

**Canadian Regional
Development**
A Critical Review of Theory,
Practice, and Potentials



**Développement régional
canadien**
Un examen critique des théories,
des pratiques et des potentiels

Regional Profile of the Northern Peninsula Region, Newfoundland

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Document Reference

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Brief History of Region

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

After the Archaic Indians and the Dorset Palaeoeskimo settlements the tip of the Northern Peninsula was briefly inhabited by Viking settlements around 1000 AD (Ingstad & Ingstad, 1986). Evidence of the Norse settlement in the Northern Peninsula was confirmed through excavations and carbon dating in the 1960s (Nydal, 1989). Similar to Port au Choix, Parks Canada maintains a National Historic Site at L'Anse aux Meadows to document the settlement and history of the Norse settlement.

The colonial influence of the French and the British greatly influenced the Northern Peninsula region. The Basque and Bretons began their influence the region fishing the waters during the 16th century (Browning, 1895; Rompkey, 2003). Permanent settlement of the region did not take place until the late 18th century (Simms, 1986). The Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713, witnessed the retreat of French control of the Hudson's Bay and Newfoundland. As a concession to the treaty, the British granted France the exclusive use of the area known as the French Shore for seasonal fishing, an area from Cape Bonavista to Point Riche (Crosbie, 1956). The boundaries of the French Shore were revised to Cape St John to Cape Ray under the Treaty of Versailles in 1783. It is important to recognize the French had rights to seasonal fishing in the French Shore region, but no rights to establishing permanent settlements. As a result settlements in the French Shore, and specifically the Northern Peninsula, remained small in population and sparse (Rompkey, 2003; Sinclair & Felt, 1993). French exclusivity to seasonal fishing in the French Shore continued until the 1904 Anglo-French Convention, at which time France conceded fishing rights in all jurisdictions in North America with the exception of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon (Crosbie, 1956). History and influence of the French Shore in the Northern Peninsula is celebrated and maintained by the French Shore Historical Society¹, based in Conche.

¹ For further information on the French Shore Historical Society can be found at www.frenchshore.com

Physiographic Description

The Northern Peninsula is the largest peninsula on the island of Newfoundland, encompassing approximately 17,483 km². The Northern Peninsula is the most northern region of the island. The region consists of all communities north of River of Ponds and bound by water on the other three sides: Atlantic Ocean and the Strait of Belle Isle. The southern boundary of what is referred to as the “Northern Peninsula region” is not unanimous. Two key demarcations to mark the southern boundary are present among community leaders: (a) Gros Morne National Park and (b) the Rural Secretariat Regional Council boundary (River of Ponds and north). This project has utilized the Northern Peninsula region represented by the Rural Secretariat Regional Council.



Figure 1: The Northern Peninsula Region

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

The Northern Peninsula has distinct vegetation from the remainder of the island given its northern location. On average the Northern Peninsula region receives 110-150 frost-free days, compared to 145-170 for the remainder of the island (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012a). Non-mountains portions of the region have nutrient rich soils, underlined with limestone. The dominant forest cover is balsam fir at lower elevations and black spruce at higher elevations.

The waters surrounding the Northern Peninsula include a wide array of fish species. Fish species in the Northern Peninsula region include: capelin, clam, cod, crab, flounder, halibut, herring,

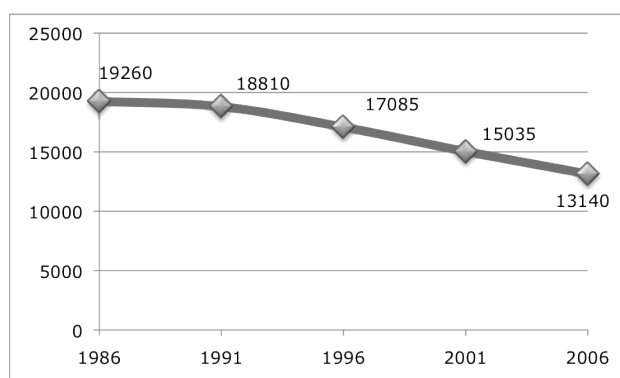
lobster, lumpfish, mackerel, mussel, redfish salmon, scallop, seals, shrimp, skate, smelt, snow crab, turbot, whelk, and winter flounder (Great Northern Peninsula Fisheries Task Force, 2006; RED Ochre Development Board, 2010).

Demographics Profile

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

According to the 2006 census the Northern Peninsula's population was 13,140, a decline of 12.6% from 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2006). During the same period of time the province of Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a population decline of 1.5%. The population decline witnessed by Northern Peninsula between 2001-2006 is part of a largely decline occurring continuous since 1986 (see Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change in the Northern Peninsula Region, 1986-2006



Source: Community Accounts (2012)

Communities within the Northern Peninsula region have experienced similar declines. The largest communities in the region by population are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Population Change in Largest Northern Peninsula Communities, 2006-2011

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

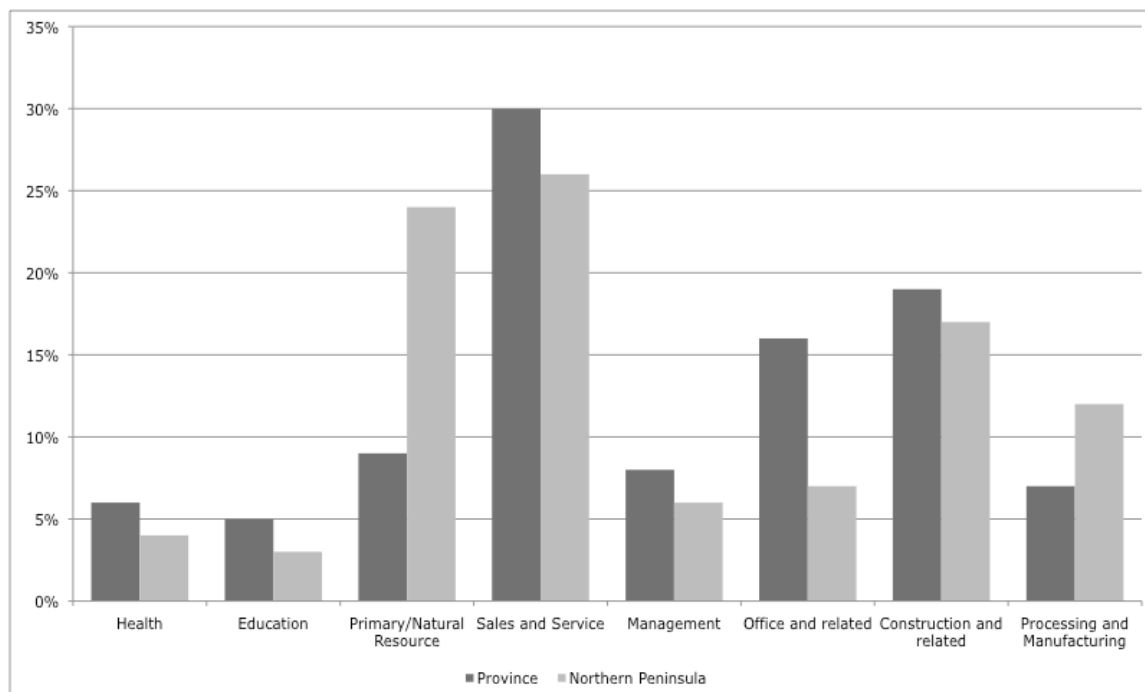
Source: Statistics Canada (2011)

Employment Characteristics

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

The economy of the Northern Peninsula is concentrated in four economic categories: 'Sales and Service' (26%), 'Primary/Natural Resource' (24%), 'Construction and related' (17%), and 'Processing and Manufacturing' (12%). The influence of natural resources is clearly evident with 1,740 people employed in fishing and forestry and 610 people employed in fish processing. Table 3 illustrates a comparison of economic sectors between the Northern Peninsula region and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Table 3. Comparison of Economic Sectors in Northern Peninsula and Province, 2006



Source: Community Accounts (2012)

Employment and unemployment in the Northern Peninsula varies throughout the year, depending on seasonal employment. The region consistently has lower employment rates than the province or country. In the 2006 census the Northern Peninsula's employment rate for adults between the age of 18-64 was 46.7% and the unemployment rate was 36.5%. The provincial employment rate in the 2006 census was 58.7% and the unemployment rate was 18.5%.

The average couple family income in the Northern Peninsula was \$60,600 in 2007, dramatically lower than the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial average of \$74,900 and the national

average of \$93,700. The Northern Peninsula's self-reliance ratio, a measure of the region's dependency on government transfers, was 67.5% in 2007. The self-reliance ratio for the province was 79.4%. The sources of government transfers in the region include Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Employment Insurance, and Income Support Assistance (Community Accounts, 2012).

Local Government

In the Northern Peninsula a mixture local government structures exist, each with different responsibilities and capacity. The region consists of incorporated municipalities, local service districts, and unincorporated communities. In total, the region is home to 51 communities (Rural Secretariat, 2012).

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

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

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

Regional Actors

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

Regional Economic Development (RED) Boards

The formation of RED boards emerged from the provincial government's strategic economic plan, *Change and Challenge* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1992). The strategic economic plan articulated a need for establishing 17 economic zones in the province to pursue long-term economic development. In response to local regional development associations and municipalities the province launched the Task Force on Community Economic Development to

examine organizational structures and programs/services of RED boards. In 1995, at the conclusion of the Task Force, nineteen RED boards were established in the province. All RED boards were given a mandate for strategic economic planning, developing regional partnerships, capacity building to strengthen the regional economy, and coordinate linkages between local, regional, provincial and federal organizations responsible for economic development (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2012b).

Two RED boards are located in the Northern Peninsula: Nordic Economic Development Corporation and RED Ochre Board. Nordic Economic Development Corporation provides services to 35 communities in the northern and eastern portion of the region (Nordic Economic Development Corporation, 2012). RED Ochre Board provides services to 34 communities (RED Ochre Regional Board, 2011). It should be noted only one of three RED Ochre Board sub-regions is within the boundaries of the Northern Peninsula. As of early 2013, financial support for RED boards in the province was discontinued by both the federal and provincial governments (Gibson, 2013).

Rural Development Associations

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

Rural Secretariat Regional Council

The establishment of the Rural Secretariat as a unit within the Executive Council of the provincial government in 2004 also created the St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council. The Regional Council consists of a government appointed board of seven members from the Northern Peninsula region. The Regional Council is charged with the mandate to provide regionally appropriate advice to government on policies, programs, and other initiatives relevant to their region (Rural Secretariat, 2011). The St Anthony – Port au Choix Regional Council facilitates discussions, information sharing, and provides advice to government on issues of relevance to the Northern Peninsula region.

Northern Peninsula Regional Collaboration Pilot Initiative

In 2009, the Speech from the Throne committed the provincial government to exploring a new model of regional collaboration with communities. The speech outlined the government's desire to "work with community and regional leaders to explore new collaborative forms of governance that advance regional sustainability" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2009, np). This new model of regional collaboration promises a new approach to government-community shared decision-making in the province. The Pilot Initiative involves the communities in the St Anthony – Port au Choix Rural Secretariat region. The Pilot Initiative was

tasked with three principal responsibilities: (a) to provide advice to government decision-makers to ensure better investment of government funds within the region, (b) to create a forum for community leaders, economic development agencies, and community service organizations to discuss challenges and opportunities within the region, and (c) to provide advice to provincial government departments on how best to develop and support innovative regional collaboration across the province (Case, 2009). The Pilot Initiative is led by a provincial ministerial committee consisting of representatives from the departments of Innovation, Business, and Rural Development; Municipal Affairs; Rural Secretariat; Tourism, Culture, and Recreation; and Transportation and Government Works.

Northern Peninsula Waste Management Service Board

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

NORTIP Development Corporation

NORTIP Development Corporation is a Community Business Service Center funded through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. Created in 1989², NORTIP Development Corporation provides assistance to residents of the Northern Peninsula region in developing, expanding, and stabilizing businesses and opportunities. NORTIP partners with regional stakeholders and government departments to facilitate economic diversification in the region and support economic and social development (NORTIP Development Corporation, 2010). An elected board of directors governs NORTIP.

Viking Trail Tourism Association

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

By no means are these the only regional stakeholders in the Northern Peninsula; rather, these represent a sample of key groups involved in regional development.

Regional Collaborations and Interdependencies

Over the past century there are many illustrations of multi-community collaboration in the Northern Peninsula region. In 1905 a consumer cooperative was established in St Anthony and

² NORTIP Community Futures was established in 1989 and later merged with Northland Business Corporation in 1995 to create NORTIP Development Corporation.

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

Functional regions were mapped according to 2006 census data as part of a multi-year research initiative on rural-urban interactions³. Within the Northern Peninsula region three functional regions are present: St Anthony, Roddickton, and Port au Choix (Freshwater et al., 2011). Functional regions are calculated based on Statistics Canada's journey to work data and define a geographical area of existing spatial interaction patterns. The Newfoundland research demonstrated the majority of people commute less than 50 kilometres for work. There are a number of communities in the Northern Peninsula region that do not belong to one of the three functional regions.

Physical Infrastructure and Networks

The Northern Peninsula's transportation network consists of highways, ferries, and an airport connecting communities to the rest of the island and the mainland. The transportation network of the region is dominated by one central highway (PR 430) running north from the intersection of the Trans-Canada Highway to its terminus in St Anthony. Highway 430 largely parallels the west coast of the peninsula with a series of secondary highways branching out to provide access to the eastern side of the peninsula, such as highways 432, 433, 434. The driving distance from communities in the Northern Peninsula to main centres can be quite long. From St Anthony it is 414 km to Deer Lake (large service centre and airport just south of the region), 680 km to Port aux Basques (terminus of Marine Atlantic ferry to Nova Scotia), and 1,050 km to St John's (provincial capital).

Public transit is not available in any of the Northern Peninsula communities and since the mid 2000s no regularly scheduled inter-community bus service has operated in the region. The Government of Newfoundland operates ferry service, passenger and vehicle, between the Northern Peninsula region and Québec. The ferry between St Barbe and Blanc Sablon, Québec, 1¾ hours in duration, operates daily.

The Northern Peninsula is serviced by one passenger airport in St Anthony, owned and operated by Transport Canada. The airport in St Anthony is serviced by two airlines: Provincial Airlines (providing daily service to St John's, Blanc Sablon, and Goose Bay) and Air Labrador (providing service three days a week to Mary's Harbour and continued service to Fox Harbour, Williams Harbour, and Port Hope Simpson). A larger airport is located south of the Northern Peninsula region in Deer Lake. The Deer Lake airport is serviced by three airlines: Air Canada

³ For more information on this project visit http://www.municipalitiesnl.com/?Content=Programs/Rural_Urban.

(providing daily service to St John's, Halifax, Goose Bay, Montréal, and Toronto), Provincial Airlines (providing daily service to Stephenville, St John's, and Goose Bay), and WestJet (providing seasonal service to Toronto).

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The *Canadian Regional Development: A Critical Review of Theory, Practice and Potentials* project is a multi-year research initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project is investigating how Canadian regional development has evolved over the past two decades and the degree to which Canadian regional development systems have incorporated ideas, policies and practices associated with “New Regionalism” into their policy and practice.

The project is conducting an empirical assessment of Canadian regional development using a multi-level, mixed methods case study approach in four provinces: British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Québec. The assessment of regional development across the case studies is based on the five key themes of New Regionalism: i) collaborative, multi-level governance; ii) integrated versus sectoral and single objective approaches; iii) fostering knowledge flow, learning and innovation; iv) place-based development; and v) rural-urban interaction and interdependence.

Kelly Vodden (Environmental Policy Institute, Grenfell Campus and Department of Geography, Memorial University) is leading the project, together with co-investigators David Douglas (School of Environment Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph), Sean Markey (Geography, Simon Fraser University), and Bill Reimer (Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University). In addition, graduate students at all four universities are engaged on the project. Further information on the project can be obtained at <http://cdnregdev.ruralresilience.ca>. The project has been financially supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development.



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