

A model for strategic social planning in a fishing economy: Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993-2005

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Kanadako probintzia batean gizarte zibileko boluntarioak gizarte politikaren eraketan sartzeko egindako saioa aztertzen da artikulu honetan. Joera historikoen eta politika zehatzen diseinuan egindako hutsegiteen konbinazioak galarazi zuen proiektua. Baina saioak porrot egin arren, irakaspen probetxugarriak eskaintzen dizkie boterea herritarren esku utzi nahi dituzten gobernuei.

Giltza-hitzak : Gizarte plangintza. Eskualde garapena. Erregenerazio ekonomikoa. Ternua.

El artículo analiza la tentativa de una provincia canadiense de involucrar en la formación de la política social al sector voluntariado de la sociedad civil. Una combinación de tendencias históricas y errores en el diseño de políticas concretas socavó el proyecto; a pesar de haber fracasado, ofrece lecciones útiles a gobiernos que quieran delegar poder a sus ciudadanos.

Palabras clave: Planificación social. Desarrollo regional. Regeneración económica. Terranova.

L'article analyse la tentative d'une province canadienne d'impliquer le secteur bénévole de la société civile dans la formation de la politique sociale. Une combinaison de tendances historiques et d'erreurs dans le schéma des politiques concrètes a sapé le projet; bien qu'il ait échoué, il offre d'utiles leçons aux gouvernements qui désiraient déléguer le pouvoir à leurs concitoyens.

Mots clés : Planification sociale. Développement régional. Régénération économique. Terre-Neuve.

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW¹

Newfoundland and Labrador,² Canada's easternmost, small and historically poor province, began talking about a strategic social plan (SSP) in 1993. By 1998 the Plan was made public. Two years later, it entered into effect and in 2001 it was fully operational. Then an election in 2003 produced a change of government and this new administration announced in 2004 that it would not continue the SSP. In 2005, the Strategic Social Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador was history.

Despite its short life, it ran at full capacity for only three years (2001-2004), the SSP is a project that deserves the attention of anyone interested in innovative social policy. The Plan was about doing four things:

- Bring the voluntary, community-based sector (VCBS) –the volunteer groups which run the local cancer society, women's centre and kids' soccer leagues– into the social policy process for more than just service delivery.
- Use the energy and expertise of the volunteers who make the VCBS work to make social policy that better adapts social programs to real conditions in the province's communities.
- Lay the foundations for *place-based* social policymaking by allowing communities to alter general policies to fit specific local needs.
- Create a framework of *collaborative governance*, which is centred around and builds on linkages between government and the voluntary sector.

But more interesting that what the SSP wanted to do, was why it wanted to do it.

Development in Newfoundland, as in many other places, has always meant economic development and nothing else. Once the economy was right, everything would be fine, because there would be jobs for all and the social problems that didn't just disappear would be no match for the

1. This work is part of a study of the Strategic Social Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador undertaken with the Values Added CURA (Community-University Research Alliance) carried out by the Community Services Council (CSC), St. John's, NL, Canada, and the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The CURA is financed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and directed by Ms. Penelope Rowe, director of the CSC. The author acknowledges the assistance of Kenny Curlew and Colin Macdonald, research assistants at the CURA, as well as to his fellow research team members: Larry Felt, Fran Locke, Patti Power, and Penny Rowe. All errors of fact or interpretation are the author's.

2. Although the official name of the province is Newfoundland and Labrador, it is still conventional to refer to it by its historic name, Newfoundland. Both are used in this work.

province's plentiful resources. This apparently universal form of economic determinism did not, however, bear the predicted fruit, at least not in Newfoundland. Rather, the province remained stubbornly underdeveloped, dependent on a fishery that provided little beyond subsistence for many fishers. Attempts to industrialize were often poorly conceived and equally poorly executed. Mines and the forest industry offered opportunities for some, but did not lift the province out of its doldrums. Having the highest rate of unemployment in the nation and usually being the country's poorest province looked like Newfoundland's permanent fate.

Then things got worse. The closure of the collapsed cod fishery in 1992 eliminated an estimated 40,000 jobs. This led to a massive out-migration, amounting to almost 10 percent of the population, which fell from 560,000 to 505,000 between 1991 and 2001. Understandably, rural areas were hardest hit.³ Along the 9656 kilometers of the Island of Newfoundland's coastline⁴ fishing community after fishing community saw its young leave, taking with them their community's future. Outport Newfoundland, the rural parts of the province that had for more than two centuries provided its sustenance and shaped its culture, was dying.⁵ Because traditional, economy-centred plans had not averted the disaster, it seemed the time had come for radical measures.

The SSP proposed a thorough overhaul of both how the province of Newfoundland and Labrador conceived of development and the place of social policy within the development process. Government departments were to lose their monopoly over policymaking at the same time that they would be forced to leave their silos and start collaborating with each other for the people's greater good. Communities were to be given a voice in determining what they needed from government to put themselves on a sustainable footing. In short, government was to be forced to deal with its citizens as equals, devolving power to those to whom it was constitutionally responsible. In its intentions, at least, the SSP was revolutionary.

Had the Strategic Social Plan been produced in a province with a history of experimentation in social policymaking,⁶ such as Quebec or

3. J. de Peuter and M. Sorensen, *Rural Newfoundland and Labrador Profile: a Ten-year Census Analysis*. Ottawa: Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2005, www.rural.gc.ca/research/profile/nl_e.pdf, accessed July 13, 2007.

4. The province's total coastline includes the Labrador's coast and the coasts of offshore islands, for a total length of 23, 212 km. (Natural Resources Canada 2007). Spain's, including the Canary Islands, is 7286 km.

5. In Newfoundland, an outport is any coastal rural community and outport Newfoundland is synonymous with rural Newfoundland. The term literally refers to any port out from St. John's, the capital and commercial centre.

6. I use a broad meaning of social policy and thus include health and education, as well as social services.

Saskatchewan, there would have been no surprise. Over the years, those provinces have elected governments with strong commitments to reform.⁷ Governments there have not shied away from rethinking the roles of state and citizen or from changing how the political system defines, approaches and resolves public issues. The SSP, however, came from Newfoundland, a province with little history of great breakthroughs in any area of public policy. Naturally, there have been important reforms undertaken over the years, but governments with a clearly articulated “let’s rethink what government does and how it does it” approach have been rare.⁸

A radically reformist policy issuing from a generally cautious political setting inevitably raises a number of questions. These begin with why: what prompted government to start down the path of strategic social planning, and what led it to embrace a revolutionary plan? Put a little differently, why did government adopt the concepts of place-based policy making and collaborative governance as key elements of the SSP when they had never before appeared in official documents? Following closely is how: what steps did government take, first, to devise its plan and, second, to make it operational? The next thing we want to know is how the SSP worked: what results did it produce and why did it produce those particular outcomes? Finally, since the SSP came to an end so quickly, the concluding question has to be why it was terminated by a newly elected government of another party: had it conspicuously failed to meet its goals or did the new administration simply have a different agenda?

To address these questions, the article moves through several steps. First, it considers briefly the matter of strategic planning to establish what the concept means in the context of Newfoundland. The next section describes how the SSP came into being. A third part looks at the Plan’s structure and analyzes its operation. Particular attention goes to the role assumed by the VCBS and the mechanisms that were developed to link government directly to the communities. The fourth section evaluates the SSP’s operation to underline its strengths and weaknesses, while a fifth offers an interpretation of its demise. The analysis suggests that two classes of factors must be considered in evaluating the SSP: one consists of the content of specific programs and asks if changes to these could have let the Plan work better; the other is path dependence, a familiar theme from institutional analysis, which considers how established political patterns affected the outcome. A conclusion draws lessons from the Newfoundland experience that other governments wishing to pursue a similar strategy might wish to bear in mind.

7. Reform politics in Saskatchewan since 1944 have revolved around the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation) and its successor, the NDP (New Democratic Party), social democrats who created the first government-administered, single-payer health care system in North America. In Quebec, the reform tradition begins with the *Revolution Tranquille* of the Parti Liberal du Québec (1960-1966) and continues today through the Parti Québécois.

8. Even the first post-Confederation-with-Canada administration of the Liberal Joseph R. “Joey” Smallwood, 1949-1971, was only a partial exception. Although Smallwood greatly expanded education, health, and social services, and gave a greater voice to outport Newfoundland, he also kept the highly centralized, patronage-based politics of his predecessors.

2. STRATEGIC PLANNING IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR: THE ROAD TO THE SSP

Governments plan and sometimes they call their plans “strategic”. Strategy means having a central, long-term objective and devising means to secure that objective. Strategy necessarily implies planning. Strategic planning, by extension, suggests “highly structured, future-oriented management techniques”⁹ that better “(align) an organization with its environment”.¹⁰ This demands that a strategic plan be “action-oriented (and)...carefully linked to implementation”.¹¹ Although strategic planning in general has its critics¹² and there are specific caveats issued with regard to strategic planning by governments,¹³ there are nevertheless clear successes.¹⁴

It was Premier Clyde Wells (1989-1996) who brought strategic planning to the provincial government. Wells introduced both a strategic economic plan (1992) and the initial version of the SSP. Both were efforts to get fresh approaches to long-standing economic ills and the social consequences of a weak economy.

As with many other economies built on raw materials (such as fish or minerals) and semi-finished products (for example, newsprint), Newfoundland and Labrador has seldom known sustained prosperity. Although joining Canada in 1949 gave the province’s inhabitants a reasonably secure social safety net, the structure of the economy changed little.¹⁵ As a result, unemployment has remained well above national levels—14.8% compared to 6.3% nationally in 2006;¹⁶ and, until revenues from offshore oil began flowing in 1997, per capita income in Newfoundland and Labrador

9. F.S. Berry and B. Wechsler, “State Agencies’ Experience with Strategic Planning: Findings from a National Survey,” *Public Administration Review*, 55:2, 1995, 161.

10. G. Kissler, et al, “State Strategic Planning: Suggestions from the Oregon Experience,” *Public Administration Review*, 58:4, 1998: 353.

11. T. Poister and G. Streib, “Elements of Strategic Planning and Management in Municipal Government: Status after Two Decades,” *Public Administration Review*, 65:1, 2005, 46.

12. H. Mintzberg, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning: Reconceiving Roles for Planning, Plans, Planners*. Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan 1994.

13. Berry and Wechsler, 159-168.

14. Kissler, et al.; cf. J.D. House and K. McGrath, “Innovative Governance and Development in the New Ireland: Social Partnership and the Integrated Approach,” *Governance*, 17:1, 2004, 29-58.

15. It is more accurate to say that the province’s great economic drivers are still perceived as coming from the resource sector, currently offshore oil. However, the service sector, government and commerce, provide the bulk of employment in Newfoundland and Labrador and generate most of its income.

16. Statistics Canada, “Latest release from the Labour Force Survey,” January 5, 2007, <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Subjects/Labour/LFS/lfs-en.htm>, retrieved January 7, 2007. Note that this is with a petroleum boom that has given the province some of the highest growth rates in Canada for the last five years.

was generally Canada's lowest. To maintain public services at levels comparable to those of other provinces, the provincial government had to rely heavily, often for half of its revenues, on federal transfers to individual and equalization payments.¹⁷

2.1. Building the SSP

When Canada's federal government reduced its spending on social programs in the late 1980s, the cuts hit Newfoundland and Labrador particularly hard, with rising unemployment, higher unemployment insurance and welfare expenditures, and a shrinking tax base leading to greater provincial budget deficits. In response, the newly elected Liberal government established the Economic Recovery Commission in 1989 and subsequently announced a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), its roadmap for economic development. Demographic trends (low birth rate, aging population, high out-migration) and the 1992 closure of the cod fishery, however, increased the demand for social programs and created additional pressures for government action. These combined forces led Premier Wells to announce in 1993 the development of a strategic social plan to complement the SEP. A consultation paper was released in 1996 by Wells's successor, fellow Liberal Brian Tobin, explaining why the government was proposing a strategic social plan.

A fundamental rethinking is required of both the system, and how the provinces/territories and federal government work together. Piecemeal or ad hoc changes to existing programs will not achieve needed reforms...This is why Newfoundland and Labrador needs a strategic social plan...We cannot address 21st-century problems with 20th-century...We must assess the services we provide and re-think the ways they are provided...Then we can formulate our priorities and our choices as a rational and sustainable strategy for the future.¹⁸

This consultation paper also announced the establishment of a Social Policy Advisory Committee (SPAC) to conduct a public dialogue. The SPAC, comprised of fifteen representatives from various sectors of civil society, held public meetings around the province, conducted roundtables, and received briefs and presentations from individuals, voluntary organizations and community groups. Its final report combined the themes raised in the public consultations with a set of conceptual benchmarks that included governance, collaborative partnerships, public consultation, citizen engagement

17. Equalization payments are transfers from the federal government of Canada to offset differences in fiscal capacity, i.e. the ability to generate tax revenues, among provinces. Their objective is to give all provinces per capita tax revenues equal to that of the average of all ten provinces. The program does not aim to raise per capita incomes or to be a source of development funds.

18. Government of Newfoundland, *Strategic Social Plan Consultation Paper*. St. John's: The Queen's Printer, 1996, 3.

and accountability. Thus, the conceptual core of the report took concepts derived from neoliberal discourse and turned them around so they spoke of citizen participation and community control.¹⁹

Concretely, the SPAC called for a new approach to making social policy that would “acknowledge the essential roles of individuals and communities in fostering social and economic well-being”.²⁰ The provincial government accepted the SPAC’s report and created both interdepartmental and ministerial committees to translate it into policy. Adopting the outlook of the SPAC was one of several significant “off-path changes”, deviations from established procedures and behaviours, that marked the Plan. Yet it is not at all clear that government appreciated how profoundly it would have to change its ways to let the SSP conform to the spirit of the SPAC’s report. In any case, in 1998 it released: *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*.²¹ At that point the SSP ceased being a bottom-up citizens’ initiative and started becoming a top-down government project.

2.2. What the SSP proposed

The SSP advocated a place-based model for development that demanded a more collaborative form of governance. Place-based refers to expanding the focus of policy making to include regions (here defined by a mix of geographical and socio-economic criteria) as well as functional socio-economic categories; while collaborative governance suggests incorporating more non-governmental actors in the design and delivery of policies –effectively devolving authority to them. As such, it represented a significant shift in the province’s approach to policy formulation, program design, and service delivery. The SSP sought to move public policy formation and decision-making from a reactive model to a preventive one emphasizing early intervention. It advocated linking social and economic development through broad-based strategies at government and community levels using integrated and coordinated public policy responses. The Plan also proposed increased partnerships involving the provincial government, the federal government, communities, and voluntary organizations

19. S. Phillips, “More Than Just Stakeholders: Reforming State-Voluntary Relations,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35:4, 2001, 182-202; and S. Patten, “Democratizing the institutions of policymaking: democratic consultation and participatory administration,” 2001, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35:4, 221-239, examine these questions in the context of Canadian national politics.

20. Government of Newfoundland, *Report of the Social Policy Advisory Committee. Volume 1: What the People Said*. St. John’s, NL: Office of the Queen’s Printer, 8. See also, Government of Newfoundland, *Report of the Social Policy Advisory Committee. Volume 2: Investing in People and Communities*. St. John’s, NL: Office of the Queen’s Printer, 1997

21. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. St. John’s, NL: The Queen’s Printer, 1998.

as the basis of sustainable development.²² The SSP had four expected outcomes:

- Vibrant communities where people are actively involved.
- Sustainable regions based on strategic investment in people.
- Self-reliant, healthy, educated citizens living in safe communities.
- Integrated and evidence-based policies and programs.²³

Although these provided rough benchmarks for assessing its success, there was no scheme for measuring how fully the objectives were achieved:

Thus the SSP was about building a new way to make social policy, built around “a partnership approach to policy development and service delivery”.²⁴ The partners were to be the state, the SSP regional committees, and the VCBS. What is significant is not the talk of service delivery, a common theme of public-private partnerships (PPP), but rather the reference to policy development. The SSP aimed at bringing into the policymaking process the voluntary sector and the communities in which the sector’s organizations are rooted. This objective ties directly into place-based development and evidence-based decision-making, as the VCBS could not formulate good policies for communities without ready access to good data. Putting the principles into practice, in turn, required new structures to facilitate interdepartmental collaboration, public consultation, and citizen engagement in the policymaking process.²⁵

Viewed from one angle, the SSP looked like the Newfoundland and Labrador edition of alternative service delivery in the social policy sector. This would make it about engaging the voluntary sector, civil society more broadly, in PPPs. These most commonly take the form of contracting out the delivery of government responsibilities to private organizations, making them delivery systems. Voluntary sector groups are attractive participants because of their expertise, flexibility, and low operating costs.²⁶ Entering into a PPP brings a voluntary organization benefits, such as greater material resources, but also costs, in the form of administrative overhead, loss of flexibility, and potentially a loss of focus.²⁷ Although the province’s economic status in the

22. M. Rowe and V. Randell, 1999, “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Strategic Social Plan,” in *Collaborative Government: Is there a Canadian Way?*, ed. S. Delacourt & D.G. Lenihan, Toronto: Institute for Public Administration of Canada, 1999, 81-91.

23. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, 23-32.

24. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, 10.

25. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, 3-8.

26. A. Ware, *Between Profit and State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989; C. Brinkerhoff, “Government-nonprofit partnership: a defining framework,” *Public Administration Review*, 22, 2002, 19-30.

27. G. Nowland Foreman, “Purchase-of-service contracting: voluntary organizations and civil society,” *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42:1, 1998, 221-239.

mid-nineties justified a search for savings, there was more than dollars behind the SSP.

Since at least 1986, when the provincial Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, released its report, *Building on Our Strengths*,²⁸ decentralized, though not devolved, development has been part of the policy discourse in Newfoundland and Labrador. The collapse of the cod fishery in 1992 and the seemingly permanent moratorium that has followed brought economic and social problems that buffeted the hundreds of coastal communities that had lived off cod for centuries. As families abandoned their homes in search of a living, a sense of crisis came to prevail in many of the province's smaller towns. Accordingly, focusing on communities in constructing a strategic social plan was a natural and logical step. The voluntary sector, and even more the volunteers, in those communities could be both the analysts of what needed to be done and the catalysts doing it.

Ostensibly about social policy, the SSP thus also had a rural focus. Although not specifically a response to the post-1992 crisis in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, the SSP's emphasis on community and sustainability fit well with the greatest social policy challenge of the nineties. Indeed, viewing the SSP in the context of the crisis of rural Newfoundland and Labrador makes the Plan look a bit like a community development initiative. Perhaps inadvertently the Plan assumed multiple responsibilities.

One point that emerges is that the SSP gave little attention to questions of implementation or to how to evaluate the policy's progress. This omission was doubtless partly the product of a civil service stretched very thin after several years of downsizing, it fell from 13,351 in 1987 to 8745 early in 1999,²⁹ but may also have reflected the initiative's novelty. In either case, the Plan had to be built on the fly, with little guidance and few guidelines. The SSP was not a detailed strategic plan.

Recognizing that economic and social development should not be separated, the SSP was clear about the need to integrate social and economic policy planning more closely and to engage communities directly in the policy process. These objectives focus on the input and conversion facets of policymaking, not the concrete policies that result. This was a "process is policy" strategic plan that had absolutely no concrete deliverables. As such, it needed a strong, flexible, and well-designed set of structures to make it work.

28. Government of Newfoundland, *Building on Our Strengths*, Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. St. John's, NL: The Queen's Printer, 1986.

29. Statistics Canada, "Public sector employment, wages and salaries, monthly," CANSIM Table 183-00023, Record number 1713, <http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=1713>, accessed July 14, 2007.

3. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SSP

The SSP had four main structural components: an inter-ministerial committee; the Premier's Council on Social Development (PCSD); a secretariat (SSPO); and six Regional Steering Committees (RSC). Though important to its implementation, the first two were somewhat peripheral to the Plan's operational logic; nonetheless, the PCSD played a useful role in social policy planning more generally. The third was administratively central. And the fourth was crucial. We shall treat the peripheral instruments briefly, the SSP's administrative arm in more depth and give the most detailed consideration to the RSC.

3.1. SSP Structures

3.1.1. Inter-ministerial committee

The inter-ministerial committee brought together all departments of government concerned with the SSP. For the first time in province's history, the finance minister sat on an operational committee with ministers holding social portfolios. Social policy had never been a great concern of Newfoundland governments, whether colonial or provincial. Since joining Canada in 1949, the provincial government's slogan has been "Develop or perish!",³⁰ and all administrations, Liberal or Conservative, have acted on the belief that a rising economic tide would lift all social boats. Thus this committee and the parallel deputy ministers'³¹ committee marked a substantial off-path change in the direction of horizontal collaboration among the various ministries of state. This horizontal collaboration, often called breaking out of departmental silos, was an objective of the SSP,³² but as we shall see, it was also a prerequisite to be met *before* the Plan could work as envisioned.

3.1.2. PCSD

Although its establishment was recommended in the Plan, the Premier's Council on Social Development did not have a major role within the SSP, as it did not have institutional links with either the RSCs or the VCBS. This consultative council was, however, actively involved in the preparation of the Social

30. For a study how "develop or perish" was put into action under the government of Newfoundland's first provincial premier, Joey Smallwood, see, D. Letto, *Chocolate Bars and Rubber Boots*. Paradise, NL: Blue Hill Publishers, 1998.

31. A deputy minister is a career bureaucrat who is the administrative head of a department. The position parallels that of a *viceministro* in Spain.

32. P. Power and F. Locke, with L. Felt, and D. Close, *And No One Heard: Regional Horizontal management and Government Silos in the Implementation of the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. Research Paper, Values Added Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL, 2006, http://www.envision.ca/pdf/cura/And_No_One_Heard_Nov_06.pdf, accessed July 15, 2007.

Audit, which collected the data published in the Community Accounts. These, in turn, provide the data that communities can use to plan their futures. Further, unlike most consultative councils, the PCSD was able to exercise a significant amount of initiative and took a role as an advocate for Newfoundland's social policy network.³³ Nevertheless, it was not designed to serve as a link between the SSP and the cabinet. Thus its potential to advance the specific objectives of the Plan was limited.

3.1.3. SSPO

The Strategic Social Plan Office (SSPO) was small, never more than six professional staff, and ill-funded, its budget –also the SSP's funding– was static at \$Cdn 2 million from 2000 to 2004 and at the end amounted to 1/20th of 1 per cent of the province's budget. With these meagre resources, the SSPO was to be the PCSD's secretariat, coordinate preparation the Social Audit and the Community Accounts, develop the horizontal links between departments needed to permit place-based policymaking and be the link between the government and the RSC. It had neither formal policymaking responsibility nor was it actively engaged in policy analysis and planning. The SSPO was really a semi-administrative entity whose responsibilities outran its resources.

Because the Plan needed horizontal collaboration among departments of government, the Office could not be housed in an existing ministry. Therefore, the SSPO found a home in the Executive Council, which is similar to a ministry of the presidency. This brought the SSP an advantage, being at the centre of the provincial state, and a disadvantage, being led by an assistant deputy minister (ADM), because the Executive Council already had a DM in the Clerk of the Executive Council. Although this may seem like bureaucratic rank-pulling, it mattered. The SSPO's ADM had to deal with DMs from far stronger departments, trying to change how they ran their ministries in order to implement the SSP. Nevertheless, according to a former cabinet minister, it did secure a measure of coordination among departments with social affairs responsibilities.³⁴

3.1.4. RSC

At the heart of the SSP were the Regional Steering Committees, whose task was to connect government with Newfoundland's communities. It was thus the RSC where community strengthening and renewal would take shape

33. D. Close, P. Rowe and C. Wheaton, 2007. *Planning the Future of Rural Newfoundland and Labrador by Engaging the Public: From the Strategic Social Plan to the Rural Secretariat*. Research Paper, Values Added Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL, 2007, http://www.envision.ca/pdf/cura/Planning_Future_Rural_NL_Jan08_07.pdf, accessed July 15, 2007.

34. P. Warren, interview with the author, St. John's, NL, September 8, 2003.

as communities and government turned their efforts toward this common goal. That, in any event, was the intention. What happened in practice was substantially different, in great part because of the structure of the RSC.

To give the six RSCs – five on the Island of Newfoundland and one for Labrador – a high profile, the government appointed the regional directors of government departments and the presidents of regional health, hospital and school boards. However, this resulted in fewer places on the Committees for the VCBS. Indeed, in the two regions studied intensively by the research team with which I work, only 6 of 65 members came from community based organizations.³⁵ Further, the Committees had little funding: just enough to do some traveling in their region and to hire one staff person, a regional planner.³⁶ As a consequence the RSCs often had to turn to their members for extra resources.³⁷

3.1.5. A final note on structure

The government of Newfoundland and Labrador was operating without a map or compass when it set up the SSP structures. No one had done anything of the sort before, so there were no models to follow. In retrospect, it seems that the government unconsciously followed an established line and applied the template developed for other regional boards. Thus in the government's institutional perspective the SSP became a variant of earlier decentralization policies and not an exercise in devolution. Put differently, it proved difficult for government to shed long-standing habits of centralized administration and turn power back to the province's citizens.

4. THE SSP'S PERFORMANCE

Though short-lived, ill-funded, and with little administrative support, the SSP did operate from 2000 to early 2004 and has left a record to evaluate. Indeed, its record is complete. We shall examine here in some detail two aspects of the Plan's operations: its administration and its system of linkages.

4.1. Administering the SSP: the SSPO in detail

Officials who worked with the SSPO acknowledge that the agency had to invent its role as it went along, there being no appropriate pre-existing inter-

35. An informal survey of the remaining four boards suggests that roughly 10 percent was the usual level of representation afforded the VCBS.

36. The title is misleading because the regional planners did not do regional planning. Rather they served as administrative officials, outreach officers, and links between the RSC and the SSPO, on the one hand, and the VCBS, on the other.

37. Values Added Community University Research Alliance, Interviews, Community Groups, 2005; hereafter cited as CURA, Community Groups.

nal models.³⁸ Therefore the process of constructing the implementing machinery began slowly and proceeded empirically: the first SSP secretariat, the SSP Unit, started in 1998 with just one person: the Assistant Secretary to Cabinet, who added the secretariat to her existing duties.³⁹ Apparently, insufficient forethought had been given to the policy instruments needed to make the Plan workable.

Looking at the Office's two linkage roles –among government departments and between government and the SSP Regional Steering Committees– raises two points. First, its role in linking government departments should not be seen as horizontal management.⁴⁰ Rather, it appears to have been developing a role as a hub that connected the social policy sides of all government departments.⁴¹ Turning next to its role dealing with the Plan's Regional Steering Committee, the logic of the system left the SSPO representing government to the regions as well as the regions to the government. This was substantial and subtle political task for a small agency with a significant administrative burden.

According to a senior official who worked with the SSPO for several years, much of the Office's work consisted of maintaining contact with the committees.⁴² It did this, first, by having a representative attend RSC meetings and, second, through the regional planner each RSC had. Though responsible to the RSC, the planner was paid by the SSPO, and part of a planner's job was to liaise with the Office. The SSPO also hired a fulltime researcher to be an in-house consultant and to conduct workshops with the regional committees to raise their analytical capacity and let them contribute more to strategic planning. This research function dovetailed with the secretariat's work on the Social Audit and Community Accounts, which have proven useful for planning social development. Thought not derisory, the administrative resources available to the SSP through the SSPO were nevertheless slight.

4.2. A closer look at the Regional Committees and the VCBS

Regional boards and committees have been used to decentralize public administration in Newfoundland and Labrador since the 1980s. However, the RSCs had two functions that set them apart from other regional entities.

38. Strategic Social Plan Office, author's interview with officials, July 7, 2003, hereafter cited as SSPO interview; Rural Secretariat, author's interview with official, June 7, 2005; hereafter cited as Rural Secretariat interview.

39. Rural Secretariat interview.

40. G. B. Peters, *Managing Horizontal Government*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1998; M. Hopkins, C. Couture and E. Moore, *Moving from the Heroic to the Everyday: Lessons Learned in Leading Horizontal Projects*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2001.

41. SSPO interview; Rural Secretariat interview.

42. Rural Secretariat interview.

First, they were to be the implementing mechanisms for the multi-sectoral development-cum-social policy partnerships the Plan called for, while their second task was to build partnerships with their region's VCBS to plan integrated social and economic development.⁴³ Their objective was to go beyond decentralization and move well toward devolution. However, as already noted, the RSCs' structure got in the way.

In order to set the multi-sectoral partnerships in motion, something that in the end happened infrequently,⁴⁴ the vast majority of the RSCs' members were *ex officio* appointments: namely the heads of other regional boards or regional directors of government departments (Table 1). Although this makeup reinforced the Committees' image as policy refineries where regional policy elites worked, it squeezed out the VCBS, as only about 10 percent of RSC members came from the voluntary sector. Indeed, the RSCs generally failed to engage voluntary groups: efforts to bring the VCBS into the regional social policy process seldom went beyond sending invitations to meetings the committee held throughout their region or notifying groups of special events. Worse, the relationship between the committees and the VCSB turned into one of service provider and client, with the RSCs helping community groups get financial support for projects.⁴⁵ As the organizations on the RSC were those from which the VCBS sought funding, the outcome was logical.

Further, except for organizations composed of municipal governments, municipalities were not represented and the business community only found a place at the table as members of quasi-governmental regional development boards.⁴⁶ If the RSCs were only about social policy-making the exclusion of local governments is defensible, as these have no social policy role in Newfoundland and Labrador. If, though, community development was the goal, the exclusion of municipal governments is unjustifiable. If fact, their absence, added to the heavy representation of provincial government departments and provincial government-appointed regional administrative boards, make it look as though the government in St. John's wanted to tap the policy ideas of the communities but not let those communities develop their ideas themselves.

43. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, *People, Partners and Prosperity*, 17-1.8

44. Partnerships were stuck but they were narrow and ad hoc. For example, in one of the regions the Departments of Health and Education agreed to contribute equally to the salary of an additional speech pathologist. Though small in itself, the interdepartmental collaboration was highly unusual and could have paved the way to more joint projects.

45. P. Power and F. Locke, with L. Felt, *Everybody Wanted It: Collaboration between the Voluntary, Community-based Sector and the Regional Steering Committees of the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. Research Paper, Values Added Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL, 2006, 14-16, http://www.envision.ca/pdf/cura/Everybody_Wanted_It_Nov_06.pdf, accessed July 16, 2007.

46. Values Added Community University Research Alliance, Interviews, Steering Committee, 2005; hereafter cited as, CURA, Steering Committees.

Table 1. Regional Steering Committee Membership⁴⁷

Organization Type	Number of Members (including alternates)
Municipal government associations	3
Federal government	6
Provincial Government	10
Aboriginal associations	5
Voluntary/community based	6
Education	10
Regional economic development	13
Health institutions	8
Other	3
Strategic Social Plan	2
TOTAL	65

Source: Calculated by author.

Moreover, the structure of the SSP committees also worked against horizontal collaboration. Departmental representatives tended to stay within their hierarchies and representatives from other regional boards also worked along known paths.⁴⁸ This is not surprising, as policies are made within departments, not between or among them. Government simply was not structured to facilitate inter-departmental communication; thus what the SSP sought to do went against the system's institutional logic. At best, regional representatives of the various social policy departments met more frequently, discovered their common interests and problems, and begin building informal ties that might ease future collaboration. A positive step, but not what the SSP's designers hoped for.

Nevertheless, RSC members reported good relations with government (Table 2), suggesting that some linkages did develop. Further, respondents noted good rapport among the members and several commented on the trust built within their committees. At this level, the SSP worked well and demonstrated that regional policy elites could work together effectively to plan social policy. Social capital was being accumulated but it was happening between government officials and the leaders of quasi-governmental boards. Although this advanced the horizontal collaboration agenda, it did little to bring the VCBS into the policy process.

47. Table 1 reflects the membership of the two RSCs studied in depth by the *Values Added* CURA. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the representation of VCBS organizations was no higher on the other committees.

48. CURA Steering Committees and CURA Community Groups.

Table 2. RSC Members Perceptions of Relations with SSPO

Perception	Responses (out of 17)
Good Relationship with SSPO	8
SSP staff at meetings	7
Most contact is through the Planner	5
RSC sets own objectives guided by SSP	5 *
Limited administrative support	3
Regional work more important than SSPO	3

Source: Computed from CURA, Steering Committees.

*: N = 13

Finally, although the VCBS was supposed to be the core of the SSP, there was little knowledge of the Plan within the sector. Twenty-seven groups in one of the six regions were questioned about the SSP. Twenty-four (89 percent) had heard of the Plan; 17 (63 percent) knew some of the individuals who were RSC members in their region; 14 (52 percent) knew nothing about the committee; but only 8 (30 percent) felt that they had sufficient knowledge of the SSP and the committee to complete interviews.⁴⁹

Power and Locke suggest that, like government, the voluntary, community-based sector works within silos.⁵⁰ The local cancer society works with the provincial and national offices of that organization far more than it does with the local branch of the heart fund. Further, even if the leaders of voluntary organizations in small towns are natural community leaders, which need not always be the case,⁵¹ the organizations themselves have different objectives and distinct clienteles. There is no reason why they should work together; indeed, since they compete for donor funds, there can be good reasons not to cooperate. Finally, it is not clear that VCBS leaders had the skills to operate effectively within mid-level policy councils, like the Steering Committees, yet this problem was not addressed.

49. CURA, Community Groups.

50. P. Power and F. Locke, with L. Felt and D. Close, *And No One Heard: Regional Horizontal management and Government Silos in the Implementation of the Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. Research Paper, Values Added Community University Research Alliance, St. John's, NL, http://www.envision.ca/pdf/cura/And_No_One_Heard_Nov_06.pdf, 2006, accessed July 17, 2007.

51. The local head of the heart fund may not be interested in anything besides collecting money for his charity, just as the president of a community's softball league need not care about much besides her game. It may even be a mistake to classify these individuals as potential community leaders, as their participation in voluntary activities could as easily be private regarding – it is what they want to do – as public regarding – they do it for the common good. This is a question that merits further study.

4.3. The SSP's end

The Conservatives replaced the Liberals as Newfoundland's governors in the October 2003 elections. Although both parties are ideologically centrist, the Conservatives' development policy was focused on the economy and the SSP was dropped.⁵² The PCSD did not meet again after the election, but the RSCs were not abolished until 2005. A new organization, the Rural Secretariat, took the SSP's place. It too is run from the Executive Council by a small secretariat, but has an even smaller budget than did the SSP.⁵³

5. ANALYSIS

From the foregoing, we can say that the SSP did relatively little for the VCBS and took few steps toward place-based policymaking or devolving authority to encourage collaborative governance. We now ask why this happened, looking first at the effects of specific policies, and then at the effect of path dependence.

5.1. Specific policies

5.1.1 No Policy Deliverables

The relationship between process and product is at once straightforward and complicated. Without Henry Ford's assembly line there could not have been a Model T, but if the Model T had not been a success other manufacturers would not have set up their own assembly lines. A process needs a product before it can be evaluated. Yet the SSP's product was its process. Was that its Achilles' heel, too?

Doubtlessly, the SSP would have had a higher profile if it had incorporated an array of concrete policies. These would have given the VCBS material to deliver and the province's communities tools to use as they planned for the future. Moreover, it is conceivable that having material benefits from the Plan would have prompted the VCBS to press government for stronger, more active SSP, perhaps increasing its budget and expanding the SSPO. But making those policies effective would have demanded precisely the tight inter-departmental coordination that characterizes horizontal collaboration, one of the very things the SSP was to establish.

52. Although the program was evaluated in 2003, no assessment was done after its termination. See Helleur and Associates, *Learning Study: has the Government Started Doing Business as Envisioned by the Strategic Social Plan?* St. John's, NL: Jane Helleur & Associates, 2003.

53. J. Bennett, 2007. *Collaboration or Consultation? The Development and Implementation of Social Policy in Rural Newfoundland and Labrador from the Strategic Social Plan to the Rural Secretariat*. Unpub. MA Thesis, Department of Political Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NL, 2007.

Was the SSP then compromised from the outset? Having no policy deliverables was a signal disadvantage but it need not have been sufficient to make the Plan unviable. Had the VCBS been engaged as foreseen and the Regional Committees functioned as hoped there could have been enough positive results to raise the SSP's profile. That, however, probably required a more engaged civil society and a government with historically broader perspectives on development and a greater readiness to share power with its citizens.

5.1.2. Implementation

The document presenting the Plan to the public was short on specifics and the evolution of the SSPO suggested that a good deal of the Plan's machinery was built on the fly. How clear, then, was the government about what was needed to make the Plan work? Had it thought about how many changes it would have to make?

A document announcing a new program cannot present a fully elaborated framework for its operation. Even so, the SSP started life with many loose ends. The two most obvious of these were the absence of operational measures by which to know if the Plan's goals were being met and the manner in which the SSPO was set up and staffed. To some extent, these reflect the program's novelty and would be part of the start up costs of any radical policy initiative. There is, though, one area where hindsight causes us to question the SSP's design: the structure of the RSCs.

Governance refers to linking and coordinating government and non-governmental actors to make and deliver policy; and it implies shifting authority to those non-governmental actors. However, we have seen that the RSCs were composed principally of representatives of government departments and quasi-autonomous, government-established health services, education and economic development boards. Since few of the RSC members came from the voluntary sector, it appears that the committees were set up, perhaps inadvertently, to let regional administrative boards and regional branches of government departments establish more effective contact with each other. This is a laudable administrative objective that should increase horizontal coordination, but it is not governance. A 2003 consultant's report, which assessed the SSP's performance, recommended the development of clearer links between the VCBS and the RSCs, so perhaps time would have resolved this problem.⁵⁴

What is true of governance also applies to civil society. The structure of the RSCs not only gave the voluntary, community-based sector little representation, in many cases it also left the volunteers having to deal as equals with those on whom they depended for funding. Further, the capacity of the VCBS and its members to engage immediately as active members of a policy-making team may have been overestimated.

54. Helleur and Associates, 2003.

5.1.3. Time and resources

Did the SSP have enough time to find its way and become a useable strategy for making social policy in Newfoundland and Labrador? Perhaps four years would have been enough if there had been a culture of devolving power to citizens and encouraging horizontal policy planning, as well as providing more material resources to support the process. That might have made the Plan an incremental experiment in policy thinking that would be introduced, implemented, tested, and revised after a few years. However, the SSP moved policy thinking in a dramatically new direction at a time when there were few resources available to facilitate the change. And, when the 2003 elections brought a new party to power, the SSP came to an abrupt end.

Obviously, a new administration can drop an existing program in order to advance its agenda. In any event, although there is no evidence that the Liberals would not have kept the SSP had they returned to office in 2003, neither is there any suggestion that they would have significantly rethought and restructured their program. Recall that from 2000 to 2003 the budget of the SSP stayed frozen at \$2 million per year, while the general provincial budget was growing by 22 percent, from \$3.1 billion to \$3.8 billion. This does not give much reason to believe that the Liberals would have done more than tinker with SSP had they won again.

5.2. Path dependence

Path dependence refers to the tendency of institutions to follow established patterns, to do things in established ways and by known means;⁵⁵ and by defining institutions to mean repeated patterns of interaction, the concept stretches to include both formal organizations and long-established behavioural preferences. Thus institutions can include broad historic patterns of structuring authority and more discrete policy preferences.

5.2.1. Historical tendencies

Whether as a colony, short-lived Dominion,⁵⁶ or province of Canada, what is now Newfoundland and Labrador had a centralized government.⁵⁷ The pat-

55. P. Pierson, "Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics," *American Political Science Review*, 94:2, 2000, 251-267.

56. From 1931 to 1934, Newfoundland was recognized by Britain as a Dominion, which gave it a constitutional status equal to Canada within the British Empire. It lost this in 1934 when self-government was suspended.

57. On this see, S. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971; S. McCorquodale, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose," in *Canadian Provincial Politics*, ed., M. Robin, Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 138-170, 1978; R. Dyck, *Provincial Politics in Canada*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1991, 47-92; R. Gwyn, *Smallwood: the Unlikely Revolutionary*. 2d ed., Toronto: McLellan & Stewart, 1999; J. D. House, *Against the Tide: Battling for Economic Renewal in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999; V. Summers, "Between a Rock and a hard Place: Regime Change in Newfoundland," in *The Provincial State in Canada*, ed. K. Brownsley and M. Howlett, Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2000, 23-47.

tern of settlement, with outports stretched along the coast and very few larger settlements outside St. John's, not only made communication difficult but also complicated the provision of government services to these outlying areas. Economic organization reinforced geography as the fishers in the outports depended on merchants concentrated in St. John's to buy their fish and to provide them with credit for the next year's fishery. Further, until Confederation in 1949, the political role of most outports was limited to returning a member to the House of Assembly, generally a parachuted candidate⁵⁸ from the capital. A constituency that elected a government member got its reward in the form of patronage –it “won its vote”; those electing an opposition member waited until next time. Citizen activism had little room or encouragement to grow.

Although one pre-1949 movement –William Ford Coaker's Fishermen's Protective Union in the early twentieth century– challenged this system,⁵⁹ there were no significant changes to the model of governance until self-government was taken from Newfoundland in 1934. Then when Joey Smallwood's pro-Confederation-with-Canada forces won a referendum in 1948 the old order lost its chance to return. Changing the legal regime, however, did little to change Newfoundland's political style: the outports were better represented but patronage politics still dominated and decisions were made at the centre, and mainly by the premier. And although administrative decentralization has become common, decisional power has stayed in St. John's.

For the SSP to have worked, the politics of Newfoundland and Labrador would have needed a significant reorientation. That would have required the government to have dedicated substantial energy, time, and money to assure that decisional power was devolved to communities and that departments began working together to provide integrated policies. This did not occur; whether it was due to lack of commitment or a shortage of resources is immaterial.

5.2.2. Low profile social policy

As noted in the introduction, social policy innovation has not been a priority for Newfoundland and Labrador's governments.⁶⁰ This does not mean that

58. A parachuted candidate is one who does not live in the constituency in which she or he runs.

59. I. McDonald, “To Each His Own.” William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland. St. John's, NL: ISER, 1987.

60. There is one significant exception: resettlement. Between 1954 and 1975, 28,000 people left their isolated, rural communities and moved to larger, more central towns, at government expense. In all, some 250 communities vanished. The program was controversial then and still stirs emotions today, which may explain why the Newfoundland and Labrador government avoids social experimentation. For an introduction to the resettlement program, see, Maritime History Archive, *Resettlement: No Great Future*. St. John's: Maritime History archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2005, <http://www.mun.ca/mha/resettlement/index.html>, accessed July 17, 2007.

they have ignored social issues, only that they have prioritized seeking the economic resources needed to address social questions. So, one after another, resource megaprojects have been put in motion that have created thousands of jobs and pumped millions of dollars into the provincial economy. None of them, unfortunately, proved sustainable, leaving the status quo ante of low incomes, poor permanent job prospects, low levels of education, and uneven levels of health care in their wake.

Thus to move into a project like the SSP that dealt with engaging the voluntary sector, passing decisional power to communities and not just coordinating social policy across departments but actually integrating economic and social policies to address social problems was a qualitative change, not an incremental one. Worse, it had to be made when the Newfoundland and Labrador public service was being drastically reduced to cut costs, declining by 34.5 percent over 12 years.⁶¹ The result was a straitened public sector that found it hard to carry out more than routine operations. Planning and implementing a novel, sophisticated social policy initiative under those conditions would necessarily be extremely difficult.

5.3. Summing up

The SSP had a lot to overcome to work as its proponents had hoped it would. We have seen that it was unable to do so for a combination of reasons. Some, such as having insufficient resources, could plausibly have been corrected quickly. Others, like the historic centralism of government in Newfoundland and Labrador, would take far longer to address. This has led to the suspicion that the SSP was a case of SIBD: being able to say that "something is being done". Though it certainly did not start that way, because the SSP demanded a substantial investment of time and effort from many people inside and outside government to get started, it is possible that as time passed and new issues arose to occupy government those in power increasingly accepted as normal and desirable a small Strategic Social Plan. This seems especially plausible since there was never any great public pressure on government to expand or revise the program.

6. WHAT OTHERS CAN LEARN

The Strategic Social Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador had both successes and failures that can serve as lessons for others. Regarding, first, its achievements, whatever else the SSP did or did not do, it broke new ground in Newfoundland and Labrador in four areas: recognizing the importance of horizontal collaboration between and among government departments; acknowledging the potential utility of civil society as both policy instrument and policy actor; building a first set of mechanisms to link gov-

61. Statistics Canada, "Public sector employment, wages and salaries, monthly".

ernment and civil society, here the VCBS; and taking steps toward focusing on communities, thus thinking in terms of holistic approaches to public policy. Beyond these there was the creation of the Social Audit and Community Accounts, the latter of which are still used to provide one-window access to otherwise scattered social, economic, and demographic data. Finally, there is anecdotal evidence that regional offices of government departments and regional boards dealing with health, education, hospitals, and economic development work together more often and more easily than before. The question is what will be built on these somewhat modest results. This leads us to the Plan's failures.

The most serious failure was underestimating the scope of the changes necessary to make a program like the SSP work. It really did require a near-total rethinking of government, how it functioned and how it related to its citizens. Reformers can appear at any time, but major reorientations generally happen only at times of crisis –think of the New Deal in the United States in the 1930s– or when a new regime emerges that alters the very bases of a political system's legitimacy and restructures most of its institutions, as happened in Spain after the death of Franco. For all its problems, Newfoundland and Labrador did not face such dramatic prospects. That it had received a horrible shock with the closure of the cod fishery is undeniable, but by the late 1990s that shock was being assimilated and new economic possibilities flowing from offshore oil were opening up. Perhaps if a determinedly reformist party had won power the SSP could have prospered, but conditions did not favour radical change.

A second weakness existed at the conceptual level. It now looks as if too much was expected of the voluntary, community-based sector and that not enough was done to help the sector and the people who drive it learn to be part of a policy network –the actors in a policy field whom government consults on a regular basis. As well, it is now evident that the structure of the Regional Steering Committees reflected a too strongly government-centric perspective that privileged government and quasi-governmental agencies. It is possible that this problem could have been addressed had the SSP lasted longer, but it would have been preferable to avoid it in the first place by raising the proportion of civil society representatives, and by naming people from the business community and local mayors and councilors to the RSCs.

Third, there is the question of scarce material support. One reason that governments like civil society groups, especially volunteer agencies, is that they work cheap. But that is no excuse for freezing funding to the SSP while the provincial budget grew by over 20 percent. This, however, points to a fourth failing of the Plan: it had little public support. Had the people clamoured for more resources for the RSCs and the SSP proper, they might have been forthcoming; but silence called forth inaction. Of course its final weakness was being unable to survive a change of government, which may be another indicator of its lack of public support.

No doubt the list of the SSP's strengths and weaknesses could be extended but the basic lessons its experience holds for policy reformers anywhere would still be:

- Pay attention to the institutional framework in which the reform will be implemented. Having to change that framework while you change specific policies and processes is always a mammoth job.
- Be sure of your material support, both financial and personnel. Having enough money and staff to get something started may sound satisfactory but the SSP showed that increases are not always forthcoming.
- Try to assure that your project is either backed by all parties able to win power or that it has gained enough institutional presence and public support to make it hard for a new government to drop.

In the end, the SSP did not realize the hopes of its proponents and designers, because it did not generate evidence-based policies and programs to produce viable communities and sustainable regions. It did, however, show that securing those objectives will require more support, financial, administrative and public, than the Plan received. It also tested a model for regional consultation that proved to need revision. Finally, it raised important questions about what has to be done to let government engage the community-based, voluntary sector, or the rest of civil society, in a genuinely devolved system of governance. Though disappointing to its supporters, the SSP's history should help others design more effective instruments elsewhere.

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