of REDBs had multiple functional regions within their boundaries. Simms also found a number of ‘orphaned’ communities that lack linkages to other places. In some cases these communities were completely isolated while in others they were linked by road but no other variables. In terms of lessons for policy and practice, for some REDBs there is a need for defining ‘local regions’ within their large zone boundaries for development and planning. In addition, functional labour regions can be used as a starting point to define a region. Simms emphasized that functional regions are an analysis unit and not an administrative unit. Furthermore, functional labour regions are dynamic and should be re-evaluated after major economic shifts.

The second part of Simms’ presentation looked at the Regional Economic Capacity Index (RECI), which is a decision support tool that uses variables based on three endogenous factors (demography, economic, structure and governance) and two exogenous factors (spatial location and service level). It provides a + or – score to indicate whether the community has strengths and weaknesses in these areas or a minor to high comparative advantage/disadvantage relative to other communities. The tool is modular and flexible. One can extract information on labour market potential in the form of overall composite scores or as detailed information on the inputs that make up these scores. New inputs can be added or old ones removed as new information becomes available. Community level information can be used to identify local and regional conditions for supporting economic development strategies and to assess a community’s position at four different regional levels (Province, Rural Secretariat, REDB, and Functional Region). The web based application for the RECI will be available at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre/reci](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/reci) with a link provided on MNL’s Functional Regions project web pages.

## **Kelly Vodden – Functional Regions and Regional Governance: Implications for Policy, Planning and Dialogue**

Kelly Vodden began her presentation with a description of governance and rural-urban interactions. She mentioned a number of key areas that link urban and rural areas including natural resource flows, food, people, finance, ideas, institutions and identities. She discovered that over one-third of the groups that were identified as active in development within the rural pilot region areas were based in an urban setting, illustrating that collaboration in governance and development is an important form of rural-urban interaction. To supplement data on functional, administrative and social/relational approaches to determining regional boundaries within the province, non-governmental and business leaders were surveyed to see how they themselves define their regions. Responses were varied within and across the three pilot regions. Vodden emphasized that there is a different role for the various types of regions and that informal networks of communities are already occurring, forming regions “from the bottom-up.” She highlighted that regions are nested or layered in Newfoundland and Labrador with many regional groups and governance efforts operating at each layer. Regions operating at a scale below administrative regions such as Regional Development Boards or Rural Secretariat regions are often based on self-selection, existing relationships, common interests, “reasonable” travel distance and cost and notions of region as “home”. While there is a role for multiple levels of regions she suggested, given limited resources and capacity, there is a need for further analysis and dialogue on existing regions to seek opportunities for further collaboration and in some cases re-organization. Vodden also argued that identifying functional regions (and changes that occur in these regions over time) within existing administrative boundaries and assessing their ‘regional economic capacity’ provides decision support information for such a dialogue and for policy development and decision-making.

In terms of labour market challenges, she found a number of mismatches between existing labour market actors and programs and existing labour market challenges. Labour market challenges include the limited and sporadic active efforts to address local labour supply and demands; institutional silos (e.g. economic versus labour market development); as well as the need for increased resources at the local level, better communication, coordination, and partnerships, including clear multi-level expectations, along with shared knowledge, accountability, and decision-making. Examples of Active Labour Market Policy from other jurisdictions offer lessons for NL (Freshwater 2008, Lysenko and Vodden 2010).

Vodden’s presentation concluded with a discussion of the governance of natural resources and ‘re’-emerging rural-urban interactions in NL related to control over and benefits from natural resources. Again, Vodden discovered that decision-making is occurring primarily in urban areas and that the role of rural areas in the resource sectors and as stewards of natural capital needs greater attention. Regional planning and governance and education about the role and assets of rural and rural-urban interdependencies can play a role in fostering more equitable rural-urban interactions in the future.

### ***Questions and Discussion for the Functional Regions Project***

The discussion period highlighted the importance of learning from the challenges and lessons where communities are working together. Participants also expressed concern about the top-down nature of policy-making and the role of the discussed tools in that process. The hope is that this index will provide smaller places with the data and tools. The goal is for local decision-makers to be able to better understand and to demonstrate issues of concern with the index to assist them in approaching

the higher levels of government and in identifying potential development solutions. Participants were curious about how this knowledge would be shared and discovered that there will be workshops and training on the index along with links on the Harris Centre and MNL websites. However there was some concern about whether smaller places have the capacity to utilize all of the tools available to them. Discussion also focussed on whether more organizations are better or whether we are spreading the resources too thinly resulting in volunteer burn-out. In addition, participants questioned whether we need more government or governance. In the end, participants all agreed that policies are often reactive and questioned who will be the proactive parties in NL.

## **PROJECT PRESENTATION - ISRN IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

### **Greg Spencer – Social Dimensions of Creativity and Innovation in Canadian City-Regions: A Brief Overview**

Greg Spencer started his presentation with a brief overview of the research goals in the previous Cluster-Based ISRN Project (2001-2005) and a more in-depth look at the current City-Region ISRN Project. He stressed the importance of the social dimension of economic performance that underpins much of this research. He then turned to the debate surrounding specialization versus diversity as sources of growth and innovation. At the heart of this debate is the argument that the transmission of knowledge across diverse sectors stimulates growth in additional sectors. Specialization, however, in high-value added activities is often essential for regional prosperity. This debate is impacted by a number of other issues including size of the urban region, connections to global networks, and the evolution of the industrial structure. Spencer also highlighted the enduring debate surrounding whether jobs follow workers or workers follow jobs. In the academic literature this debate is fuelled by the work of Richard Florida who argues that quality of place attracts people and this in turn attracts economic prosperity. On the other side of the debate are scholars like Michael Storper who stresses that people move for economic opportunities. Spencer then provided a number of key findings for rural areas. For example, they tend to suffer from a lack of local ‘creative advantage’ with sparse local networks and low diversity. This suggests that there is a larger role for the public sector in network building. Furthermore, the attraction and retention of younger workers is a serious problem for most rural areas in developed countries. Finally, Spencer offered a number of key ideas and messages from an earlier workshop in NL: the possibility of hidden diversity - the transient workforce or ‘been-aways’; the need to be aware of the underlying processes of creativity and innovation; and the need to be aware of local strengths.

### **Ann-Marie Vaughan – Theme I – St. John’s Region**

#### **Social Foundations of Innovation: Examination of Social Networks and Clustering in the Northeast Avalon**

The purpose of Ann-Marie Vaughan’s presentation was to discuss the social foundations of innovation in the St. John’s city-region. A total of twenty-six interviews were undertaken in a variety of sectors from oil and gas to health and information technology (IT). A number of key themes emerged from the interview process, including: optimism and confidence due to the economic boom based on offshore oil and gas; the important role of the university and college for labour, research and development, and community support; a skills gap in IT and the Oceans Technology sector for marketing and business development; and a culture of giving back to the community. In terms of cluster maturity, Vaughan discovered that oil and gas is the most mature, followed by arts and culture and IT. Within these sectors, she found that oil and gas companies valued community relationships with other companies and the government but noted the absence of head offices in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Arts and Culture sector is more multi-faceted and companies tend to work together on almost everything whereas the IT sector saw other companies as subcontractors rather than collaborators. Finally, Vaughan found that in terms of place-based characteristics, size is both an advantage and a disadvantage, the cultural diversity of the city is a real draw for talent attraction, and government programs are important for innovation and creativity.

## **Rob Greenwood and Josh Lepawsky – Themes II & III – St. John’s Region**

### **Attracting Talented Workers to Atlantic Canada: is St. John’s a Metropolis on the Margins?**

Rob Greenwood reported on Theme II on behalf of Josh Lepawsky, concerning talent attraction and retention and Theme III looking at inclusivity and civic engagement. He started with a discussion of the various conceptions of city-size and how the ISRN project is fixated on size. However, the work of Richard Shearmur among others (e.g. Larry Bourne and Mario Polése) argues that location also matters. In Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador is at the margins of national population flows, however St. John’s is on the receiving end for the province. In Theme II, Lepawsky discovered that social networks are essential for talent attraction and retention. He also found that highly educated and creative workers felt loyalty to St. John’s but felt that it wasn’t the right place to be in Canada to be at the top of their game. Employers and intermediary organizations cited challenges with the size and remoteness of St. John’s. Another issue was the real or perceived social divide between ‘insiders’ and ‘CFAs’.

In Theme III, Greenwood argued that the tension between the federal and provincial government impacts collaborative decision-making. In addition, municipalities and economic development organizations reported that they are starved for resources and respect. On the other hand, social organizations are thriving, possibly due to strong leadership and the notion that this sector is not a ‘threat’ to centralized political power; interestingly, women are driving policy in this area. Greenwood closed by asking what lessons we can learn from the social sector for the municipal and economic sectors and whether local/regional democratic efficacy will ever take hold in Newfoundland and Labrador?

## **Ken Carter & Damian Creighton – Themes I, II & III – Labrador West, Corner Brook, Clarenville**

### **Social Foundations of Innovation: Applying the Lessons for Policy and Practice in Rural Newfoundland and Labrador**

This presentation was based on twenty-five interviews in Clarenville, thirty-two interviews in Corner Brook, and thirty-three interviews in Labrador West. In Theme I, they discovered a number of key findings were discovered for rural Newfoundland and Labrador. For example, innovation is occurring in Labrador West but there is a lack of infrastructure and limited collaboration. In Clarenville, they found that the relative position to St. John’s creates problems, however there are significant opportunities for innovation while in Corner Brook there is a disconnect between the university and the community. Suggestions for policy and practice include building networks, encouraging a stronger relationship between Memorial University’s St. John’s campus, Grenfell College and the College of the North Atlantic, creating more external connections, improving communication, and strengthening the rural innovation system.

In Theme II, a number of place-based challenges and opportunities for talent and attraction were discovered. In Labrador West, advantages include community safety; however, there is a lack of openness in the community, inadequate health, dental, and other services and a lack of affordable housing. In Clarenville limited amenities and isolation were issues; however, the community is safe and tolerant. Meanwhile, in Corner Brook there are labour shortages in some industries and an abundance of natural amenities; however, youth out-migration persists. Lessons for policy and practice include the importance of employment opportunities, quality of place and the need for an immigration strategy to emphasize the benefits of smaller towns.

In Theme III, the rural team found a number of insights for governance. For example, in Labrador West they found an increasing level of involvement between various levels of government and the community; however, more firms, NGOs and civic engagement are needed. In Clarenville, the town is poorly organized when it comes to projects and has limited community involvement, while in Corner Brook, businesses and the federal government are not at the table and there is a lack of trust and collaboration. Insights for policy and practice include building and communicating a regional plan, encouraging a greater regional voice in decision-making, and adding inclusivity to the agenda.

### ***Questions and Discussion for the ISRN Project***

Several issues and concerns were raised after the ISRN project overview. Many participants were concerned with the relationship between government and NGOs in rural areas. They expressed fear that government works on a different set of rules and norms and that NGOs are being diverted away from their mandates to get funding from the government. Another discussion centred on whether all rural communities can develop and what do we do if they can't? Many of the participants and presenters recognized that not all places will win and that we need to be humane and have 'community palliative care.' Further discussion centred on the role of unions as important sources of social capital and whether the study looked at the importance of unions. The first ISRN study had room for unions but the second study did not lend itself to involving unions. Some participants cautioned that there are issues of involvement and power sharing *within* unions. However, others argued that unions do meet regularly about the broader public policy issues. Another discussion questioned what a strong commitment to place means if succession planning is not put in place. Others questioned whether we can have too many organizations involved in economic development and whether the universities and colleges can be mandated to play a stronger role in economic development. Participants expressed concern over the tendency of the provincial and federal governments in 'cannibalizing' talented local and regional employees, especially at a time when many Baby Boomers are retiring from government employment. Others argued that although the university does have an obligation to connect to the region it is NOT an economic development agency. Finally, it was argued that regional structures with skill, authority and legitimacy are key and that regional government really matters.

## **DAY 1 EVENING SESSION**

The evening of Day 1 included an announcement and a stimulating panel. Representatives from a group of stakeholders including Memorial University's Division for Lifelong Learning, the Harris Centre, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association, further emphasized the importance of strong local organizations in regional development with the announcement of a new certificate course in Regional Policy and Development. Set to commence in September of 2010, the program will be the first of its kind in the province, offering a locally-relevant course of study for regional policy and development professionals (please refer to the Appendix 4 for further information).

Participants then engaged with a special panel consisting of well-known performers focused on the impact of place upon the creative process. Featuring Andy Jones, Jillian Keiley and David Maggs, the panel was moderated by Ivan Emke from Grenfell College. It was an opportunity to explore the first-hand experiences of those for whom creativity is not only a way of life, but also a profession. The panel discussed the challenges and opportunities of producing creative work in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as highlighting the influence of the everyday creative legacy of past generations, with an emphasis on the resilience and resourcefulness of rural people. The arts panel concluded with a question and answer session, eliciting insightful questions and passionate responses from both panel and audience members.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION – INSIGHTS AND LESSONS FROM DAY ONE**

Day Two started with four panellists who were invited to give their impressions and offer their perspective on some of insights and lessons from Day One.

### **Bruce Gilbert**

Gilbert started with a discussion of how government tends to be risk averse. He talked about some of the lessons he has learned including that size and distance matter. He was impressed with the amount of research occurring on regions but advocated for more data and cited President Obama's Open Government initiative as a model. Gilbert questioned what the appropriate scale for regional government is and who should change and deliver local labour market policies. Finally, he suggested that the government approach needs to change and evolve however he also argued that it's not the government's job to decide the number of groups involved in economic development.

### **Sheila Downer**

Downer argued that rural areas often feel far removed. She stated the functional regions tool will be very important to rural communities in Newfoundland and Labrador and stressed the importance of promoting the tool, and teaching communities how to use it. In terms of the role of education in regional economic development, she argued that it is not the role of educational institutions to develop but they should be involved. Downer further stressed that human resources and the lack of capacity in rural areas are major issues. She discussed the importance of engaging the knowledge flows between communities and the university to answer the tough questions like "can all rural places develop?" They need data and the knowledge to discuss these issues. Finally, Downer argued that a cookie-cutter approach does not work and questioned whether the zone boards' performance-based funding is setting up a cookie-cutter approach.

### **Kevin Morgan**

Morgan discussed three key lessons from Day One. The first centred on the great marriage between the arts and politics. With regards to development, artists are the pioneers of the way places reinvent themselves. For example, the way Andy Jones told stories about the province and re-instilled confidence in the province. He compared this to the work of Gunnar Myrdal, who argued that the self-beliefs of people in rich regions reinforce the stereotypes and perceptions about less-favoured regions to the point where they believe them. Morgan's second point dealt with multi-level governance systems and the misalignment between the provincial and municipal levels. He argued that there is a lack of joined-up thinking for the problems but we need to get over it because this is the way of the world. Instead we should be advocating for groups that straddle between the levels. Morgan's third and final point was the need to think about oil resources and how to harness them for sustainable long-term developments.

### **Susan Drodge**

Drodge emphasized that she would be bringing back these lessons to ACOA. She mentioned that the notion of functional regions is a fascinating concept and can help identify the scale for local economic development, the appropriate manageable scale, and inform where efforts are needed. She wondered if the inventories of organizations in the pilot project of the 'functional regions' projects would be made available because government doesn't always know all the players. Drodge



questioned why the social sector is so successful in building the capacity for applications. She advocated for trying to be more proactive and bringing key stakeholders with local knowledge together. Finally, Drodge argued that we need to break down the silos.

### ***Questions and Discussion for Day One Panel***

The discussion started with a suggestion that the business community sit down and hear from cultural industries to perhaps learn from them. It was mentioned that too often artists are reduced to an actor of economic development in a specific sector but they are much more and could help us rethink the way organizations see their capacity for action. A number of participants stressed the vast array of tools that are available that are not being used. The local level often lacks the capacity to use them because often they are run by volunteers who are pressed for time and money. Others stressed that we need to spend more time on the initiation stage for projects to succeed. Discussion also turned to the need for seed money to build the capacity to write solid government applications. It was also stressed that it can't just be St. John's people who go out to the rural areas to solve their issues, but that more people need to live in rural areas to solve the inherent challenges.

Participants then turned to the issue of oil prosperity and questioned what NL is doing with this new-found wealth. They identified how the same discussion is occurring about regional economic development even though economic circumstances have changed dramatically. Participants also mentioned that the negatives associated with this growth are not being discussed. Morgan called this the "Oil Challenge" and argued that there are two choices: NL could go down the Norway route and use the oil wealth to create an equitable society as in Shetland where community trusts were established, or the route Nigeria has taken, with oil wealth but widespread poverty and lack of investment in sustainability. A final discussion centred on the inability of governments to say they "don't know" that the fight over power between opposition and government often prevents decision-makers from engaging openly in joint problem solving.

## **LESSONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

Eight facilitated break-out groups were tasked with examining the key lessons from this research for policy and practice in Newfoundland and Labrador from the perspective of industry, municipal government, the federal and provincial governments, and NGOs. The findings of the break-out groups were then presented to the workshop with time set aside for discussion.

### **Groups 1&2: Lessons for Industry (Business and Labour)**

The suggestions for policy lessons from Group 1 included the need for the basics in the community to be place in order to operate, and the need to level the playing field. Once the basics are in place they argued that the government should devolve responsibility to the local level, accepting that there will be failures. Group 1 also stated that policy-making needs to be nimble, flexible and place-based, and that policy support should shift to the creative sector. They also suggested that businesses should establish themselves as good corporate citizens and provide support at the community level. Finally, they advocated for integrated policy-making. Similarly, Group 2 argued that we need to ensure that business is in the room to hear the message because too often they are not included. They also suggested that more discussion is needed on how to maximize the benefits from oil development to reduce the boom-bust cycles. Group 2 also advocated for more inclusivity in policy discussions including, for example, youth and aboriginal communities. Finally, they questioned how to create a culture of risk takers, innovators, and entrepreneurs in NL and overcome the culture of competition that undermines collaboration.

In terms of lessons for practice, Group 1 argued that there is a need to reduce the dependency on public funds to enable community actors to decide to do things on their own and be empowered to “say no to the cheque” if it doesn’t make sense for them as a community. They further advocated for more space at the community level to form and support social networks and space to be creative (eg. re-think school space for after-hours access). Group 1 questioned whether we need specialists at the community level or whether we need generalists who can see the connections and foster relationships between businesses. Finally, they argued that we need to break the resistance to change. Likewise, Group 2 mentioned that we need to be aware of all the players and encourage more information sharing. They also questioned how to build more confidence in NL entrepreneurs, encourage risk-taking and foster youth entrepreneurs. As well, Group 2 advocated for forums for sharing lessons, data, expertise and experiences.

### **Groups 3&4: Lessons for Municipal Government**

Group 3 had a number of policy lessons for municipal government including the need for workable and well thought-out ways to develop. They further argued that all levels need to be involved in the process. As well, mechanisms need to be established to ensure that the vision is followed through, and support programs for newcomers need to be developed. Finally, they suggested that policies for regional land use planning need to be created and disincentives for amalgamation need to be removed. Meanwhile, Group 4 saw the Regional Economic Capacity Index tool developed in the functional regions project as an important tool that can inform policy changes, but it needs to be brought to all three levels of government. They further argued that a process is needed to encourage municipalities to have discussions about economic development.

Both groups had a number of lessons for practice. For example, Group 3 suggested that municipalities need to use existing tools and determine where and how to gather and use the capacity

that they have. They also argued for more training for newcomers. Likewise Group 4 advocated for a space utilization plan pilot project to create an inventory of space for arts development. They also argued that MNL needs to consider inviting the NL Arts Council, etc. to participate at the annual meetings and trade shows. As well, Group 4 suggested that Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs) are the first step in getting municipalities to think about a range of issues and talk to their neighbours. Finally, they encouraged the new certificate program in regional policy and development to offer scholarships in order to encourage municipal and regional administrators to take the training.

### **Groups 5&6: Lessons for Federal and Provincial Governments**

With regards to lessons for the upper levels of government, Group 5 cautioned against the use of a 'one-size-fits-all' mentality. They advocated for more flexibility, creativity and acquiring true and meaningful input from key players in the community. Group 5 argued that government is risk averse and that top-down policies do not work. Instead they suggested that government policies need to be more proactive rather than reactive. Group 6 argued that they had more questions than lessons for government. The first was a suggestion to consider lessons from other jurisdictions specifically in terms of labour markets. Group 6 suggested that the key issues are rural, and government policy needs to reflect this. Finally, they questioned whether the government is willing to reconsider the policy-making process.

Suggestions for practice from Group 5 included building competence, community capacity building, meaningful consultation, knowledge sharing, and informal collaboration. They also argued for a regional approach and more proactive approach to policy-making. On the other hand, Group 6 questioned whether the government can be a partner when they are also the funder. They also advocated for a discussion on how tools are explained, promoted, and judged effective at the local or regional level.

### **Groups 7&8: Lessons for NGOs**

Group 7 had a number of policy lessons for NGOs including a governance model representing real regions. NGOs also need to know the regional players and who they should be working with. They also suggested that NGOs be creative and honest and encourage policy on cooperation not competition. Likewise, Group 8 suggested that government should support those who demonstrate the will to make positive change vs simply the will to survive. They also argued that we need to be more accountable and that government needs to remind itself of the value of different types of knowledge. Finally they argued that government is dealing with a high-level culture of fear.

Both groups had a number of suggestions for practice. For example, Group 7 mentioned that functional regions should be considered as an area for practice and partnerships. This in turn will help identify the needs and gaps that are identified by the region. They also advocated for stronger networks and partnerships. Group 8 argued that we need to see crisis as a driver and that government should bear the burden of accountability and evaluation. Finally, they suggested that we build on local history and move away from the adversarial relationship between government and NGOs. (See Appendix 4 for individual input on these questions.)

## **CLOSING PANEL**

Day Two closed with five panellists who were invited to give their impressions and offer their perspectives on some of the insights and lessons from the two-day workshop.

### **Bill Reimer**

Bill Reimer started with a discussion on the conditions for collaboration and collective action. He argued that compromise, trust and confidence in the partnership are rules of the game that are essential. The role of government is to create stable conditions to facilitate collaboration. He used the Harris Centre as an example that provides the space and structure to help, that the community trusts, and where the rules are secure. Reimer emphasized the importance of stability. These characteristics are especially important when talking across very different normative systems (e.g., government vs. business vs. NGOs) or conflict will result.

### **Craig Pollett**

Craig Pollett argued for caution when using the social sector as an example for municipalities. He suggested that the social sector is only responsible for one area (eg., housing) however municipalities have a number of responsibilities. He discussed the big issue of devolution and stated that it's a political question that requires a shift from the centre to regions. Pollett argued that devolution is not a voluntary decision and that the centre will not do it. He then turned to a discussion on how NL is using the stories and traditions to build identity but not to discuss stories of government or governance. In terms of institutional thickness, he suggested that there are too many organizations and not enough resources. Pollett closed with a discussion of the importance of planning and of the lack of a strong planning tradition in NL. Regions need to own their regionalism, and "say no to the cheque."

### **Richard Shearmur**

Richard Shearmur questioned how to convince people from outside rural or peripheral areas about the importance of these areas. To counter discussions from other researchers, policy-makers and economists, he argued that we need to tie the rural debate into wider arguments. His suggestion was to use the capabilities argument where all people, regardless of where they live, have access to internet, good schools, etc., to level the playing field. He further suggested that moral issues should be framed in equity arguments.

### **Lisa Browne**

Lisa Browne brought up a number of issues from the workshop. First she argued that we have more information and tools than ever before and that people need help to use them. She also mentioned how tools like community accounts are not being kept up-to-date and this takes away from their value. Browne then turned to a discussion of the business sector and how to get them to the planning table. She also argued that the usual suspects are always present and we need to start looking for who is out there who isn't at the table. In terms of the debate about grassroots and top-down, Ms. Browne suggested that it's a trade-off. A top-down approach is sometimes needed and the upper levels of government need to take responsibility. Finally, she argued that too often collaboration is forced and only included to meet funding application requirements.

## **Kevin Morgan**

Kevin Morgan focussed on three key lessons from the two-day workshop. He started with a discussion on how new stories are emerging about enterprises that are addressing the entrepreneurial deficit. Furthermore, firms are using their specialized skills in new applications to build out from their traditional technology and use their skills in other sectors. In this sense the stories are lagging behind the stereotypes. He then turned to a discussion on the government model based on ‘we know best’ and ‘we can’t be wrong.’ Morgan argued for moving away from this model to a more joined-up solution to different problems because no one level can do it alone. He further suggested that the quality of the dialogue between civil society and the state needs to be raised. Morgan also cautioned not to confuse the ends with the means; collaboration is the process and needs an end other than itself. Finally, the next 5-10 years is make-it or break-it time in terms of oil wealth and now is the time to decide.

### ***Questions and Discussion for the Closing Panel***

Participants discussed the challenges associated with regional competition and competitions between unincorporated local service districts and municipalities, and questioned how to overcome them. Suggestions included approaching the situation from a positive democratic argument. Others questioned the devolution argument and stated that many municipalities are already constrained and not seeking more authority. A number of participants questioned fairness in politics and the applicability of the equality argument to rural areas. The argument was that some areas will need to be treated unequally to get equality; for example, a tax burden on some places to pay for the quality of services in others. Panellists argued that it is equality of opportunity that is needed, not equality of treatment because different places will require different solutions. It is simply not enough to argue that rural communities need to be sustained because of emotional attachments to place. The argument needs to be hard-headed and linked with theories of equality. Other suggested arguments included enlightened self-interest (if we move everyone to St John’s it won’t improve the quality of life in St. John’s and may actually degrade it) and sovereignty (if we move out who is waiting to move in.) Finally, participants were curious about the role of community trusts in Shetland and how to use them in NL to harness oil revenues.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The Functional Regions Project provided a number of interesting findings. All participants recognized the importance of tools like the Regional Economic Capacity Index to help local and regional authorities plan and support economic development initiatives. They further discovered that there is a need for increased resources at the local level, better communication, coordination, and partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and clear multi-level expectations, accountability, and decision-making. More importantly, decision-making is occurring in urban areas and the role of rural areas needs greater attention, perhaps through regional governance and planning and education about the role and assets of rural and rural-urban interdependencies.

In the ISRN Project a number of findings were identified in each of the case study areas. In St. John's, a number of key ideas emerged including: optimism and confidence due to the economic boom; the important role of the university and college for labour, research and development, and community support; a skills gap in IT and the Oceans Technology sector for marketing and business development; the importance of social networks for talent attraction and retention; and the loyalty creative workers feel towards St. John's. In Labrador West, innovations were occurring within a specific company. In terms of place-based characteristics, a number of key findings were mentioned, including: safety, employment services, short commute, recreation, strong union and strong municipal council. However, a number of challenges were also cited including: 'one-industry' town, transportation issues, isolation, lack of affordable housing, inadequate social and health services and a lack of upper-level government support or presence. In Clarenville, proximity to St. John's was cited as a challenge for economic growth in some sectors and senior professional positions are lacking in the community. In Corner Brook, the research team discovered that there are not enough jobs in some sectors to retain people permanently and not enough networking among the partners.

Several engaging debates emerged over the two-day workshop including one focussed on whether all rural areas can be sustained. Participants questioned how to approach this issue with sensitivity and how to argue the importance of all places regardless of size or location. Other debates centred on the multitude of tools available for local communities versus the lack of capacity to use them. There are several other areas that require further discussion, including: the role of Memorial's Faculty of Business in Newfoundland and Labrador; the importance of the resource economy when thinking about these themes in the Canadian context; and the "Oil Issue" that is confronting NL. More importantly, all in attendance emphasized the importance of these insights for policy and practice. Both research teams are now tasked with concluding their findings and sharing them with all those with a role in regional policy and development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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**APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ATTENDEES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Community</b>
Brett, Linda	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	Springdale
Browne, Lisa	Eastern Health	Clarenville
Carter, Ken	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	St. John's
Cassell, Victor	Twillingate/New World Islands RDA	Cottlesville
Clair, Michael	Harris Centre, Memorial University	St. John's
Companion, Lori Anne	Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Gov't. of Nfld. & Labrador	St. John's
Creighton, Damian	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	St. John's
Curran, Pat	Irish Loop Development Board	Trepassey
Downer, Sheila	Smart Labrador	Forteau
Drodge, Susan	ACOA	St. John's
Emke, Ivan	Sir Wilfred Grenfell College	Corner Brook
Gibson, Ryan	Geography Department, Memorial University	St. John's
Gilbert, Bruce	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	St. John's
Greenwood, Rob	Harris Centre, Memorial University	St. John's
Hall, Heather	Queen's University	Kingston, ON
Heffernan, Seamus	Harris Centre, Memorial University	Mount Pearl
Keenan, Robert	Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John's
Lawrence, Elizabeth	City of St. John's	St. John's
Lomond, Ted	Newfoundland & Labrador Regional Economic Development Assoc.	St. John's
Marshall, Barbara	Labrador Straits Development Corporation	Forteau
McCahon, Marion	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	Corner Brook
Morgan, Kevin	Cardiff University	Cardiff, Wales
Moriarty, Leo	Irish Loop Development Board	Ferryland
Mullowney, Harold	Irish Loop Development Board	Bay Bulls

**Appendix 1: List of Attendees (cont.)**

Murray, Kerry	Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Labour	St. John's
Peddle, David	Sir Wilfred Grenfell College	Corner Brook
Peddle, Gerald	Twillingate/New World Islands RDA	Summerford
Reimer, Bill	Concordia University	Montreal, QC
Rogers, Churence	Town of Centreville-Wareham-Trinity	Centreville
Rumboldt, Betty	ACOA	St. John's
Shearmur, Richard	INRS-Urbanisation, Culture et Société, University of Quebec	Montreal, QC
Sheppard, Dion	Dept. of Innovation, Trade & Rural Devel., Gov't. of NL	St. John's
Shrimpton, Mark	Stantec	St. John's
Simms, Alvin	Department of Geography, Memorial University	St. John's
Smyth, Joanne	ACOA	St. John's
Sparkes, Ron	Labrador Institute	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Spencer, Gregory	University of Toronto	Toronto
Storey, Keith	Department of Geography, Memorial University	St. John's
Tilley, Paul	College of the North Atlantic	Clareville
Tobin, Mike	Town of Stephenville	Stephenville
Vaughan, Anne Marie	Distance Education & Learning Technologies, MUN	St. John's
Vodden, Kelly	Department of Geography, Memorial University	Centreville
Yetman, Michelle	Rural Secretariat, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador	Carbonear

## **APPENDIX 2: SPEAKER AND PANELLIST BIOS**

### **Lisa Browne:**

Lisa works with Eastern Health, Newfoundland and Labrador, in the area of Corporate Strategy and Planning. In this capacity, she has worked on a variety of projects, including community health needs assessments and strategic and operational planning.

She is a member of the Rural Secretariat (Bonavista-Clarenville Region) and serves as Vice-Chair of the Board of The Rooms Corporation. She served as Deputy Mayor of the Town of Clarenville and in that capacity led the development of the town's first Strategic Plan and an Economic Development Plan.

Lisa has worked in planning, marketing and fund-raising in the health sector and the arts sector in Newfoundland & Labrador and Ontario. She has a BA (English) and an MBA.

### **Ken Carter:**

Ken is Director of Partnership Research and Analysis with the Rural Secretariat, a branch of Executive Council, Provincial Government. The Rural Secretariat is involved in numerous community-based research projects around the province related to long-term sustainability of rural regions.

Ken holds M.Phil and MBA degrees from Memorial. He is interested in exploring the themes of innovation and governance in rural communities.

### **Damian Creighton:**

Damian is a Master of Arts student at Memorial University of Newfoundland, specializing in International Politics.

Damian has relocated to St. John's from the bustling city of Toronto, where he earned his Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in Global Political Studies from York University and his Post-Graduate Certificate in International Business Management from Centennial College.

He is a contributor to an online magazine that explores the diversity as well as interconnectedness of niche subcultures in Canada and around the world. Damian is currently working with the Rural Secretariat to develop strategies for sustaining rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Sheila Downer:**

Sheila is the Managing Director of SmartLabrador Inc, an incorporated organization that reflects a cooperative development strategy of the five economic development corporations of Labrador to address local ICT development.

She has been recognized as one of Atlantic Canada's Top 50 CEO's, has served as a member of the Hemispheric Advisory Board for the Institute of Connecting the Americas (International Development Research Centre) and is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Genesis Group and the Advisory Board of the Harris Centre.

**Susan Drodge:**

Susan is the Senior Policy Advisor for the Newfoundland and Labrador Office of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

After several years as a lecturer at Memorial University, Susan moved to Ottawa in 2001 to work for the national headquarters of Canadian Heritage before making her way back east to work for that department's Atlantic office and, since 2009, for ACOA in St. John's.

In her role with ACOA, she regularly engages with other government, academic and community stakeholders to work on policy-related issues and initiatives in the area of economic development, and actively supports the mobilization of policy research within her organization.

**Bruce Gilbert:**

Bruce is the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Rural Secretariat of Newfoundland and Labrador.

His previous work experience includes serving as Managing Coordinator, Canadian Climate Impacts and Adaptation Research Network; Executive Director, Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador; initiating partner and resource person, Communication for Survival Initiative, South/West coasts of Newfoundland; freelance education and organizational development consultant; community mobilization advisor for OXFAM-Canada in Namibia; director and founding member, Extension Community Development Co-op; field co-ordinator, Memorial University Extension; education officer, Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association; group leader, Canada World Youth exchanges to Indonesia and Malawi; and, several positions with Katimavik.

**Rob Greenwood:**

Rob is the founding director of The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, and is cross-appointed with Memorial's Faculty of Business Administration.

He holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Business Studies from the University of Warwick, England, and has served as a Director and Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy in economic development departments in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Saskatchewan. He was Vice President, Corporate Development, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan, and was founding Director of the Sustainable Communities Initiative, a partnership with the National Research Council of Canada.

He has taught, consulted, published and presented extensively on community economic and regional development, strategic economic planning, public policy, and knowledge mobilization.

**Josh Lepawsky:**

Josh received his BA (1996) in geography at the University of British Columbia. Subsequently, he completed an MA (1999) in geography at Queen's University, and a PhD (2005) in geography at the University of Kentucky.

He is fascinated by connections between geography and technology, a theme he pursued in both his postgraduate degrees.

His recent research is a project called Mapping the International Trade and Traffic of Electronic Waste. His PhD research investigated a multi-billion dollar mega-project in Malaysia called the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

**Kevin Morgan:**

Kevin is a professor at the School of City and Regional Planning, at Cardiff University.

He received his BA Hons at University of Leicester, completed his MA at McMaster University and finished his PhD at the University of Sussex.

His primary research areas include Innovation and Regional Development, Devolution and the Multi-Level Polity, Sustainable Agri-Food Chains, and Regeneration and Self-Managed Communities.

He is a member of the ISRN international Research Advisory Committee for both the current MCRI project (2006-2010) and the first MCRI project (2000-2005).

He has acted in a consulting capacity for various local, national and international organizations including the Regional Policy Directorate of the European Commission, the UK Department of Trade and Industry, and the OECD.

**Craig Pollett:**

Craig has been the Executive Director of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador since 2001, playing a leadership role in lobbying and advocacy, membership development and services, and policy research and development.

He has worked in economic development and policy analysis for over fifteen years, and is currently President of the Municipal Training and Development Corporation.

He received his Bachelor of Commerce from Memorial University and went on to complete his Masters in Developments Economics at Dalhousie University.

**Bill Reimer:**

Bill is a Professor of Sociology at Concordia University in Montréal.

From 1997 to 2008 he directed a national research project on the New Rural Economy (<http://nre.concordia.ca>). This project examined the major economic, social, and policy changes in rural areas over the past 60 years – with a particular emphasis on their implications for the revitalization of rural communities. It included 15 researchers and 32 rural communities in a research and education network from all parts of Canada (plus 2 in Japan).

His publications deal with the impact of technology on rural communities, the economy and the household, rural immigration, Aboriginal communities, the informal economy, social support networks, social capital, social cohesion, municipal finances, and community capacity-building.

He is Vice-President, Research on the Board of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.

**Richard Shearmur:**

Richard is a professor of urban and regional economics at the University of Québec's INRS research and teaching institute.

After completing his undergraduate studies in England, Richard worked as a property consultant in Europe. He returned to Canada to complete his Master's degree in Urban Planning at McGill and a PhD in Economic Geography at the Université de Montréal. He currently holds the Canada Chair in Spatial Statistics and Public Policy.

His work focuses upon the spatial and regional dimensions of economic development and innovation, and he has published numerous articles on the subject. In particular, with his colleague Mario Polèse he has worked extensively on questions relating to the development of Canada's more remote regions, and with David Doloreux has worked specifically on a number of comparative studies of maritime clusters.

His work has appeared in journals such as *Environment and Planning A*, *Urban Studies*, *Regional Studies*, *Marine Policy and Growth & Change*, and he regularly does policy related research for local and regional development agencies in Canada.

**Alvin Simms:**

Alvin is a geographer who utilizes GIS, and spatial analysis to examine regional economic development and planning issues.

In addition, he also uses geo-statistics and AI/Expert Systems to develop intelligent spatial decision support systems (ISDSS) for regional planning and development. His undergraduate studies were completed in quantitative Economic Geography at Memorial University. Graduate studies, with a focus on quantitative methods, GIS and spatial analysis, were completed at the University of Calgary.

He is an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Geography, Memorial University, Cross Appointed to the Faculty of Medicine's Community Health and Adjunct Professor at the Dept. of Agricultural and Rural Economics, University of Kentucky.

He has also acted as consultant for provincial and federal governments, industry and provincial health organizations to advise on and study regional economic development as well as health service related issues.

**Ann Marie Vaughan**

Ann Marie is the Director of Distance Education and Learning Technologies at Memorial University.

Ann Marie leads a team responsible for providing strategic leadership for the university in online learning course development, service and delivery; teaching and learning (including classroom design, and faculty and graduate student instructional development), and learning technology development.

Ann Marie has 20 years of experience in higher education leadership with a particular background in organizational development and strategic planning.



This knowledge has been applied to several high profile positions including, but not limited to, Associate Director of the School of Continuing Education at Memorial, Senior Planner at Memorial's Fisheries and Marine Institute and Planning Advisor with the National Research Council in Vancouver, British Columbia. She holds undergraduate degrees in Arts and Education from Memorial University, a Master of Arts from the University of British Columbia and is currently a doctoral candidate in higher education leadership at the University of Calgary.

**Kelly Vodden:**

Kelly is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Memorial University. She also serves as a research associate and member of the Community Cooperation Office with Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador (MNL).

She completed her PhD and Master of Arts degrees at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia in the Department of Geography and received her undergraduate degree in Honours Business Administration from the University of Western Ontario.

She is a Co-Investigator in the multi-year research project Rural-Urban Interactions in Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding and Managing Functional Regions.

## **APPENDIX 3: INDIVIDUAL INPUT FORMS ROLL-UP**

### **Appendix 4: Individual Input Sheets**

What are the key lessons from this research for policy in NL?

- Policy means the rules of the game, procedures within which organizations and individuals operate when they take action; can be government policy, or for private or non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

What are the key lessons from this research for practice in NL?

- Practice can be any activity an organization or individual takes to achieve their mandate / what you do to make things happen

#### **1. Lessons for industry (business and labour)**

##### **1.1 Most important policy lesson?**

- Businesses and community must support each other
- Clear, concise, non-bureaucratic policies must be articulated
- Contribution of functional regions model and lessons from OECD
- Create policies that are supportive of private sector initiatives and get rid of red tape

##### **1.2 Most important lesson for practice?**

- Business must do economic development with municipal support
- Business and labour will act on opportunities when the path ahead is clear and unencumbered
- Recognize the value of non-economic factors in making a region attractive; industry should be interested in social and cultural infrastructure as it effects the size of the available labour force and the market
- Increased business participation on REDBs
- Introduce initiatives that will entice business to consider setting up shop in rural regions

#### **2. Lessons for municipal government**

##### **2.1 Most important policy lesson?**

- Depend more on support staff; see the big picture
- Government policy should be over arching and supportive of what needs to happen and what is happening at the municipal level
- Regularly monitor the health of your municipality using some of these tools
- Incentives to advance amalgamation
- Consult with towns to determine future direction for governance so they will be sustainable

## 2.2 Most important lesson for practice?

- The many tools available are not being used; volunteers do only what is absolutely necessary because of limited time; find ways to provide more support; capacity at local level; ICSP; culture of knowledge; cookie cutter approach doesn't work
- The information flow should be two-way in the vertical hierarchy as well as lateral at all levels
- Find ways to mobilize this information to municipalities and groups within their municipalities
- Training and awareness for small rural community administrators re: ICSP; also Lifelong Learning certificate program
- Work with MNL to consult all of its members on the regional governance piece and attend consultations and actively participate in the discussion

## 3. Lessons for federal and provincial governments

### 3.1 Most important policy lesson?

- Greater presence in rural areas; more players out in the community and not in the capital
- Imposed policy regardless of how good must be well thought out and have an end result in mind
- Develop policies that are informed by these data services
- Research presented has great potential to inform policy
- Feds continue to support municipalities with infrastructure funding; Province to increase resources (financial and human) to zone boards

### 3.2. Most important lesson for practice?

- Try to fix funding model where the federal and provincial levels receive more money than municipalities
- Policy must be properly resourced and not simply downloaded with the hope that volunteers will act
- Find better ways to get public input and interpretations of the data being used to inform policy; may need to get local interpretations of this type of data to better understand it
- Utilization of information from research to include in and support REDBs reports to INTRD and ACOA
- Increase cost shared dollars that are desperately needed to rebuild infrastructure

## 4. Lessons for NGOs

### 4.1 Most important policy lesson?

- Provide knowledge and resources to assist with strategic planning
- Broaden accountability parameters for focused action-oriented groups and reward amalgamation among NGOs
- Need to be well connected
- NGOs = some community leaders

#### 4.2 Most important lesson for practice?

- Do concrete things such as Alvin and Kelly's rural-urban to help towns plan/shape future direction
- Ensure reduced competition and duplication before collaborating with government on major projects
- Need to devolve more networking activity into other similar NGOs in other regions
- Capacity must be developed and maintained; Succession planning and corporate memory must be rationalized in relation to burn out; Set up and live in rural areas;

#### 5. What is the key research question you think remains to be answered?

- Involving our best people as leaders
- Why must the adversarial approach exist when all realize collaboration is potentially the fastest way forward
- What is the actual relevance of these projects to actual communities; we can't determine this in a group such as this; we have to find out from the communities and stakeholders
- Analyses/ review of select government policies to determine extent of REDB influence on the development of these policies
- The value of regionalization and shared savings

#### 6. What is the best way to communicate lessons from these projects?

- Ask the Arts Council to act it out
- Different modes and messages for different groups; we need to learn new modes of knowledge dissemination and communication that get beyond the impasse of the methods we currently use
- Harris Centre Synergy Session for Executive Council Staff and select Deputy Ministers
- Through direct meetings with municipalities

#### 7. Any other comments / suggestions?

- Keep on connecting; good stuff!!
- I don't know enough about the project to see all of the possible uses and don't have time to read several reports that were distributed; even for a group like this, we need more concise and targeted knowledge mobilization
- Consider the impact of political dissonance on REDB/government collaboration; REDB members often tagged to a party - MHA/Minister is at odds with Board members; determine the extent / degree of impact
- Excellent conference very informative and thought provoking

#### **APPENDIX 4: CERTIFICATE IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT PRESS RELEASE**

SUBJECT: Memorial University announces new certificate in regional policy and development

DATE: June 11, 2010

Memorial University's Division of Lifelong Learning is proud to announce a new university-level certificate in regional policy and development, specially tailored to meet the needs of the province this week.

"This program embraces the essence of the Division of Lifelong Learning and the value of industry experts collaborating with the university in program design," said Karen Kennedy, director of the Division of Lifelong Learning.

Created and proposed in partnership with the Harris Centre and the Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Economic Development Association (NLREDA), the program's first students will begin classes in September 2010.

While some of the elective courses will be located at Memorial's St. John's campus, many of the courses will be offered online, reducing the need for individuals to travel for training in regional policy and development issues. In-province training will also be an option.

Aimed at those working, or interested in working, in regional policy and development, the program will be a strong professional development opportunity for a wide range of individuals, from those employed with regional economic development boards and municipalities, to those with not-for-profit agencies, social enterprises or in government.

With a broad range of required and elective courses spanning seven Memorial departments, the program will help students make informed decisions related to regional policy and development, focusing on various key topics including strategic planning, management, economic development and others.

Throughout the planning of the certificate, there was a continued emphasis on ensuring the content of the program would be relevant to the actual day-to-day experience of those working in regional policy and development. As a result, three of the six core courses that all students must complete to earn the certificate have been designed in direct consultation with the Harris Centre and NLREDA.

"For the Harris Centre, this has been a great partnership with the Division of Lifelong Learning, our faculty colleagues and NLREDA. Capacity in regional policy and development will be significantly improved as a result of this certificate program," said Dr. Robert Greenwood, the Harris Centre's executive director.

There is also a significant hands-on portion to the course – all students must complete an intensive community field placement to add context to the class work, and give them a chance to put their new knowledge into action.

"We think this is an excellent program," said Ted Lomond, executive director of NLREDA and a chief architect of the program. "We see it as developing capacity province-wide, as it provides REDB staff, professional municipal administrators and government employees

with access to a program that is specific to economic development and, just as important, geared to the specific needs and challenges of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

While the immediate aim of the program is to offer students a relevant and practical grounding in regional policy and development issues, the program is expected to have a significant positive effect on a provincial level. It is expected the program will increase the number of individuals with training in regional policy and development in Newfoundland and Labrador, and create a greater pool of skilled candidates to tackle regional policy and development issues in the future.

“The program increases future capacity as it affords Memorial students an opportunity to consider economic development as a career and it gives arts and business students a tool to specialize in the field,” Mr. Lomond said.

"This certificate addresses a key need in Newfoundland and Labrador.” Dr. Greenwood said. “And very likely beyond.”

For more information, please contact Gail Gosse, Program Developer, Division of Lifelong Learning, Memorial University of Newfoundland, at (709) 737-3069 or [ggosse@mun.ca](mailto:ggosse@mun.ca).



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# THE HARRIS CENTRE Memorial University

