

**EVALUATING PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IN REGIONAL PLANNING
PROCESS: LESSONS FROM ALBERTA'S REGIONAL PLANS**

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends who supported me.

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I want to thank my supervisors, Professors Xu and Bjornlund, for their countless hours of reading my thesis and constant encouragement and guidance in the past two years. Without their help and patience this thesis would not have been possible. I would also like to thank my committee members, Professors Johnston and Akbary, for their advices. A special thanks to my friend Heather Chan who generously offered her time and expertise for proof reading the earlier drafts of this thesis. You essentially taught me how to write academic papers.

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Abstract

Alberta regional plans aim to integrate the management of water, land, air and biodiversity resources. Designing a process that balances various interests and reaches consensus is essential for these plans. Alberta's regional plans, once approved by the minister, will get regulatory status under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. As a result, these plans will in case of inconsistency take precedence over the current generation of water plans developed under the Water Act, 1999 and the Water for Life strategy, 2003. This research aims to understand the procedural justices in the context of the process of developing the Alberta regional plans by exploring the perception of the stakeholders involved in various levels of the regional planning process, with focus on water issues and challenges.

This research focuses on the Lower Athabasca region which faces rapid growth in the mining and oil exploration industries, and the South Saskatchewan region which faces population and economic growth. Rapid growth in these regions is creating challenges and issues in water accessibility, quality, usage and storage.

The research is based on an analysis of data from three sources: policy documents, in-depth interviews, and opinions posted on various blogs and web sites expressing public opinion. The policy documents provided the official position on and opinion of the process and legal linkages between various laws and regulations. The data from in-depth interviews provided a deeper understanding of the stakeholders' perceptions of the process. These in-depth interviews were conducted with people involved in the planning process and included planners, government staffs, regional advisory council members, and stakeholders in relevant water policy areas. The electronic discussions and debates took place in electronic newspapers, weblogs, tweeters, and web discussions within each region and provided an understanding of the public opinion, perspectives, and concerns regarding the planning process within the regions.

Grounded theory uses a combination of thematic analysis and content analysis and was used for this research. The analysis revealed that Alberta's regional plans should be improved to ensure fairness of the planning process. Procedural justice should be improved in three main parts of the planning process: the plan's design, the public consultation process, and the decision making process. The analysis also revealed eight main themes to improve procedural justice in Alberta's regional plans; the need to: (i) follow procedural rules; (ii) have clear vision and objectives in the planning process; (iii) select unbiased representatives; (iv) use effective public engagement strategies; (v) support an effective public participation; (vi) define decision making roles and responsibilities; (vii) understand value conflicts; and (viii) identify challenges in the plans implementation.

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List of Abbreviations

ALSA	Alberta Land Stewardship Act
AWC	Alberta Water Council
CEMS	Cumulative Effect Management System
ESRD	Environment Sustainable Resource Development
LARP	Lower Athabasca Regional Plan
RAC	Regional Advisory Council
SSRP	South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
TOR	Terms of Reference
WPAC	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council

Chapter 1 Introduction

There is a growing level of competition for the limited water on the planet and water managers are finding it increasingly difficult to meet an ever increasing level of demand. The competition between urban, agricultural, and industrial sectors, all vying for their fair share of water, has been generating more and more controversies across the world. Consequently, many concerns have arisen about the efficiency and effectiveness of water management (Syme, et al; 1999).

One of the challenging concerns, the one this thesis will focus on, is providing a fair process for water management and planning. Lukasiewicz et al. (2013) noted that water has a dual nature as a public good and a private property, and it is a critical ingredient for human survival, which exacerbates the complexity of resolving allocation conflicts through a fair process. Integrated Resource Management (IRM), introduced by the United Nations, is considered an approach to ensure a fair planning process. IRM claims that the government cannot make fair and sustainable decisions regarding resources such as land and water, and it relies on the collaboration between governments, public, and stakeholders to provide diverse views and perspectives to make fair and just decisions (Kals and Maes, 2012, Lukasiewicz et al., 2013, Syme and Nancarrow, 2006). Many scholars believed that collaborative planning, governance, increasing partnerships, encouraging public and stakeholder participation are methods that encourage the plan process and outcomes to be perceived as more just¹ and fair (Duram, 1999, Syme and

¹ In this research fairness and justice are used interchangeably and considered synonyms. The terms fair or fairness is often used in the social psychology literature rather than the terms just or justice.

Nancarrow, 2006, Gross, 2007).

Studying social justice, which looks at the allocation of power, benefits, resources, and fundamental rights and responsibilities, provides a comprehensive perspective on how planning and management deal with complicated resources like water. Social justice has been studied from various perspectives such as distributive justice, which focuses on how resources are distributed across various groups, or procedural justice, which studies how the decisions are made rather than how resources are distributed (Leventhal, 1980, Lind and Tyler, 1988).

Procedural justice in regards to management of resources, such as water, is achieved by giving all stakeholders an opportunity to participate in and influence the decisions, rather than attempting to provide them with a pre-determined outcome. This research is designed to provide a deeper understanding of justice, to facilitate the translation of perception of fair planning processes to practical outcomes and policies.

Procedural justice literature introduces critical components that ensure fairness of the planning process and argue that reaching a fair planning process cannot be guaranteed, due to vagueness of concepts of fairness. The review of the literature revealed that: i) the concept of fairness is entangled with participants' feelings which make achieving practical outcomes a difficult task; and ii) the Alberta regional planning process is relatively new, and current literature does not address procedural justice in the context of Alberta's regional plan. This thesis addresses these two issues.

This thesis draws from the amalgam of ideas on justice, planning process and resource (such as water) management to identify components of procedural justice. These components facilitate an understanding of a fair planning process as a mean to enrich the concept of justice in resource management and planning. This research then evaluates these components of procedural justice in the planning process in the context of developing Alberta's regional plans. This process has been completed in Lower Athabasca region with the final plan approved by Cabinet and it is under progress in the

South Saskatchewan region.

1.1 Problem Context

Transition to Integrated Resource Management (IRM) and a Cumulative Effect Management System (CEMS) in Alberta is happening under new legislation which is the legal basis for Alberta's regional plans. The regional plans are designed to balance economic, social, and environmental goals in seven² regions in Alberta. With the approval of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA, 2009), in case of a conflict between various legislations, Alberta's regional plans prevail over all water, land, air, and biodiversity legislations. The regional plans increase the provincial control over decision making, since the government is the only authority who makes the final decision in the planning process (LUF, 2008). In contrast, some policies and legislations (e.g. Water for Life Strategy, 2003) promote partnerships and prepare the ground for transition of power from government to governance. Integration of these policies and legislations with the regional plans is a main concern for stakeholders, government staff, and the public, especially in the context of water management and planning.

de Loë (2009) argued that ALSA does not talk about the relationship between the three Water for Life partners³ and the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC), consequently it is not clear how these groups participate in the regional planning process or how the water management plans they have developed or are developing will influence the regional plans. Moreover, after the approval of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, it is still not clear how Water for Life partners can contribute to the implementation of the regional plan. This research is

² Lower Athabasca Region, Lower Peace Region, North Saskatchewan Region, Red Deer Region, South Saskatchewan Region, Upper Athabasca Region, Upper Peace Region

³ Alberta Water Council (AWC) - the province-wide scale
Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACS) - the Alberta watershed scale
Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs) - the local scale

designed to review the fair planning process literature, to evaluate the procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process, and to identify the components that can enhance the procedural justice in the planning process.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The broad goal of this research is to get a better understanding of social justice in water planning and management by achieving three objectives:

1. develop a theoretical framework to evaluate procedural justice in a regional planning process.
2. evaluate the procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process, in Lower Athabasca Region and South Saskatchewan Region.
3. identify critical components of procedural justice in these two regions and modify the theoretical framework based on Alberta's regional planning process.

The broad goal and detailed objectives lead to two main research questions:

1. How did the public and stakeholders in Alberta perceive the fairness of the regional planning process?
2. What are the critical components of procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process?

1.3 Thesis Outline

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Following this introduction, the second chapter presents an overview of the policy and legislation background in Alberta to provide an understanding of the context within which the planning processes in the two case study regions takes/took place. The third chapter presents an overview of literature that is

pertinent to this study to develop a theoretical framework for evaluating procedural justice. The fourth chapter discusses the approaches used to answer the research questions. The next, three chapters (Five, Six, and Seven) present results and discuss the importance of the findings. The final chapter (chapter Eight) consists of a summary of results and their practical and scholarly contributions, research limitation, and future research opportunities. .

Chapter 2 Background

This chapter provides a broad introduction to Alberta's water legislations and land policy. In 2008, Alberta's approach to manage water, land, and the overall environment shifted towards a Cumulative Effect Management System (CEMS) and Integrated Resource Management (IRM) (ESRD, 2012). Alberta's regional plans are designed to facilitate this new environmental management system. One of the noticeable characteristics of both CEMS and IRM is that they use a grass-root management approach. Despite the fact that Alberta's regional plans use CEMS and IRM, the decision making process is designed as a top down process. This contrast has raised some concerns about how to integrate these plans with the ongoing process of grass-root water management in the province. In this chapter, the policy context of water and land management is reviewed to provide an understanding of Alberta's regional plans in two different regions: Lower Athabasca Regions and South Saskatchewan Region.

2.1 Alberta Water Legislation and Policy

Historically, water management has been a real challenge in Alberta. The provincial government has passed laws and regulations to address issues of water scarcity in southern Alberta and water quality issues in northern Alberta. The historical context of water legislations in Alberta stemmed from 1870 when the territory controlled by the Hudson Bay Company was transfer to the Dominion of Canada and what is now the Prairies Provinces became part of the Northwest Territory (Bjornlund and Klein, in press, p2). At this time, the Riparian Doctrine became formal law. Under the Riparian Doctrine, large volumes of water were not permitted to be diverted away from natural watercourses for irrigation purposes and diverted water could only be applied to riparian land (Harris, 2008). The Riparian Doctrine quickly proved to be a barrier to development. As a result, the Northwest Irrigation Act (1894) was introduced to

establish the First-in-Time-First-in-Right (FITFIR) principles (de Loë, 2009). This Act vested the ownership of water in the crown and required all water users to apply for water allocation licenses. The first irrigation Act in Alberta was adopted in 1905. However, the federal government retained control over water resources until 1930. Alberta legislated a Water Resources Act in 1931 which affirmed that all water is considered to be the property of the province. The Water Recourse Act (1931) grants the rights to use water through government license.

Between 1960 and 1980, the Alberta water supply was increased with the construction of storage facilities to meet increasing water demands and to increase irrigation capacity. The movement to change the Water Resource Act began in 1989. This process began with public meetings, consultations, information gathering, and review of similar legislations around the world that were considered to be effective in protecting the environment and helping economic stability and growth. The result of these activities was the Water Act (1999) which was proclaimed in 1999 and later revised in 2000 (de Loë, 2009). Combined with the Environment Protection and Enhancement Act (2000), the Water Act helped provide the basis for a new approach to water management in Alberta (Bewer, 2012).

2.1.1 Water Act

The purpose of the Water Act was to support and promote the conservation and management of water. The Water Act emphasized the domain of the provincial government over water allocation by setting license requirements, retaining FITFIR and maintaining the inseparability of licenses from land (Water Act, 2000, sections 3, 49, and 58). The Water Act introduced water markets as the means to facilitate voluntary transfer of all or part of licenses (Percy, 2004). The Water Act provided flexible water allocation in a large and arid region providing workable and practical methods for accommodating new users (Bewer, 2012, Percy, 2004). Moreover, the Water Act provided an adjustable system for integrating water allocation decisions with

environmental concerns (Water Act, 2000, Section, 51 and 55).

In summary, the Water Act considered both groundwater and surface water and provided significant detail about license issues, priorities and renewal. Moreover, the Water Act created a considerable legislative foundation for watershed planning and integrated resource management in Alberta.

2.1.2 Water for Life - Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability

The government of Alberta recognized the need for a comprehensive water management policy, so a process of extensive consultation began around 2001. In 2003 the government introduced the Water for Life strategy in recognition of the growing pressure on water resources and the need for future development. The Water for Life (WFL) strategy was an attempt to balance environmental and economic concerns. The strategy focused on three goals: (i) safe and secure drinking water supply; (ii) healthy aquatic ecosystems; and (iii) reliable water supplies for a sustainable economy. To fulfill these goals, it listed three areas of focus for action: (i) knowledge and research; (ii) partnership; and (iii) water conservation (de Loë, 2009). In addition, the WFL strategy sets out a series of outcomes for each goal. The outcomes were divided into three time periods: short term (2004-2006); medium term (2007-2009); and long term (2010-2013).

The WFL strategy had a broad vision of considering watershed management which promotes a multi-level governance structure with local initiatives, inputs, and decision making. The WFL strategy focused on community involvement in watershed management (de Loë, 2009). The Strategy identified three types of partnerships: The Alberta Water Council (WAC), Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs), and Watershed Stewardship Groups. These partners provided regionally based solutions through collaboration with stakeholders and the public to ensure sustainable water management (de Loë, 2009).

In 2007, the Alberta Water Council was asked to review the Strategy and provide recommendations on updating water policy in the province. The recommendations were

provided in the Water for Life-Renewal (2008) and Water for life-Action Plan (2009) (de Loë, 2009). One of the key recommendations of the Water for life-Renewal (2008) was the need to integrate the Strategy with another planning process which was recently developed under the Land Use Framework (2008). The Water for Life-Renewal identified that the emphasis on partnership has proven to be a strong foundation for building local commitment to protect watersheds and ensuring local sustainability. However, it was not clear which steps or actions should be implemented to support the roles' of these partners in developing or improving the watershed management, knowledge, tools, and programs (de Loë, 2009).

In 2009, the Water for Life-Action Plan outlined the necessary actions to address the Water for Life-Renewal recommendations. It has been argued that the general nature of these actions did not provide a clear program to address the broad spectrum of water management issues in the province (Saunders, 2010). However, the Action Plan aligned with other strategic policies (Land-Use Framework, Cumulative Management System, and Provincial Energy Strategy) to support integrated resource management in the province.

2.1.3 Alberta Land Stewardship Act and Land Use Framework

The need for comprehensive land use policies led to a series of consultations which developed the Land Use Framework (LUF) (2008). The development of LUF took two years. In 2006, the government consulted with various groups of stakeholders. In the following year, the government of Alberta sought additional advice and input from the public. Based on these consultations the Alberta Government in 2008 published the final LUF policy. LUF provided a land use system that managed public and private lands and natural resources in an effective manner. LUF addressed the cumulative effect of future growth and new economic development at the regional level. It created a vision of working together with respect and care for economic, environmental, and social well-being in the Province.

LUF used the integrated resource management approach and identified three inter-related outcomes: a healthy economy supported by land and natural resources, a healthy ecosystem and environment, and people friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural support.

LUF was designed to complement existing acts, policies, and strategies on land, air and water. To provide legislative backing for LUF, the government of Alberta passed the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) in 2009. The main purposes of ALSA were to provide:

- the means by which the government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the province, including economic, environmental and social objectives;
- the means to plan for the future, recognizing the needs of current and future generations of Albertans;
- the means to coordinate the decisions made concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and the environment;
- legislations and policy that enable sustainable development by taking into account and responding to cumulative effects of human endeavor and other events.

According to ALSA, the Alberta government aims to: i) use the principles of sustainability, accountability and responsibility; ii) adopt a land stewardship ethic; and iii) integrate collaborative, transparent and knowledge based processes.

ALSA was criticized by various groups and sectors (Lavelle, 2012, Saunders, 2010, Passelac-Ross, 2011). Critics argued that ALSA is ambiguous and can be interpreted as reflecting a different understanding of property rights. ALSA was unclear about authorities and proposed property right legislations which created a significant public backlash (Bankes, 2011). The ALSA Amendments (2011) was a response to the reaction to ALSA by the public. The Amendments clarified the original intent of the legislation and ensured that ALSA did not limit the existing laws about property rights for compensation and appeal provisions (Saunders, 2010).

ALSA and its Amendment established the legal authorities to divide Alberta into seven regions (see Figure.2-1.). ALSA gave the regional plans legal effect as a regulatory instrument which supersedes other Alberta legislation and policies such as the Water Act and the Water for Life Strategy. ALSA formed the foundation for the regional plans by appointing the Land Use Secretariat and creating the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC). Moreover, ALSA specified the public consultation mechanisms which obligate the minister to ensure that appropriate public consultation with respect to the proposed plan or amendment are carried out.

LUF, with the legal support of ALSA established the seven regions based on watershed boundaries and municipal jurisdiction. The Regional Planning process started with the Lower Athabasca Region which has been criticised internationally due to rapid development of oil sand and environmental degradation (Saunders, 2010). The second plan was developed for the South Saskatchewan region where fast population growth and competition for resources are the main challenges.

2.1.4 Alberta Regional Plans

These seven Regions were named after the major watersheds, for the development of regional plans to integrate land and watershed management (see Figure 2-1). Regional plans were designed to reflect the vision, principles and outcomes of LUF and to balance economic, social, and environmental goals.

The idea behind the regional plans was that they should provide a broad strategic plan for land, water, biodiversity, and natural resources for public and private land (TOR LARP, 2009, TOR SSRP, 2009). The regional plans will overrule water, land, air, and biodiversity legislation if any conflicts happen (LUF, 2008). As a result, regional plans are legal documents and reflect public policy for the regions which are enforceable by the Crown, government department, local authorities, and decision makers (Wenig, 2010).

Alberta's regional plans will be subject to regular reviews. These reviews will

evaluate and report on the plan's implementation each five years with a complete review each ten years by the Land Use Secretariat, which is part of Alberta's public service sector and not a governmental department. The Secretariat is responsible for preparing regional plans, facilitating the implementation of the plans when developed and approving, reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of the plans and updating them every 10 years (ALSA, 2009 Division 3 57). The plans have two main parts (LUF, 2008): (1) strategy and implementation and (2) regulatory details.

Alberta's regional plans have a significant role in integrating various policies and legislations. Decision makers in each region are required to comply with the regional plans (LUF, 2009, p 31). As a result, reviewing and studying the planning process is essential in understanding how the plans align various policies with provincial strategies. Reviewing the planning process from a procedural justice perspective provides a comprehensive insight into each step of the process and evaluates whether it is fair.

The planning process for LAR and SSR were started by inviting various sectors to nominate representative for the region to form the Regional Advisory Committees (RAC). After the selection of RAC members a series of public meetings were held around the region (TOR LARP, 2009, TOR SSRP 2009). The results of the first public consultation were studied to identify possible visions and objectives for the region. These visions and objectives were introduced in a document called Terms of Reference (TOR). The TOR provides the vision and objectives for each region. The vision and objectives are guidelines under which the RAC should work and provide its advice to the government about the development of the regional plans.

Based on the TOR, RACs met regularly to study the information and data that the government provided. This information has to remain confidential. The government is responsible for providing all information that RAC are allowed to use to prepare their advice.

After meeting for a year, the RAC for LARP provided its advice to the government in the form of advice sheets which were treated as confidential information. The advice sheets were organized by the Land Use Secretariat and released as a public report. Following this report, the RAC was formally disbanded and the government released a document entitled Advice to the Government of Alberta regarding a Vision for the region (ESRD, 2013). The second round of public meetings was held in various places in the region. The Alberta government invited the public and stakeholders to provide input and comments on the draft Vision, Outcomes, and Objectives proposed by the RAC. This phase consisted of open houses, workshops, and meetings with the public, stakeholders, and municipalities. The public was also invited to provide feedback by completing a workbook either online or in hardcopy (Passelac-Ross, 2011).

In the next stage the planners and the Land Use Secretariat developed a Draft Regional Plan based on RAC's Advice document and public input. The Draft Regional Plan was released for the third round of public consultations. The government announced that stakeholder and public consultations on the draft plan will take place between specific dates and locations around the region. In addition, the government asked Albertans to provide feedback on the draft plan by completing a workbook by mail, in person, or online, within a deadline which was extended.

After the final round of public consultation, planners revised and modified the Draft Regional Plan based on the public inputs and comments and prepared a final plan for Cabinet approval. After the Regional Plan was approved by the Cabinet, it became a legal document which had to be implemented by related authorities. The government explained various phases of Alberta's regional planning process in a simple diagram on the ESRD website, (2011) (see Figure 2-2).

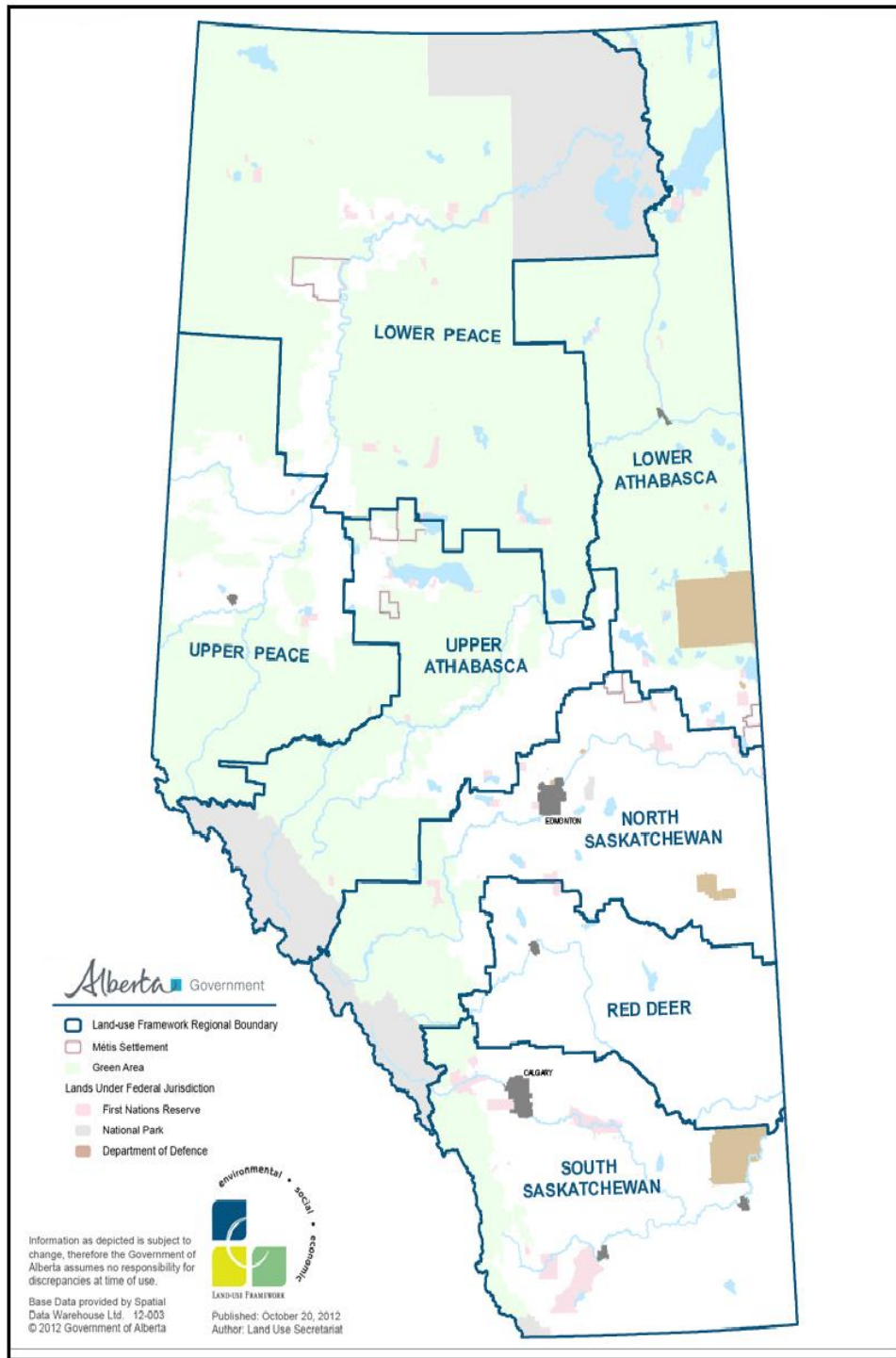


Figure 2.1 Alberta LUF regional boundaries (Government of Alberta, 2012)

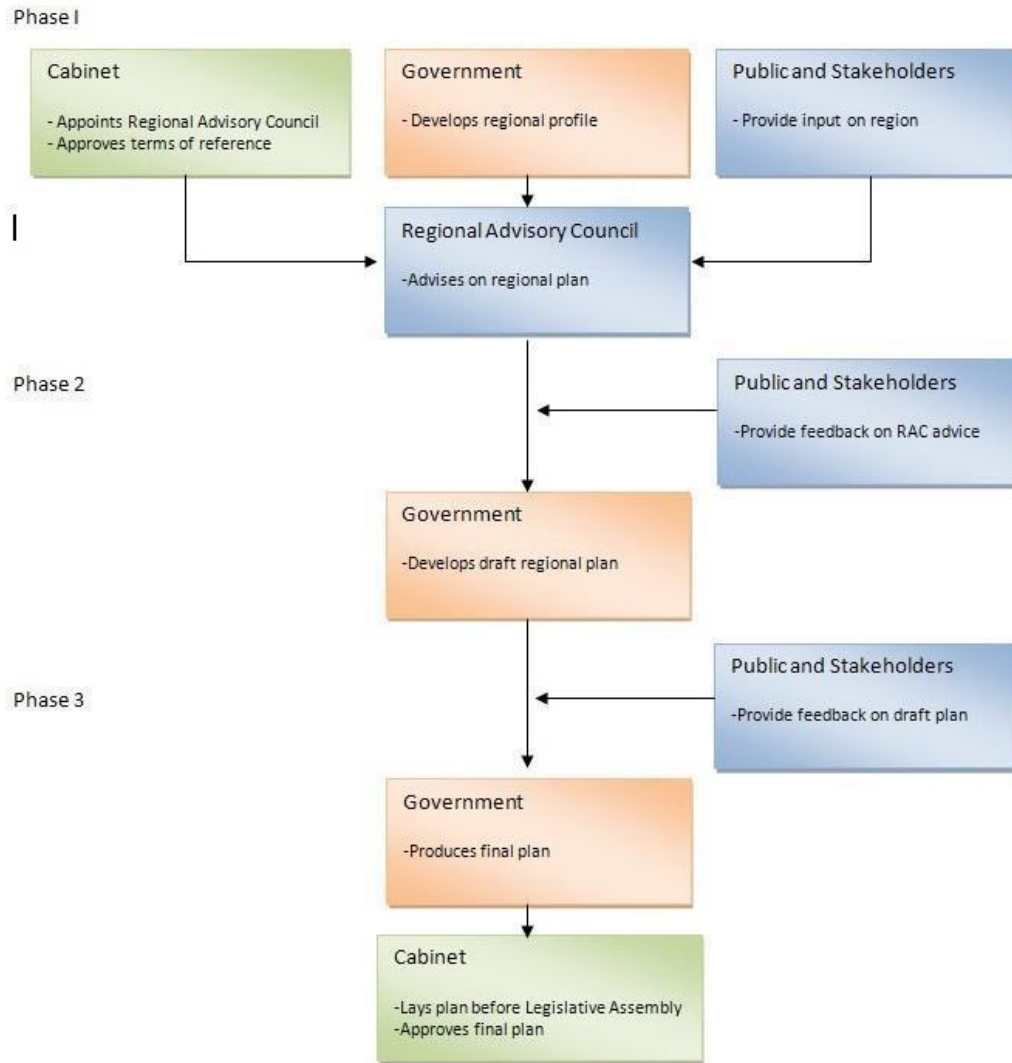


Figure 2.2 Phases of regional planning process (Government of Alberta, 2011)

2.2 Study Area: LARP and SSRP

Under the Land Use Framework (2008) regional boundaries are regulated. Alberta is divided into seven regional areas and each area will produce its own plan for future development (Government of Alberta, 2012): (1) Lower Athabasca Region (approved); (2) Lower Peace Region; (3) North Saskatchewan Region; (4) South Saskatchewan Region (planning and consulting under way); (5) Upper Athabasca Region; (6) Red Deer Region; and (7) Upper Peace River.

This research focuses on two regions for evaluating the procedural justice of the planning process: Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan. Studying these regions will reveal that the fairness of the planning process with respect to the plan's ability to respond to various challenges in the region. Each region has unique economic, social and environmental characteristics. Evaluating the planning process in different regions reveals how these unique characteristics are considered in the planning and decision making process. As of the end of the fieldwork for this study in May 2014, the plans for these regions were either approved or in the process of being approved. Comparing the planning process from each region provided comprehensive information about how regional plans facilitated flexible structures to support a fair decision making process. These regions have different characteristics and challenges: one region (the SSR) faces environmental challenges because of intense population and economic growth and the other (LAR) faces environmental challenges because of a fast growing oil sand industry.

2.2.1 Lower Athabasca Region (LAR)

The current population of the Lower Athabasca is approximately 130,000, with most of the population located in the urban service areas of Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, Bonnyville, and Lac La Biche County (see Table 2-1).

In 2008, the shadow population of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo was estimated at 25,000-30,000 people (TOR LARP, 2009). At the 2006 census, more than 10% of the residents of Wood Buffalo were identified as Aboriginal:

2,425 First Nations and 2,535 Metis (Wood Buffalo Municipality, 2012).

Table 2.1 Population Distribution in Lower Athabasca Region (Statistic Canada, 2011)

Population Wood Buffalo(CA)	Total
Population 2011	66,896
Population 2006	52,643
Population change 2006-2011	27.1
land area Km ²	63,782.95

Population Lac la Biche County, (MD)	Total
Population 2011	8,402
Population 2006	9/123
Population change 2006-2011	-7.95
Land area Km ²	16,300.95

Lower Athabasca contains almost all of Alberta’s proven oil sand reserves, and is home to the majority of oil sand developments in the province (TOR LARP, 2009). About 40% of the land base (or about 400 townships) are underlain with known oil sands deposits and five oil sand companies are currently operating and withdrawing water from Athabasca River (ESRD, 2013). In 2010, oil sands production was over 1.6 million barrels per day (Alberta Energy, 2013). The current level of oil production is 1.3 million barrels per day (mbd) (TOR LARP, 2009).

Besides the oil sand industry, the forest industry is also a major contributor to the economic development in the region. Timber production is estimated at 3.5 million cubic meters per year. The forest industry has integrated its operations with oil sands operators, where timber is harvested in advance of oil sands development; however oil sand growth is faster than the harvesting and reforestation.

Lower Athabasca Region spans the boundaries of three major river basins: the Athabasca River basin, the Beaver River basin and the Peace/Slave River basin (LARP Framework, 2012). The Athabasca River is the second largest river in

Alberta after the Peace River. Athabasca Watershed Council states that “the Athabasca River flow is monitored at three points along the river by Water Survey of Canada. There are no water control structures or dams on the Athabasca River.” (AWC and WPAC, 2013, p1).

The total allocation of surface and groundwater in the watershed in 2005 was 849,639,000 m³. Approximately, the petroleum sector accounted for 68 percent and other industrial sectors 17 percent, the municipal sector 7 percent while other sectors 5 percent (Athabasca Watershed Council, 2013). The extensive water allocation for the oil sand and other industrial sectors increased public concerns about water quality in the region. The regional plan tried to build on existing legislations which not only protect environmental integrity but also provide secure water supplies for economic growth.

The ecological characteristics of Lower Athabasca region divide it into four natural subregions: Rocky Mountain, Foothills, Boreal Forest, and Canadian Shield. Maintaining the biodiversity in these subregions is an important environmental objective for the regional plan. Therefore, conserving land areas, especially in the Boreal forest across northern and central Alberta, is one of the main goals set by environmental groups.

In conclusion, fast growing industries (e.g. oil sand and forestry) in LAR have put pressure on natural and environmental resources. Lower Athabasca regional Plan (LARP) is designed to balance social, environmental and economic goals. This regional plan builds on new layers of legislations. This new layer of legislations provide an effective and efficient management that support the flexibility needed to address local challenges and provide strategies to deal with these challenges within the region.

2.2.2 South Saskatchewan Region (SSR)

The South Saskatchewan region is the most populated area in Alberta. It contains 45

percent of Alberta’s population, approximately 1,500,000 people. Various urban areas in the region have experienced the greatest population growth in Canada recently (see Table 2-2). For example, Calgary Metropolitan Region, the biggest city in the province, has experienced a population increase of 14.6 percent from 1996 to 2006 (TOR SSRP, 2009).

Table 2.2 Population Distribution South Saskatchewan Region (Statistic Canada, 2011)

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2011	2006	Change (%)
Calgary metropolitan area			
City of Calgary	1,096,833	988,812	10.9
Airdrie	42,564	28,927	47.1
Rocky View County	36,461	33,173	9.9
Cochrane	17,580	13,760	27.8
Chestermere	14,824	9,923	49.4

Census subdivision (CSD) name	2011	2006	Change
Calgary MA	1,214,839	1,079,310	12.6
Lethbridge	105,999	95,196	11.3
Medicine Hat	72,807	68,822	5.8

The SSR has 15 counties: M.D. of Bighorn, Rocky View County, Wheatland County, County of Newell, Cypress County, County forty mile, M.D. of Taber, County of Warner, County of Lethbridge, Vulcan County, M.D. of Foot Hill, M.D. of Willow Creek, Kananaskis improvement District, M.D. of Ranch land, Cardston County and M.D. of Pincher Creek . The main cities in the region are Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Brooks. Moreover, the SSR includes seven First Nation communities which are located mostly in the western and southern parts of the region.

The SSR has diverse economical characteristics. Agriculture, energy production, forestry, and tourism and recreation are the cores of economic activities (Statistic Canada, 2006). Agricultural activities occupied about 43 percent of the land area in the region (TOR SSRP, 2009). Moreover, 37 percent of Alberta’s cattle herd is located in

the SSR as a part of livestock industries.

The oil and gas sector is another economic force in the region. There were 10,000 oil producing wells in the region in 2008 based on The Canadian Energy Research Institute's Economic Impacts of the Petroleum Industry report (2009). In addition, the TOR SSRP (2009) reported that 40 percent of the region is underlain by freehold minerals, with the remaining 60 percent of the region underlain by crown minerals. However, alternative renewable energy sources, especially wind-generated, is growing fast and is competing with oil and gas energy production.

Forestry and related manufacturing industries generates 10,200 jobs and is the other noticeable sector in the South Saskatchewan economy. Total revenue from forestry sits at around 2 billion annually. The forestry sector is facing some challenges, such as the lack of a stable land base, uncertainty around land tenure, the regulatory regime, and government policies. This sector hopes that improving global competitiveness, diversification, and using innovative production help this sector to be successful and sustainable in the long term.

Recreation and tourism have great potential and capability to become a significant economic force in this region. SSR has various natural attractions such as national and provincial parks near water and mountains.

South Saskatchewan Region encompasses the Bow River Basin, Oldman River Basin, Saskatchewan River Basin, Milk River Basin, the Many Island, and the Pakowki Terminal Basins (ESRD, 2012). The Region faces pressure on water resources because new surface water allocations are not available in the Bow, Oldman and South Saskatchewan River basins (TOR SSPR, 2009). In addition, the region has historically experienced periods of drought, which can be amplified by climate change (Bjornlund and Klein, in press).

In 2010, total annual licensed surface and groundwater allocations in the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) were 288 million cubic meters. Of the total water use

in the SSRB, the Oldman River Sub-basin has the highest percentage (47%) among the sub-basins, followed by the Bow (41%), and South Saskatchewan (4%) (South East Alberta Watershed Alliance, 2010).

The SSRB contains some of the most diverse landscape in Alberta. It includes three ecological zones (Canadian Council of Ecological Areas, 2004): the Prairies which extend to approximately 80 percent of the area, the Boreal Plains, and the Montane Cordillera which together occupy roughly 20 percent of the area. However, the region has experienced significant landscape change due to settlement, ongoing population growth, and economic development. Sixty-one per cent of the native prairie in Alberta's Grassland Natural Region and over 75 per cent of the native grassland in the Foothills, Parkland, and Rocky Mountain natural regions has been lost (TOR SSRP, 2009).

In conclusion, population growth and high competition for resources put pressure on natural and environmental resources in the region. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is designed to provide integrated management strategies to deal with challenges facing the region. It intends to balance environmental, economic, and social goals and aims to create new conservation areas, establish environmental limits, protect water resources and provide clarity about land use and access.

2.3 Summary

This chapter reviewed the broad context of water policy and legislation in Alberta. The increasing pressure on natural resources spurred the government to introduce new environment management systems. Alberta's regional plans are designed to facilitate this process. Implementing a new management approach needs legal and regulatory supports. Thus, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) was approved to provide the legal support for the regional plans. According to ALSA, in case of conflicts regional plans prevail over all other water, land, air, and biodiversity legislations. This new management approach increases provincial control over decision making about land,

water, air and biodiversity resources.

Water policies and legislations (e.g. Water for Life Strategy, 2003) prepared the ground for transition of power from government to governance. These policies try to promote grass-root management approach; however the regional planning process follows a control and command approach. The integration of these policies and legislations with conflicting natures is a main concern for stakeholders, government staff, and the public, especially in water management and planning. This research evaluates the fairness of the process to address people's concern.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

This chapter first discusses the evolving water management paradigms, especially integrated water resource management, to provide a better understanding of the policy making process. This chapter also clarifies the concept of social justice with the explicit purpose of illustrating its complexity. This review relates the social justice concept to procedural justice and identifies the principal components which are critical criteria to use when evaluating social justice issues. The last part of the review focuses on procedural justice principles with regards to Alberta economic, social and environmental characteristics (see chapter two). This chapter provides a prelude to answer the second research question, and to achieve the first research objective.

3.1 Water

There are various tensions and challenges in water management and allocation because of the increasing demands from water users who all want a fair share of this increasingly scarce resource. In addition, climate change and water pollution are threats to the quality and the quantity of water. People will always demand access to a minimum quantity of water at an acceptable quality, and these demands are constantly increasing due to population and economic growth. In order to combat these challenges, it is helpful to review the successes and failures of water management and allocation systems that have been used in the past across various jurisdictions.

Allan (2005) provided a review of water management and allocation systems from 1850 to 2000 and identified patterns in water management and water allocation policies in five distinct time periods, which correspond to particular water management paradigms. These paradigms progress from pre-modern (1850 to the late 1800s), industrial-modernity (late 1800s to 1980), green (1980 to 1990), economic (1990 to 2000), to political and institutional, also known as Integrated Resource Water

Management (2000 and onward) (see Figure 3-1). The 1980s green movement represented a permanent shift in the mindset of water managers, with sustainability playing a key role (Allan, 2005). This new hydro-political philosophy introduced a new stage in water management and water allocation, which Allan called “reflective modernity”. The concept of reflective modernity encompasses the green, economic, and political and institutional movements.

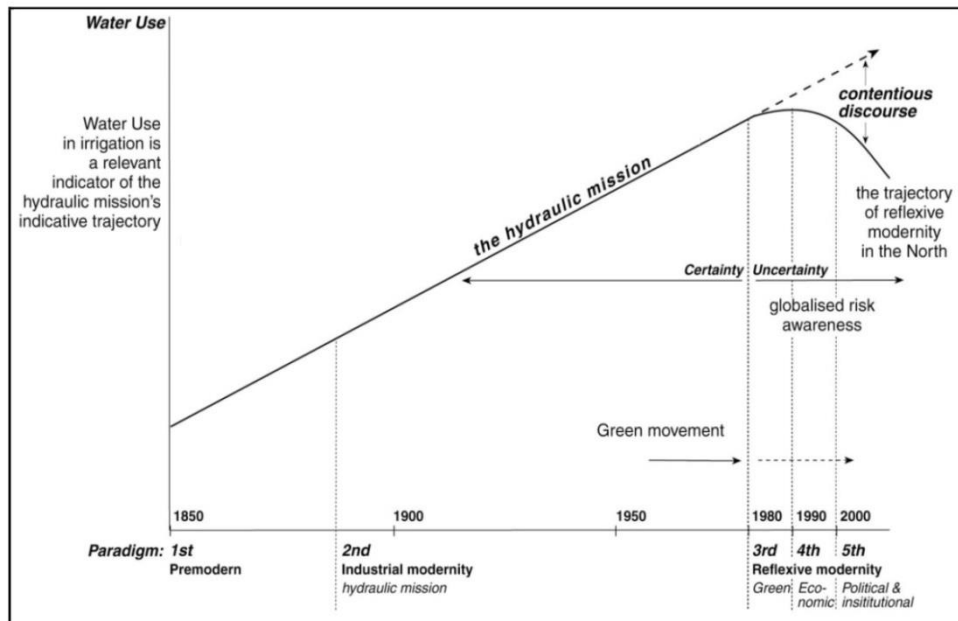


Figure 3.1 Evaluation of water management in five stage (Allan, 2005)

Reflective modernity emerged as a result of environmental activism movements in the 1960s and 1970s in reaction to the environmental damage that resulted from economic development in the industrial period. The green paradigm of the 1980s was based on environmentally driven water management. By the 1990s, it was replaced by the economic paradigm, which placed a monetary value on water and even proposed distribution via water markets. Around 2000, the main focus of water management changed again, with the emergence of the political and institutional paradigm. This latest paradigm proposes a balance between environmentally sustainable water management and economic goals.

Government policy-makers have the ability to enable comprehensive responses to changes in demography, technology, ideas, and social values. Allan (2005) was the first to note the relationship between social, economic, and environmental forces in the hydro-political process. He claimed that the interaction between them resulted in the birth of a new paradigm in water management and decision-making processes. In 1992, the Rio Convention adopted this method of thinking by accepting the Dublin Principles. The Dublin Principles are a good example of the application of social, economic and environmental considerations in water management (Rogers, et al., 1998). These principles addressed the increasing scarcity of water as a result of different conflicting uses and overuses of water. The Dublin Principles contain four propositions for promoting sustainable development in water management at local, national, and international levels:

1. Fresh water is a finite and vulnerable resource, which is essential to sustain life, development and the environment;
2. Water development and management should be based on a participatory approach, involving users, planners and policy-makers at all levels;
3. Women must play a central part in the provision, management, and safeguarding of water;
4. Water has an economic value and should be recognized as an economic good.

In conclusion, the principles of reflective modernity ushered in a new paradigm of water management which integrated social, environmental, and economic values as the foundation of all policy-making processes.

3.1.1 Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)

The integration of social, environmental, and economic values forms the foundation of Allan's fifth paradigm, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) (2005). IWRM is a process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources in order to maximize economic and social welfare in

an equitable manner without compromising sustainability of vital ecosystems (GWP-TAC4, 2000). IWRM principles can be summarized into three main categories: social equity, economic efficiency, and ecological sustainability. To foster social equity, IWRM emphasizes the need for actors and agents to integrate diverse rules and resources while considering the dynamic interplay of power in a strategic context (Saravanan, et al, 2009). In other words, adopting IWRM requires a shift from a control and command management approach to a grass-roots approach which emphasizes collaboration and participation (GWP-TAC4, 2000). By adopting an inclusive approach, a genuine consensus can be reached through mutual and cooperative agreement among participants (Habermas, 1984). This approach is in accordance with IWRM, as it considers the physical water system, the social function of water, and the economic demands for water (Bogardi, 1994).

Most of the decision-making tools designed via IWRM presuppose that participants in communicative action have equal and perfect knowledge, and can effectively negotiate their power differentials with honesty and integrity. However, in the real world, IWRM decision-making processes are faced with conflicts over preferences and values. There is also an unbalanced distribution of power, knowledge, and opportunities to communicate. In addition, the probability of conflict with respect to water allocation between and within each sector is high, due to the complexity of the decision-making process and the need to integrate the goals of multiple parties. Due to the likelihood of conflict, it is practically unavoidable that elements of injustice will be present in the decision making process (Kals and Maes, 2011). For facing these challenges, IWRM principles are aware of social, economic, and environmental concerns, and include these concerns in their decision making models to restore a fair balance among various goals. Moreover, IWRM methodologies and tools must be evaluated regularly in order to measure the effectiveness of specific policies in meeting the goals of the actors involved (Giupponi, et. al.; 2006).

3.2 Theories of Justice

The ancient philosopher Aristotle is recognized as being among the first to analyze what constitutes fairness with respect to the distribution of resources between individuals (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005). Different understandings of justice can be based on culture or religion, as cultural values can influence the notion of justice. However, most philosophies of justice follow one of three main schools of thought: egalitarianism, liberalism, and utilitarianism. The core principles of each theory focus on aspects of human rights and moral behaviors. Egalitarianism focuses on the equality of access to all resources, and supports the idea that all humans are equal in fundamental worth and moral status. Liberalism rests on the concepts of popular sovereignty, collective expression of rational choice, and free society. As a libertarian, Nozick (1974) believed that “only a minimal state limited to enforcing contracts and protecting people against force, theft, and fraud is justified. Libertarians believe that more extensive states would violate a person’s rights, and are thus unjustified” (Nozick p. 56). Finally, Utilitarianism proposes that the ultimate objective of morality is to maximize the utility and minimize the deficit or damage.

Rawls (1999) proposed a new perspective on justice by combining key concepts from liberalism and utilitarianism. Rawls believed that justice is a system of thought and it is the first virtue of social institutions. In order to resolve conflicting claims, it is essential to think about justice as a principle or set of principles that can underpin a legal system. Patrick (2012) claimed that justice is a concept that people commonly associate with the legal system, which serves to right wrongs. The meaning of justice in decision-making and resource allocation is addressed within the disciplines of sociology, social psychology, philosophy and political science (Patrick, 2012). Clayton (1994, 2000) observed that issues of justice arise when resources are not equally distributed between groups, or when resources are (or are perceived to be) in short supply. As a result, various theories of justice have been developed in economic, social, and environmental

perspectives. Table 3-1 provides a comparison of schools of thought within these three contexts. This research focuses on justice from a social perspective.

Table 3.1 Theories of justice defined from three perspectives

<p>Economic-based theories</p> <p><u>Libertarian theory</u>: Justice is managed through the free market. People have the right to buy and sell whenever they want so long as they do not use force or fraud (Nozick, 1974 and Hamowy, 2004).</p> <p><u>Efficiency theory</u>: This theory is similar to libertarian theory in that it advocates a free market where there is minimal State interference. The State protects private property, but does not interfere with the economy (Hsu, et. al., 2008).</p> <p><u>Cost-benefit analysis</u>: All courses of action are evaluated based on the costs and benefits (primarily expressed in monetary terms) associated with each. The superior options are those which balance the greatest benefits with the lowest costs.</p>
<p>Social-based theories</p> <p><u>Human Rights theory</u>: Disputes are settled by appealing to principals of fundamental human rights. These comprise negative rights which are rights to non-interference (e.g. people’s life, liberty, expression, religion or property) and positive rights which are rights to assistance (e.g. health, education and wellbeing) (Lundy, 2011).</p> <p><u>Utilitarian theory</u>: The ultimate objective when making decisions, taking action and designing policies is to maximize utility. This theory supports decisions that maximize happiness or preference satisfaction, and is laudable in its aim to improve the wellbeing of all people (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005).</p> <p><u>Rawls’ theory of justice</u>: The basic premise of the theory is that decisions can be made based on which alternatives offer the most help for the worst off or that the worst possible outcome is made as good as it can be (Rawls, 1999, and Clayton, 2000).</p>
<p>Environmental-based theories</p>

Bio-centric Individualism: This is not a justice theory per se, but is a perspective that contributes to the discussion. It is based on the belief that there is value in every living thing and that people have an obligation to take this value into consideration whenever their actions affect living things (Dobson, 1998).

Eco-centric Holism: This view proposes that human activity should be restricted to preserve the existence of endangered species and to preserve the continued health of ecosystems. It is also not a justice theory per se, but offers an additional viewpoint that considers the broader environment in decision making (Wenz 1988).

Precautionary Principle: This view places restrictions on development when it has the potential to negatively impact the environment. Where there is a risk of irreversible harm or damage, the absence of evidence cannot be used as a basis for proceeding with development (Wenz, 1988, and Dobson, 1998).

3.2.1 Social Justice

The concept of social justice is an inseparable part of justice theories. Social justice means to create a fair and equal society in which each individual matters, and their rights are recognized and protected when decisions are made. Social justice was first used in 1840 by a Sicilian priest, Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio, and given prominence in 1848 by Antonio Rosmini-Serbati in *La Costituzione Civile Secondo la Giustizia Sociale*. To understand the mindset of social justice, decision-makers must prioritize the welfare of society as a whole above the welfare of individuals. Prilleltensky and Nelson (1997, p4) define the value of social justice as the “fair and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, resources, and burdens in society.” Social justice is discussed in justice literature with respect to three main concepts: equity, distributive justice, and procedural justice (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005). The challenge of defining ‘equity’ in a social context has a long and extensive history. From a social policy perspective, equity has two main components: proportionality and egalitarianism (Rasinski 1987, cited by Syme and Nancarrow, 1999). Proportionality focuses on allocation of resources between people. A proportional allocation of

resources should be based on people's efforts towards the greater good. In contrast, egalitarianism proposes that everyone should get an equal share of resources without any special considerations.

Distributive justice evaluates whether an outcome is just in terms of the distribution of resources between stakeholders. Leventhal (1980) defined distributive justice as a "judgment of fair distribution, irrespective of whether the criterion of justice is based on need, equality, contribution, or a combination of these factors" (p.29). Harvey (1973) proposed eight criteria for just distribution: 1) inherent equality; 2) valuation of services in terms of supply and demand by who needed resources; 3) need; 4) inherited rights; 5) merit; 6) contributions to the common good; 7) productive contribution; and 8) efforts and sacrifices. Early justice research focused on perceived fairness of outcome (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005).

With the introduction of procedural justice, researchers change the way they think about fairness (Leventhal, 1980; Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005). The concept of procedural justice is described by Tyler as the belief that "fairness of procedures mitigates loss of support due to poor outcomes and maintains supportive behavior" (Tyler, 1984, p.210). Procedural justice examines each step of the decision-making process and evaluates whether it is just (Syme and Nancarrow, 1999, Kals and Maes, 2011). A review of procedural justice and its application to natural resource management is offered by Lawrence et al. (1997). According to Lawrence et al. (1997), procedural justice evaluates the fairness of individual components of the planning process and then looks at public opinion to evaluate the fairness of the proposed process as a whole (Thibaut and Walker, 1975, Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005).

3.2.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural fairness is widely recognized as the most appropriate measure to evaluate outcome satisfaction. As a result, outcome fairness should be the focus of social justice, rather than distributive fairness (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1984, 1986, 1994; Tyler

and Lind, 1992; Tyler et al., 1985; Tyler, Rasinski, and Spodick, 1985; Drew, et al, 2002). Generally there are three main theories that influence current research on procedural justice: theory of procedure; justice judgment theory; and group value theory (Thibaut and Walker (1975, 1978), Leventhal (1980), and Lind and Tyler (1988), respectively). Table 3-2 compares the three theories of procedural justice:

Table 3.2 Procedural Justice Theories

Theories	Main Themes
Theories of procedure (Thibaut and Walker)	“Legal process has to resolve conflicts in such a way as to bind up the social fabric and encourage the continuation of productive exchange between individuals” (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005, p.22).
Justice judgment theory (Leventhal)	Procedural justice should be relevant in allocation contexts. “Procedural rule is defined as an individual’s belief that allocative procedures which satisfy certain criteria are fair and appropriate” (Leventhal, 1980, p. 30).
Group value model (Lind and Tyler)	It is important to distinguish distributive justice from procedural justice. Procedural justice focuses on how decisions are made using instrumental and non-instrumental procedural justice criteria (Drew, et al., 2000, Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005).

Leventhal (1980) and Lind and Tyler (1992) each developed their own model to evaluate fairness of decision making processes. Leventhal’s model proposed that a fair allocation procedure has two parts: procedural rules and procedural components. Procedural rules (see Table 3-3) are used to evaluate procedural components. There are seven distinct procedural components: (a) selection of an agent, (b) setting of ground rules, (c) gathering of information, (d) outlining the structure for decision making, (e) the appeals process, (f) building in safeguards, and (g) flexible mechanisms to adapt to changing needs. Leventhal (1980) argued that because designing fair procedures is a complex and often unpredictable process, it may be necessary to add or change procedural components based on unique circumstances.

Table 3.3 Leventhal Principals for Evaluating Procedural Justice (Leventhal, 1980)

Leventhal's Procedural justice rule	Description
Consistency	For a procedure to be fair, it must be applied consistently across people and across time.
Bias-suppression	Assurance that the decision makers are unbiased.
Accuracy	Procedural fairness will be enhanced if the procedures ensure that decisions will be based on accurate information.
Correctability	Fairness of procedures will be judged against the extent to which it contains provisions for correcting bad decisions (appeals, etc.).
Representativeness	The extent to which the procedures "represents" the interests of all relevant subgroups that may be influenced by the decision.
Ethicality	The extent to which the procedure is seen to conform to a standard of moral and ethical behavior.

The second model for evaluating procedural justices is Lind and a Tyler's relational model. This model is described by Drew et al. (2002) as considering a number of procedural justice principles:

- a) Knowledge of procedures: to evaluate a policy or decision, people must be aware of how it was made.
- b) Procedures must be consistent with the perceptions of what constitutes a fair process.
- c) Voice: peoples' perception of their opportunity to present their views.
- d) Lane's criteria (1986, as cited in Lind and Tyler, 1988, p. 172):
 1. Recognition of personal rights and dignity;
 2. Ease of operation: procedures in the political arena should be efficient and quick;
 3. Shared values: procedures will be evaluated according to the extent that

decision makers are seen to hold common values and beliefs;

4. Fair decisions: procedures will be evaluated in terms of whether they result in fair decisions

In summary, Leventhal is focused solely on the mechanics of designing a fair procedure, while Lind and Tyler's theory also considers individual values and preferences when designing a fair procedure.

3.3 Procedural Justice Principles

The task of defining the principles of procedural justice in the way decision makers integrate and manage social, economic and environmental goals is challenging. Syme and Nancarrow (2001) believed that as long as there are disagreements in perception of what is fair and just, creating a fair decision-making procedure will be difficult. In addition, Lukasiewicz et al. (2013) argued that "procedural justice literature lacks a comprehensive model" (p3), which makes it necessary to strike a balance between designing technical rules and incorporating the needs of the individuals involved. The issue of balance becomes more prominent in the regional planning process. For example, since the Alberta regional planning process is relatively new, it does not yet contain sufficient information to properly identify procedural justice principles. The literature review shows that the social justice and procedural justice literatures both identify principles which are important when creating a fair decision making process. Moreover, both the social justice and procedural justice literature found that the location and circumstances of each case study was a vital consideration (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001). Consequently, procedural justice principles should be selected based on factors such as the value of public participation, public experience, public expectation of the planning process, and social and cultural values. Based on the literature review five major principles was identified which was used to create a comprehensive model that can be used to evaluate the perception of procedural justice. The five principles are:

1. Unbiased Framework
2. Informative Procedure
3. Legitimate Representative
4. Active Participation
5. Resolving Conflict

Each procedural justice principle contains various components to ensure a fair planning process. Moreover, these principles must be selected with respect to the economic, social and environmental characteristics of each case. These five principles are used in this research as the theoretical framework to understand and evaluate the fairness of the Alberta regional planning process. Figure 3-2 describes these five principles in terms of the theories they were derived from.

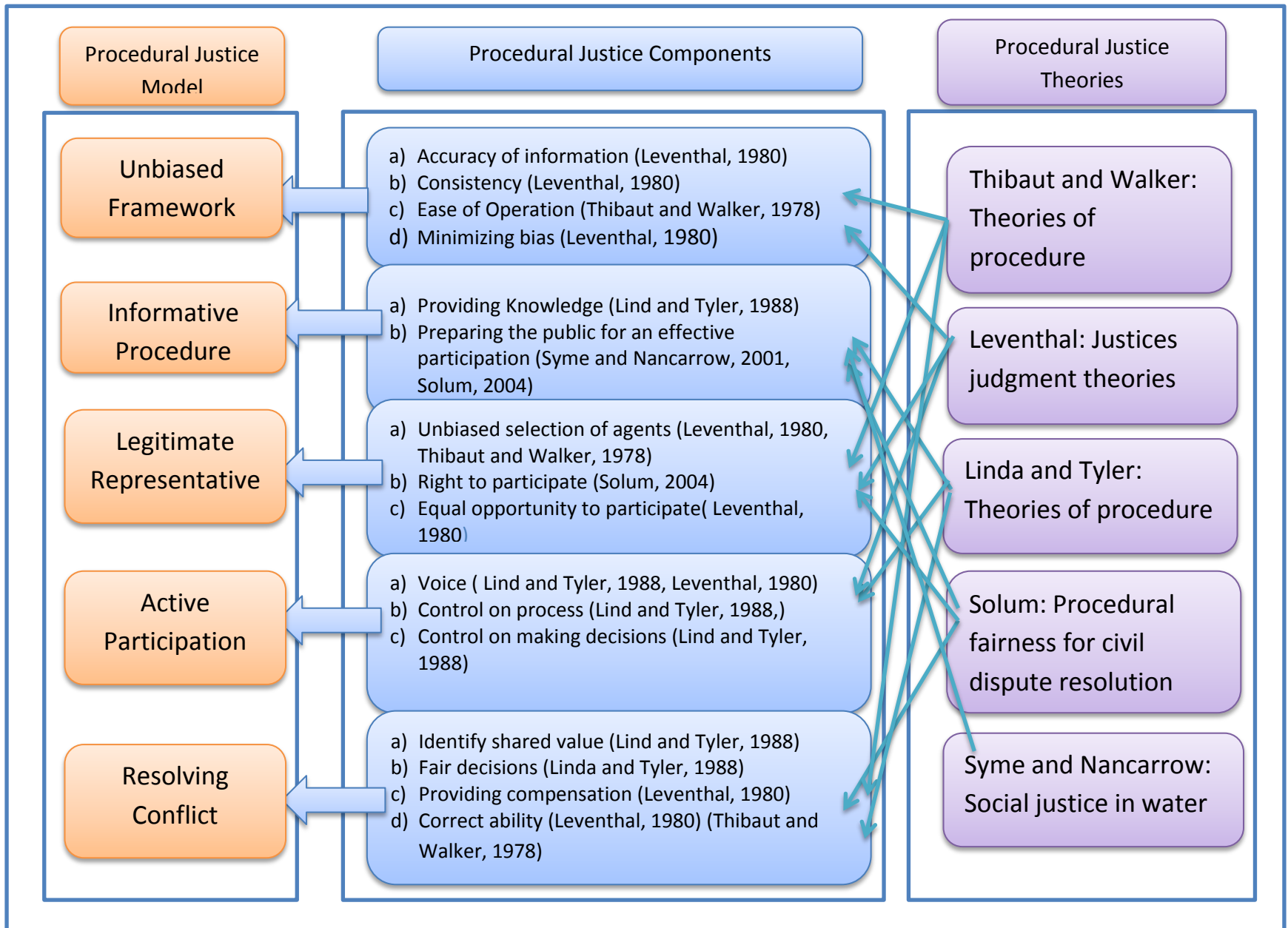


Figure 3.2 Procedural justice model and its connection to the procedural justice literature

The following subsections will describe each of the five principles in greater detail.

3.3.1 Unbiased Framework (Process)

The development of an unbiased and dynamic process is a critical element of a decision-making process. An unbiased framework must contain rules and components that ensure the fairness of process by considering:

- a) consistency (Leventhal, 1980);
- b) accuracy of information (Leventhal, 1980, Lind and Tyler, 1988);
- c) ease of operation; and
- d) bias minimization (Leventhal, 1980).

In an unbiased framework, each component contributes to the creation of a strong and fair planning process. Consistency across people, methods, time, and objectives is a hallmark of a strong planning process (Drew et al., 2002). The planning process might be seen as unfair if the process is evaluated and judged solely based on its objectives and outcomes. However, Ptaszek, et al., (2013) believed that if the planning process is consistent during the whole procedure, people's perception of it will change over time and they might accept the planning process as a fair procedure, even if they might consider the outcomes as being unfair.

Accuracy is the second component which leads to a strong planning process. Accurate information and sound science provide the basis for informed opinions which result in better decisions because the decisions are based on evidence rather than personal bias (Lawrence et al., 1997). If accuracy is compromised or if necessary scientific data is incomplete, some sectors or groups of people can be disenfranchised during and after the planning process (Dolan, 2007).

Ease of operation, or having an understandable procedure, is an important component in a strong and unbiased framework. A fair planning process must be easy to

understand and should not be ambiguous or confusing. If so, the public and stakeholders following the process will understand why these plan outcomes were selected to reach the plan's objectives (Dolan, 2007, Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Lawrence et al., 1997). These scholars also argued that when people understand the basis for the design of the process, they are more willing to accept the plan and its outcomes.

In order to create a fair and strong framework it is essential to minimize bias and the influence of strong individuals (Dolan, 2007, Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Lawrence et al., 1997). A fair and strong process provides well-defined channels for open discussion and considers various views and interests (Lawrence et al., 1997). In addition, a fair and strong process minimizes discrimination against various sectors and creates a procedure which ensures growth and development for all sectors in the region (Syme and Nancarrow, 2000).

These four principles are the pillars of an unbiased framework which ensure a fair planning process. When stakeholders and the public perceive that the planning process is consistent, unbiased, accurate and easy to understand, they are more willing to accept the planning process and its outcomes.

3.3.2 Informative Procedure

To be fair, a planning process must be designed such that the public is informed and empowered to participate (Lind and Tyler, 1988, Solum, 2004, Lukasiewicz et al., 2013). Lind and Tyler (1988) and Solum (2004) argued that an informative procedure has two main goals: (1) to provide background knowledge for the public (Lind and Tyler, 1988), and (2) to provide opportunities for effective participation (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, Solum, 2004).

An informative planning process should provide sufficient background knowledge such as general information about the region, the planning process, possible outcomes of the plan, and the legal consequences of the plan. This knowledge can be extended to what might be particular challenges in the region, how the plan will respond to these

challenges, and how decisions will affect the public in the future (Dolan, 2007).

Background knowledge helps the public to understand why the planning process is important, provide informed feedback, and consider solutions to the issues and challenges in the regions.

Once the public is informed, the informative process should provide the public opportunities to actively participate in the planning process. An informative process introduces participation opportunities, indicates the value of public ideas, and makes sure to address public concerns in the planning process (Syme and Nancarrow, 1999).

In summary, an informative process creates positive psychological perceptions of the planning process by first providing the public with background knowledge, and secondly, providing them with opportunities to actively participate in the planning process.

3.3.3 Legitimate Representative

Scholars have proposed that consulting with representatives of the public who possess special expertise is extremely useful to both planners and the government(s) involved in natural resource management or regional planning (Groves, et al., 2002, Beierle, 1998, and Kerselaers et al., 2013). Ideally, these representatives, who have special knowledge and represent specific sectors, and are interested in participating in the process, are consulted (Syme and Nancarrow, 1999). For example, a representative with special expertise would be a CEO of an industrial agricultural company, an executive from the natural resources industry, or an environmental specialist. These representatives need to act on the public's behalf; therefore legitimate representation of the relevant stakeholders is an integral component of the fair planning process.

To ensure legitimate representation, three conditions must be met: (1) an unbiased selection process for representatives must be used (Leventhal, 1980), (2) equal rights must be provided for each representative (Solum, 2004), and (3) equal opportunities must be given to each representative to share his or her ideas (Leventhal, 1980). In a fair

process, all qualified representatives should have an equal chance to be selected by the authorities, so that political perspectives, gender, interests, and ideologies do not influence the planning process.

Procedural justice scholars argue that representatives should all be treated equally and with respect. Moreover, each representative should have equal access to information and financial resources (Dolan, 2007, Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Lawrence et al., 1997). Consulting with legitimate representatives has a positive impact on both planners and consultants, as it brings new perspectives and levels of expertise to the process in a dynamic, cost-effective, and integrated approach. Consequently, selecting legitimate representatives and consulting with them create a positive psychological perception because the representatives feel their opinions matter and they can play an active role in forming the plan.

3.3.4 Active Participation

Many scholars believe that a fair process must include both legitimate representatives and active participation in order to ensure that the public's voice will be properly considered in the planning process (Lawrence et al., 1997, Syme and Nancarrow, 2004). People are more willing to actively cooperate, in terms of investing resources, time, and energy, when they perceive that the planning process is fair (Luo, 2005). Recent procedural fairness research showed that fair procedures will encourage active participation when the public is provided with opportunities to voice their interests, control the process, and control the outcomes. The key components of active participation are:

- a) Opportunity to voice interests (Lind and Tyler, 1988, Leventhal, 1980)
- b) Control over the planning process (Lind and Tyler, 1988, Leventhal, 1980)
- c) Control over the making of final decisions (Lind and Tyler, 1988)

The opportunity to voice interests is associated with providing the public with the

right to speak or be represented in the planning process (Howard, 2010). Conducting meetings and open houses enables participants to voice their need and their interests. The ability to voice interests in the planning process is a component of universal fairness, which should be provided for the minorities, who are affected the most, as well as the majority (Syme et al., 1999). Consequently, providing a voice in the planning process empowers the participants.

Participants can also have control over the planning process and the final decisions. Arnstein (1996) and Thibaut and Walker (1975, 1978) argued that active participants not only have the ability to present their ideas, but also have the ability to influence the planning and decision-making process. Arnstein proposed a ladder of participation to show the critical differences between empty ritual participation and real control in participation. The ladder of participation is divided into eight steps based on the degree of influence of participants in controlling the process of decision-making. These eight steps in order of increasing levels of power were identified as: manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. Planning processes which are on the first or second step of the ladder are considered to be non-participatory. Planning processes that include fair procedures will be located on the higher steps as participants and disputants have the ability to influence the presentation of information and argument, and can directly shape the final decisions in the planning process. In summary, a fair process empowers participants by giving them a voice and allowing them to control the planning process and final decisions.

3.3.5 Resolving Conflict

Ideally, planning and management processes are designed to balance the competing interests and conflicting values of various actors involved. As a result, successful planning processes include the capacity to deal effectively with differences in perspective, solve conflicts, make and implement collective decisions, and provide compensation for people who are harmed by the decisions (Syme et al., 1999). Some

scholars argue that a fair process has several aspects which facilitate the resolution of conflicts, such as:

- a) Identifying shared values (Lind and Tyler,1988)
- b) Identifying and correcting wrong decisions (Correctability) (Leventhal,1980)
- c) Providing compensation (Leventhal,1980)

First the ability to appreciate the diverse and shared values of the actors will help identify solutions that are acceptable to all parties, and consequently improve the perception of procedural justice (Tyler et al., 2007, Solum, 2004). Research shows that in order to reach fair decisions, participants believe that scientific methods will provide solutions, lead to unbiased decisions, optimize outcomes, and resolve conflicts (Tyler et al., 2007, Solum, 2004, Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013).

Second, the scientific approach has the ability to carefully review the process to find mistakes and errors in the process. Leventhal (1980) introduced the concept of correctability as an important component of procedural justice. A fair process is able to detect poor decisions and correct them, in order to ensure the decision making process is informed by and final decisions are based on accurate information (Solum, 2004, Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013).

Third, providing compensation as part of a fair process is complicated, and is accompanied by its own legal process. In the case of conflict, making decisions beneficial to all actors might be impossible, so groups which will be hurt by the decision should be compensated for a process to be fair (Tyler et al., 2007, Kerselaers et al., 2013). Compensation can be provided using a variety of mechanisms, such as monetary compensation and resource replacement compensation. In several papers, Syme and Nancarrow (2001, 2000, and 1999) indicated that compensating the loss of actors improves the perception of fairness in the planning and implementation processes.

3.4 Summary

This chapter reviews the literature on the topics of water management, justice and procedural justice principles. With respect to water management, the literature shows that a new paradigm of water management that integrates social, environmental and economic values has emerged. In the justice literature, social justice is discussed in terms of three main concepts, equity, distributive justice, and procedural justice.

Procedural justice principles seek to apply social justice to water management models. It is challenging to design a comprehensive model which balances technical rules with individual interests in the planning process. Procedural justice literature was examined to outline a comprehensive model to evaluate fairness in the Alberta regional planning process (see figure 3-2), which was based on five major principles of procedural justice. It is difficult to determine the success of the Alberta regional planning process because it is a relatively new process, and not much research has been conducted with respect to procedural justice. This research is a first step toward evaluating procedural justice in Alberta regional planning process.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The perceived fairness of a procedural process contributes to the overall feeling of fairness and legitimacy, regardless of resolution and outcome of the process. Indeed, procedural justice is sometimes more important than the outcome (Rohl and Machura, 1997). As a result, this research is designed to evaluate the procedural justice in Alberta regional planning process in two regions: Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan. These two regions are chosen since they represent rapid growth in both industrial activities and urban population. This research aims to evaluate the perception of procedural justice and identify the critical components of procedural justice in the case of Alberta regional planning process. The methodological framework is designed to first identify the critical components of procedural justice and then assess the stakeholders' perception of fairness in the Alberta regional planning process based the identified critical components.

4.1 Research Approach

A methodological framework provides the foundation for the design of the particular method. This framework clarifies the research process and method while justifying these choices (Liamputtong, 2009). Procedural justice has to be seen in a natural setting and in the context of moral and philosophical aspect of human psychology (Rohl and Machura, 1997). Furthermore, procedural justice is an interpretive subject: human judgment, self-interest, and definitions of fairness have specific effects on justice perception (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001). Qualitative research is the approach often used to understand these characteristics of human psychology. Various scholars such as Marshall and Rossman (2010), and Ezzy (2006) used qualitative research methods to assess procedural justice in regional planning processes. The methodological framework in this research is also designed based on qualitative research to understand how various components of

fairness in Alberta regional planning process are perceived by stakeholders.

There are a number of theories which can guide the design of qualitative research. Grounded theory offers rich possibilities for the advancement of social justice research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Grounded theory can be constructed through an observation of the social world (Liamputtong, 2009). It utilizes the comparison of literature and actual social life to generate a new theory in social justice (Kennedy and Lingard 2006). The grounded theory approach is not linear but concurrent, iterative and integrative, with data collection, analysis and conceptual theorizing occurring in parallel and from the outset of the research process (Duchscher and Morgan 2004). Research starts with a topic of interest, collects data and allows relevant ideas to develop. This requires open mindedness to ensure that data are not ignored because they do not fit in with a preconceived notion.

Grounded theory provides tools to analyse planning processes and procedural justice. These tools, such as in-depth interviews, narratives inquiry, focus group inquiry, observation and document reviews, are used to evaluate social and procedural justice in various contexts. For instance, Kerselaers et al. (2013) used these tools to evaluate the procedural and distributive justice in rural and regional planning. Syme et al. (1999) used them to define the components of fairness in water decision making processes. This research uses the tools provided by grounded theory to evaluate procedural justice in Alberta regional plans.

4.1.1 Philosophical Stance

The selection of method can be viewed as arising from the basic philosophical beliefs about the research. Annells (1996) suggests that the philosophical basis of grounded theory should be considered and evaluated in the context of the researchers' ability or interests. Grounded theory, with its aim to develop explanatory theory concerning common social patterns, has emerged from the tradition of symbolic interaction of social psychology and sociology (Chenitz and Swanson, 1986). Symbolic

interactionism is both a theory about human behavior and an approach to inquiring about human conduct and group behavior. Its history spans several disciplines and its epistemological roots can be traced to philosophy, education, psychology and sociology (Tourigny, 1994). The notion of symbols is intrinsic and, according to symbolic interactionism, social life is expressed through symbols (Blumer, 1969). Language is one form of these symbols. In-depth interview is one of the symbolic interactionism tools that has been used to assess and evaluate various aspects of social life such as perception of social justice (Chenitz and Swanson, 1986).

This research studies procedural justice to identify the component of procedural justice according to individuals and their perception about fairness in Alberta's regional planning process. Thus, this research uses in-depth interview as a tool to conduct the evaluations and assessments of their perception of fairness.

In conclusion, this research evaluates procedural justice in Alberta regional planning process. Three stages of decision making process were studied to assess the planning process. In addition, the planning process and public interaction were observed to identify fairness principles. This research used qualitative research methods, a grounded theory approach in particular, to explore and evaluate procedural justice in the planning process.

4.2 Data Collection

The idea behind data collection in grounded theory is to purposefully select the best sources that are most helpful in studying the research objectives and research context. The aim is to create an in-depth database to evaluate procedural justice in Alberta regional planning for two different regions (SSR and LAR). This study collected data from various sources for each region separately. The data needed were collected through reviewing government documents, in-depth interviews, observations of public meetings and review of public web documents.

4.2.1 Government Documents

Document analysis is a systematic procedure which requires data to be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, enhance understanding, and build and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008 as cited in Bowne, 2009).

The main purpose of reviewing government documents is to determine the linkage among various legislations and Alberta regional planning process. As Glasson and Marshall (2007) indicate, regional planning provides comprehensive insight on spatial changes in society, economy, and environment. This insight focuses on the control and management of natural resource, land use, and physical changes. Thus, a critical review of government documents will gather information about how these legislations and policies were interpreted and applied and integrated into the planning processes. The secondary purpose of reviewing government documents is to create a comprehensive understanding of the three phases in the planning and execution of Alberta's regional plans. This will identify the components of fair process underpinning the planning process. The first type of documents concentrates on government documents which are generated during different phases of the planning process: The Terms of Reference, The Regional Advisory Councils Advice, The Regional Plans Draft, The Final Plan, as well as meeting minutes and feedbacks during the process of planning. In addition, this review will be extended to the documents which are mentioned during the in-depth interviews with planners, stakeholders and professional advisors.

The second type of documents focuses on the policies and laws mentioned in the Land-Use Framework and the Water for Life Strategy as well as the laws and regulations controlling the processes. The Water Act, Alberta Land Bills and related legislations and amendments which provide administrative tools to enable the government to direct planning requirements and processes were reviewed. Reviewing these documents was prioritized based on the importance of their roles in the planning process measured by how frequently they were mentioned during the planning process,

in-depth interviews, and meeting minutes. The method can be seen as a snowball sampling approach since the laws and amendments are included based on previous data which have been examined. In total, 93 government documents were identified and studied as part of this research. The name, number, and type of documents are listed in Appendix C.

Compared to other qualitative research methods, document analysis has both advantages and limitations. The advantages of document analysis are efficiency, availability, cost effectiveness, lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity, stability, coverage and exactness. The limitations are insufficient detail and low irretrievability (Bowen, 2009). The current study will use other data collection methods, such as in-depth interview, to cover these limitations.

4.2.2 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews identify individual's experiences, beliefs, behaviors, and opinions, discover and explore the range and variation among individuals and find patterns to answers research questions (Liamputtong, 2009, Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey, 2010). In-depth interviews were conducted with knowledgeable participants about their personal perception and experience about the subject of studies, and their interpretation of laws and regulation related to the subjects. In this research, in-depth interviews were conducted by planners and decision makers about their perception on the fairness of the Alberta regional planning processes. These interviews were focused on procedural justice critical components and personal perception about a fair process. As a result, the in-depth interviews explored the critical components of procedural justice that were used or that should be used to ensure the fairness of the planning process.

This research used mixed sampling methods combining two methods used in qualitative research: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The mix sampling method identified the most eligible and knowledgeable individuals in the planning process. Purposive sampling uses strategic choices to identify people who are the most

knowledgeable in relation to the subject of the study. The result of purposive sampling is a small pool of knowledgeable people. To increase the size of the sample, this research used snowball sampling. Snowball sampling uses recommendations to find people with specific knowledge and expertise. The groups of informants who were identified by snowball sampling were nominated by other participants, as key informants with a profound insight into the subject of the study.

In-depth interviews rely heavily on individuals who are able to provide rich and sufficient accounts of their experience (Liamputtong, 2009). For the purpose of this research, key informants were selected from various sectors or groups involved in the planning processes. The research focus is on individuals with substantial roles and responsibilities in the planning processes as well as those whose role has been mentioned more frequently in policy documents, acts, and regulations. For instance, participants who are representatives of environmental, social, or economic sectors were selected equally to provide fair opportunities to reflect their ideas or views. The key informant pool for this research includes planners, decision makers, staff from municipal governments and provincial government departments, and members of relevant boards, agencies and other organizations.

The exact number of participants is determined by two steps: i) research design and ii) field execution. Research design relied on the literature to determine how many interviews are needed to reach data saturation. The literature suggested that between 8 and 15 one-on-one in-depth interviews are needed (Patrick, 2012, Liamputtong, 2009). Moreover, the literature suggested that final sample size should depend on four factors: 1) the depth, and nature of the research; 2) the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the participants; 3) the level of analysis and interpretation required to meet research objectives; and 4) practical parameters such as budget or financial resources, time, and availability of participants (Jette, Grover and Keck 2003).

Field execution is the second step that determines when data saturation has been

reached through the preliminary analysis. Data saturation is reached when an additional interview no longer reveals ‘fresh insights’ to the preliminary analysis. This is especially important in grounded theory as it relies on data saturation (Creswell, 2004). Besides sample size, length of interview has direct impact on data saturation. In market research, the length of interviews varies between 10 and 30 minutes. In social sciences, in-depth interviews are usually between 30 to 90 minutes and are recorded either in writing, audio, or visual form. The research purpose for this study is strongly focused on social justice issues which require in-depth interviews between 30 to 90 minutes.

Kvale (1996) suggested that the process of using in-depth interview should have seven stages: i) thematizing; ii) designing; iii) interviewing; iv) transcribing; v) analyzing; vi) verifying; and vii) reporting. The second stage, designing, includes the development of an interview guide that includes the key topics and questions to be explored during the interview. The interview guide is developed from the literature review (Chapter 3). The interview guide (see Appendix B) is semi-structured to support the main purpose of the research. The semi-structures interviews leave space for new subjects that might emerge during the interview process. For example, subjects that are specifically related to Alberta and are not discussed in the literature.

In the beginning of the interview, the researcher should start with an introduction and should explain the purpose of the research. Before the interview, the researcher should check equipment, ensure that the letter of consent is signed in accordance with the ethics protocol, and write field note related to the interview environment. During the interview, the interviewer should take notes about the respondent’s behavior and other non-verbal responses. At the end of the interview, the researcher should take time to thank the participant, make sure that the participant is left with a good feeling, and reconfirm how participant contribution will help the research.

Transcribing involves creating a hard copy of each interview by writing out each question and response. The field notes and extra data about environment, gender, age,

and other related data should be included in the transcription, and properly labelled in separate tables. The transcription stage should be followed by the pre-analyses stage which involves rereading the transcript and identify the important themes emerging from the interview.

Sixteen semi-structured and open ended interviews were completed with key informants. These key informants were involved with or knowledgeable of the Alberta regional planning process in the Lower Athabasca (LAR) and South Saskatchewan regions (SSR). There are six interviewees from LAR and ten from SSR. From these sixteen interviews, eight was done in person, five by phone, and one by Skype. One interviewee declined to be audio recorded and one interview had technical issues with the recording (see Table 4-1).

The Regional Advisory Council Member’s names were available on-line on Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development official website and the Alberta Water Council membership list was published on its website. These websites were used to provide initial points of contact. Approximately half of the interviews in SSRP were confirmed in advance, but finding participants who were willing to speak about regional planning processes in LARP was challenging. From eight selected participants, two of them confirmed their interview in advance. The participants who accepted to be interviewed recommended a number of participants. In addition, it was not possible to arrange interviews with key informants who were involved with or knowledgeable about Alberta’s regional plans from a First Nation perspective.

Table 4.1 Involvement of key informants

Location	Responsibilities	#participants expected to be interviewed	# participants were interviewed	Sectors /Interests
Lower Athabasca	Regional Advisory council (RAC)	3	2	Industry (Oil-sand), and environment

	Local /provincial government	2	2	Municipalities Law and Environment
	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council	2	1	Watershed scientists
	First Nations	1	0	
	Regional Planning Team	1	1	-
South Saskatchewan region(SSRP)	Regional Advisory council(RAC)	3	3	Environment, Water and Irrigation
	Local /provincial government	2	3	Municipalities and Environment
	Watershed Planning and Advisory Council	2	2	Watershed scientists and Environment
	Irrigation Districts	1	1	Water licences
	First Nations	1	0	-
	Regional Planning Team	1	1	City development

Most interviews for the South Saskatchewan Region were conducted in places such as Calgary, Lethbridge, Airdrie, Crowsnest Pass, Strathmore, and Canmore. Table 4-1 characterizes the involvement of the key informants. Most interviews were 45 minutes to an hour in length, although a small number of interviews were well over an hour. During in-depth interviews various types of questions were asked according to the interview guild (see Appendix B). In addition to the main questions, probing questions were asked to provide deeper insight into the informant's expertise and knowledge.

4.2.3 Public Documents

The third part of the data collection process focused on the perception of the general public about Alberta's regional planning process and fairness of the process. The public documents included 100 websites, weblogs, and web based materials related to LARP and SSRP. The author, number, and link of documents are listed in Appendix D. Web based materials were used as the main source for public opinion because of the

characteristic of Alberta's regional planning process. The scale of this research, time, and monetary limitations were other main reasons for this choice.

Public documents were collected through the Bing search engine, and the search process was limited by time and main keywords. For the Lower Athabasca region the research was conducted from the time the planning process started by the nomination of the RAC (December 2008) to the time the plan was approved by the Cabinet (August 2012). The main search terms used were: "Lower Athabasca regional planning process," and "Alberta Regional planning process".

Public documents from the South Saskatchewan Regional Planning process, which was still ongoing at the time of this research, was conducted from May 2009 when the Cabinet appointed the RAC until March 2014 when the final phase of public consultation was wrapped up. Search terms used were "South Saskatchewan regional planning process", and "Alberta Regional planning process". A python program was written to search through the web and identify the desired documents. From the search results, fifty documents related to the LARP and fifty documents related to SSRP were selected. The selected documents were reviewed, duplicate documents were deleted, and new documents were identified. Analysis of public documents provides a good understanding of the value and perception of the general public which are not directed by particular sector interests about the Alberta regional plan.

4.2.4 Personal Observations

The final stage of data collection is personal observations, which contains personal notes and digital photographs. This data was collected through observations while participating in various meetings related to Alberta regional plan as well as open houses about Water Conversation. For example, I participated in the final phase of public participation providing input into the Draft Plan (SSRP) in different locations (Lethbridge on November 14th, 2013 and Fort Macleod on November 20th, 2013). These meetings/open houses have two main parts. The first part is designed for

stakeholders and takes place in the morning. This is followed by the public forum that takes place in the afternoon.

I also participated in ‘Alberta’s Regional Land Use Plan Integrating Water and Land Use’ workshop that took place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on November 27th, 2013. This workshop was hosted to provide local decision makers with an opportunity for frank discussion with local experts and decision makers about the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP). This workshop was hosted in partnership with the Watershed Toolkit Project, which provides interactive knowledge transfer between water leaders, academia and decision makers, and was run by Sustainability Resources Ltd. These experiences were instrumental in providing additional insight into the perception of procedural justice in Alberta’s regional planning processes specifically in the South Saskatchewan Region.

4.3 Data management

Pandit (1996) believed that data management is an important consideration after the data is collected. Huberman and Miles (1998, p.180) defined (qualitative) data management as “the operations needed for a systematic, coherent process of data collection, storage and retrieval” necessary to enable the researcher to keep track of the volume of data, to flexibly access and use the data and to document the analytical process. The data management stage includes identifying codes, categorizing collected codes, cleaning data, documenting variables, and recording results of analysis. Data management reduces errors as data can easily be miscoded, mislabeled, mislinked, and mislaid. In this research, NVivo was used to organize large amount of data collected from various sources. Five useful principles for storage and retrieval of qualitative data were suggested by Levine (1985):

1. Formatting: how fieldwork notes are categorized and structured. For example, notes are labelled with name of the researcher, the site of the

interview, the persons involved, and the format of the data.

2. Cross-referral: information in one file shows where information in another can be found.
3. Indexing: a generic term for what usually is called ‘coding’. It includes (a) defining clear categories, (b) organizing these into a more or less explicit structure, and (c) pairing the codes with appropriate places in the database.
4. Abstracting: a condensed summary of longer materials which is linked clearly in the file structure to longer material.
5. Pagination: using unique number/letters as locater of specific material in field note.

NVivo provides a range of tools to assist in data management, some of which are appropriately used from the beginning while others are more relevant as the project develops. During the data analysis process for this research the classification, collection, queries, and modelling tools were used. Moreover, the report section was used to review and arrange the data, codes, and themes.

4.4 Data Analysis

This section focuses on selection of the most effective method for data analyses. Different methods were used to analyse the collected data (see Figure 4-2). These methods are selected based on data characteristics. Two analytic options were used in this study to evaluate procedural justice: content analysis and thematic analysis. For each option the following processes were carried out: (1) identify themes and sub-themes, (2) build and apply codebooks, (3) describe outcomes, (4) make comparisons, and (5) build, display, test and validate models.

4.4.1 Content analysis

The analysis of government documents and public web documents were carried out using “Content Analysis” as suggested by Weber (1990), Liamputtong (2009), and

Sanders and Thornhill (2004). Content analysis is a systematic and replicable technique for compressing large volumes of text into fewer content categories such as child nodes, parental nodes, and themes which describe the focus of the documents polices, and legislation with respect to the fair planning processes (Krippendorf, 1980, Weber 1990, Stemler, 2001).

Some qualitative researchers have used content analysis extensively. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) identified three different approaches to content analysis. Conventional content analysis, which derives coding categories directly from text, is used in this study. As a technique content analysis involves specialized procedures, coding, identifying themes, and analysing them are the main stages of content analysis.

In this research content analysis was conducted in four steps. The first step was to conduct word frequency queries. The results of these queries created the first set of codes. These codes were unorganized and scattered. For the purpose of further analysis, they needed to be arranged in a systematic order.

In the second step, the identified codes were categorized, classified, grouped and linked to consolidate meaning and explanation. The codes derived from this step were called child nodes. Child nodes contained detailed meaning and explanation related to justice or specific part of the planning process. To provide clear understanding of procedural justice, child nodes needed to be refined and reorganized to create comprehensive ideas and concepts.

The third step was to reorganize, regroup, reclassify, and relabel child nodes to identify inclusive and broad connections between meaning and explanations. Parental codes were created in this step. Parental nodes were more general and comprehensive compared to the child nodes. Whenever a collection of child nodes emerge that cannot be categorized into an existing parental node, either a new parental node is created, or the child node is put aside as a special node. These special nodes will be stand alone because they are rarely mentioned. However, the special nodes are important since they

might provide a different insight into the planning process. Parental nodes were further refined to produce the final statements and comprehensive arguments.

In the fourth step themes were generated when parental nodes with similar contents were put together. Themes are the theoretical pattern and the result of our analysis (see Figure 4-1).

4.4.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) was the method used to analyze the in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis works directly with the main content of in-depth interviews (Pope and Mays, 2007). Themes are identified by reading and re-reading the transcripts and using a comparative coding process (Pope and Mays, 2007). The coding scheme is based on categories which are designed to capture the dominant themes in the interviews (Hardy and, Bryman, 2009). TA is more concerned with reliability than with word-based analysis. To maintain the rigor in this method, Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012) suggest monitoring and improving inter-coder agreement. In this research monitoring and inter-coder agreement is provided by comparing codes with fellow students. As Bernard and Ryan (1998) mentioned, the analytical process should contain four main steps:

1. read verbatim transcripts,
2. identify possible themes,
3. compare and contrast themes, identify structures among them, and
4. build theoretical models, monitoring and checking codes with data.

In this research, interviews were transcribed and imported into NVivo. First step in the thematic analysis after reading each interview was coding. The coding steps were similar to the four step process used for the content analysis. Although, in the thematic analysis, open coding style for the first step is used. The open coding style was applied in this research using Code Toolkit in NVivo. In open coding style, words, sentences,

paragraph, and interviewees emotions (e.g., long pause, frustration, uncertainties) can be coded.

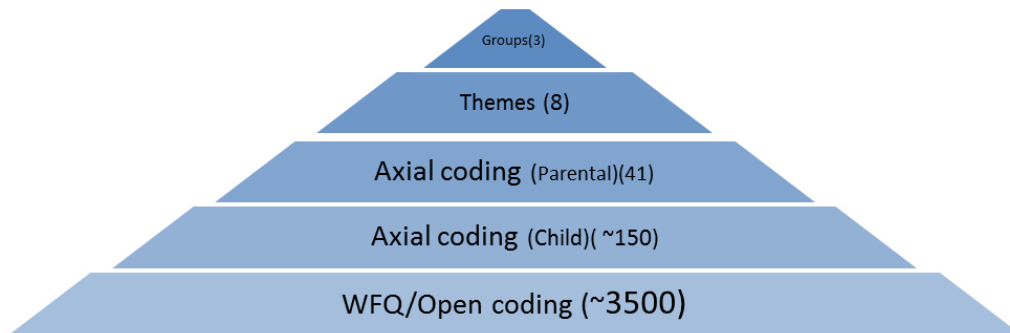


Figure 4.1 Hierarchal coding process in NVivo

In the final phase of analysis, when all themes were identified through content and thematic analysis, these themes were mixed and compared to provide a comprehensive and broad understanding about procedural justice in Alberta regional planning process. Content and thematic analysis helped this research move beyond counting explicit words or phrases, and focus on identifying and describing public ideas and perceptions about fairness of Alberta regional planning process.

4.4.3 Limitation

The mixed method analysis which uses content and thematic analysis is the simplest way of showing the proportionality between different procedural justice principles. However, there are several limitations to this method. The process of coding texts is ultimately subjective and difficult, as many principles are hidden and implicit and must be inferred from the text, rather than being explicitly stated. The timing of the analysis also affects the results. The chosen documents (100 public documents and 93 government documents) covered the period of Alberta's regional planning processes from 2009 until 2014, and were written during a period with specific, scientific, political, and economic characteristics. Regional Planning and resource management are a continuously changing political process, so subsequent documents may emphasis

different principles. Moreover, the public perception of the procedural justice might change after the process finishes and plans are implemented. The mixed method analysis presented here should not be considered as an ultimate assessment of procedural justice intentions, but a snapshot in time.

Research Design

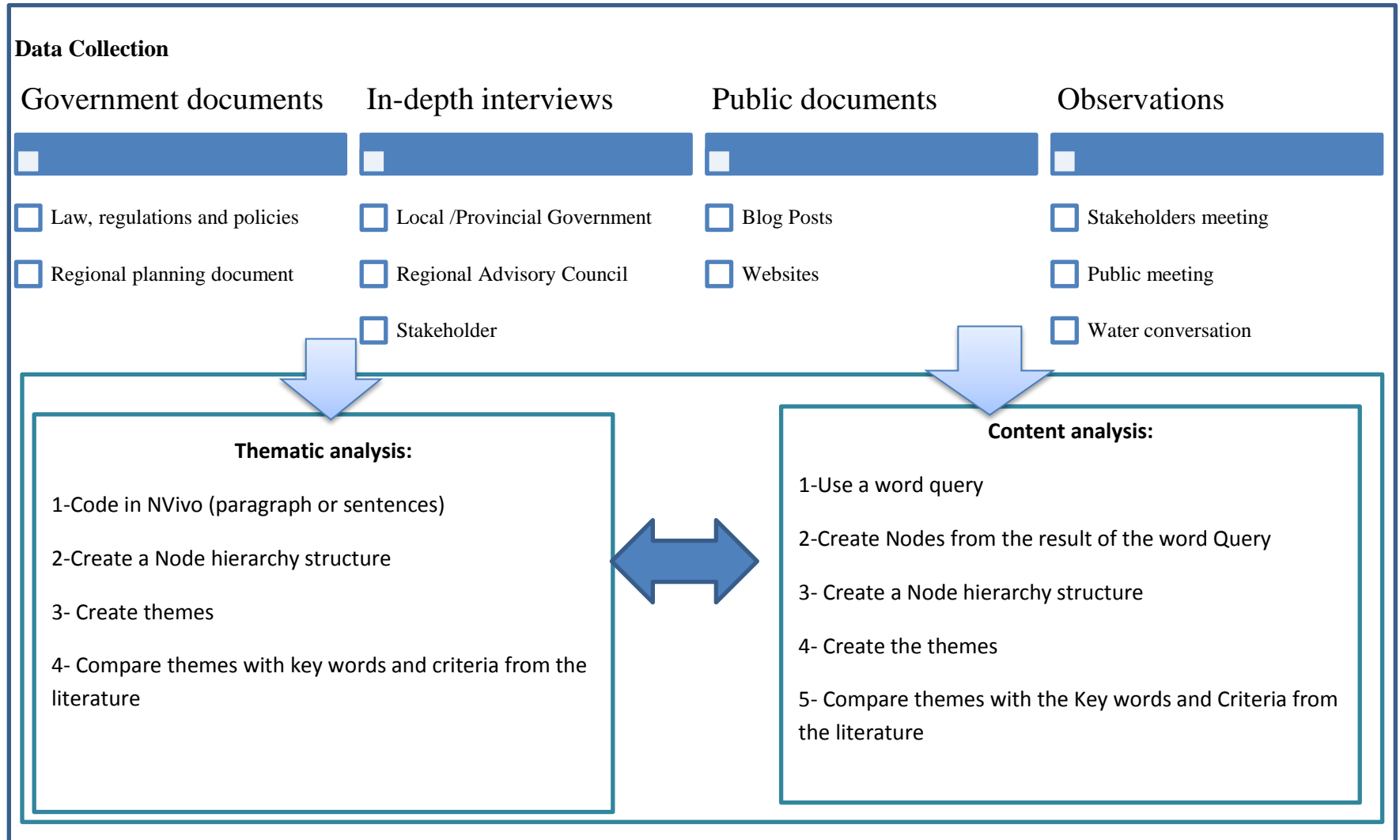


Figure 4.2 Research design and data analysis

4.5 Data verification and Saturation

Data verification and saturation are crucial components of all qualitative research, particularly when it comes to case studies (Creswell 1998). Data verification focuses on ensuring the quality of the information collected. Data Saturation focuses on the quantity of the information and ensures that all relevant themes have been identified. Data verification discusses the rigor, ethic, and confidentiality of the data collection. Data saturation identifies the point at which no new information or theme is observed in the data. In this research, data saturation was reached in two stages. In the case of SSRP data saturation was reached in the fifth interview (5/10) (see Figure 4-3), while in the LARP data saturated was reached by the fourth interview (4/6) (see Figure 4-4).

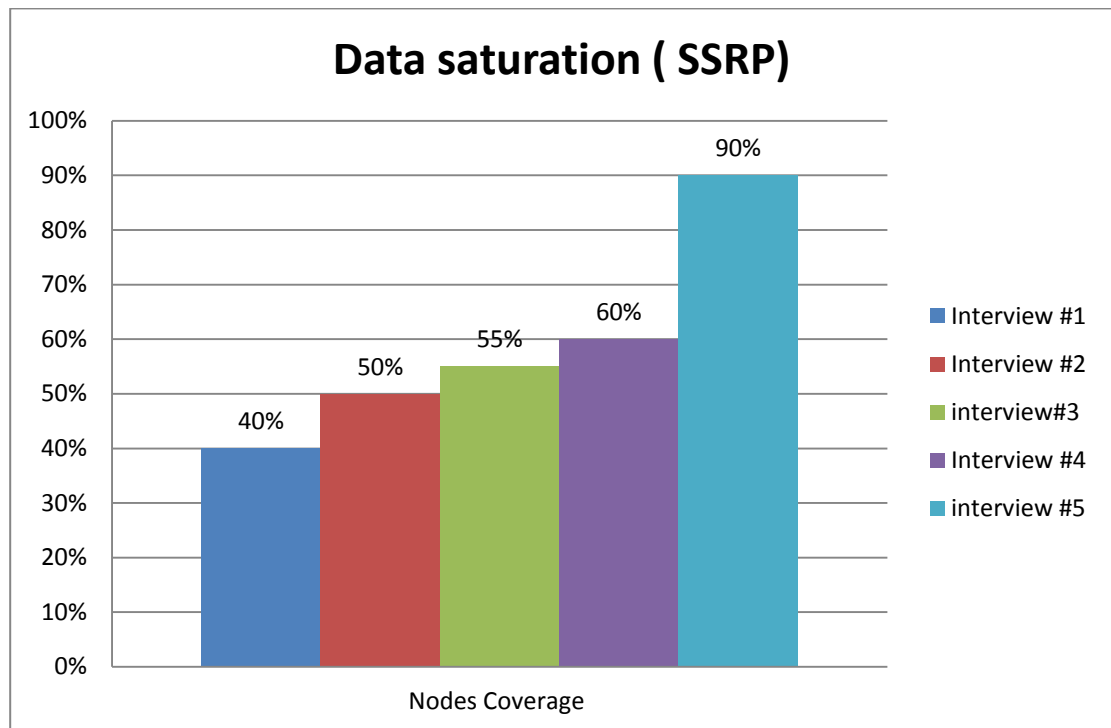


Figure 4.3 Reaching data saturation for SSRP

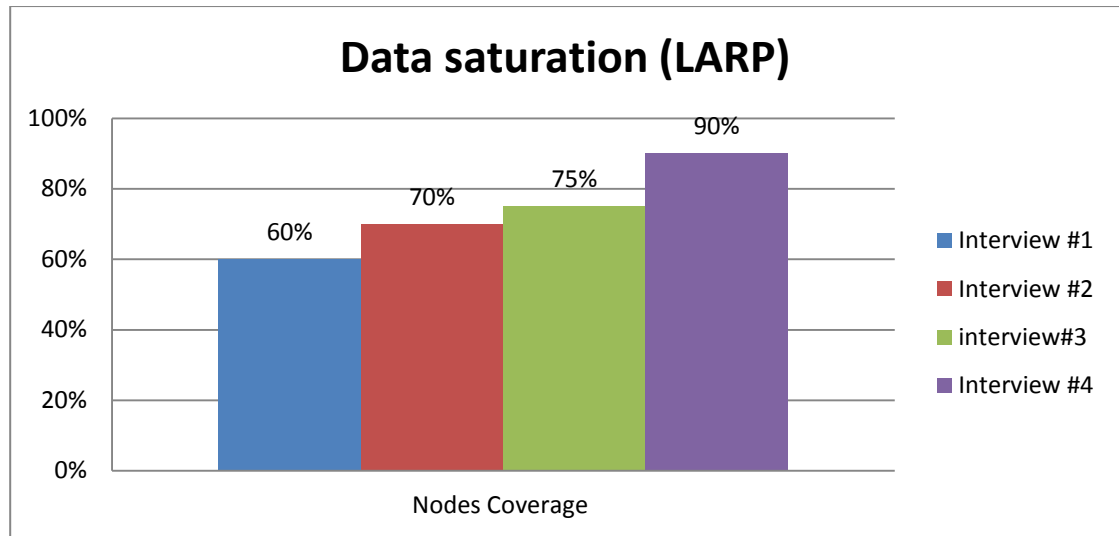


Figure 4.4 Reaching data saturation for LARP

4.5.1 Rigor

Rigor is the means by which integrity and competence is ensured, a way of demonstrating the legitimacy of the research process. Without rigor, there is a danger that research may become fictional journalism, worthless in contributing to knowledge (Tobin and Begley as cited in Liamputtong, 2009). The concept of validity and reliability are seen as incompatible with the ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundation of qualitative research. Qualitative research is descriptive and unique to specific historical, social, and cultural context. Hence it cannot be rigidly replicated in order to justify reliability.

Lincoln and Cuba (1989) introduced four innovative criteria for rigor in qualitative research: credibility, transformability, dependability, and conformability (Carpenter and Suto, 2008, Creswell, 2007, Padgett, 2008, Liamputtong, 2009). This research checked for the validity and reliability using two different methods: triangulation and peer review. Additional steps were also taken to ensure coding reliability. Codes and categories were continually checked and reviewed for accuracy throughout the data analysis. Furthermore, raw coding data was provided to two research supervisors to be reviewed for accuracy and consistency. These steps, as well as data source triangulation,

serve to increase the validity of this study's findings.

4.5.2 Ethic consideration

Research is a moral and ethical endeavor and should ensure that the interests of those participating in a study are not harmed as a result of the research. A quick review of the literature related to qualitative research shows that there are four or five key ethical principles that are applied across the board. These include:

- informed and voluntary consent;
- confidentiality of information shared;
- anonymity of research participants; and
- beneficence or no harm to participants

This research adhered to the above principles by following the ethical standard set by University of Lethbridge.

4.5.3 Informed and voluntary consent

Informed and voluntary consent is an important part of the research. It is a process and needs to be negotiated throughout the course of the in-depth interview. Consent will be sought through formal procedures such as consent forms. Moreover, formal consent will be taken at the initial stage of the research (see Appendix A: invitation email and Consent letter). Ethic approval was obtained from University of Lethbridge.

4.5.4 Confidentiality

In the context of this research, confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed. The identity of research participants will be protected through various processes designed to protect their anonymity. The concept of confidentiality is closely connected with anonymity; in social research anonymity is the vehicle by which confidentiality is operationalized. However, anonymity of data does not cover all the

issues related to confidentiality concerns. Confidentiality of data also includes not deliberately or accidentally disclosing what has been said in the process of data collection with others in ways that might identify an individual. This research tried to identify these possibilities and reduce the chance of breaking confidentiality. To ensure the confidentiality, the names of key informants were replaced by numbers. These numbers were recorded in the transcripts and other data-bases which were generated by the transcripts of the in-depth interviews.

4.6 Summary

With an interest in understanding procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process, this study aims at answering two research questions: how the public and stakeholders in Alberta perceive the fairness of the regional planning process and what critical components are identified in Alberta's regional planning process. There is some pre-existing knowledge about the components of fair procedure; however, the concept of procedural justice is case sensitive. As a result, qualitative method and grounded theory were selected to be used in this study. Grounded theory involves defining the components and developing different themes within the data. This research used content analysis and thematic analysis to identify three general categories which includes eight different themes (see Figure 4-5). The following chapters interpret the themes, identify the results and provide an in-depth understanding on procedural justice in Alberta's regional plans.

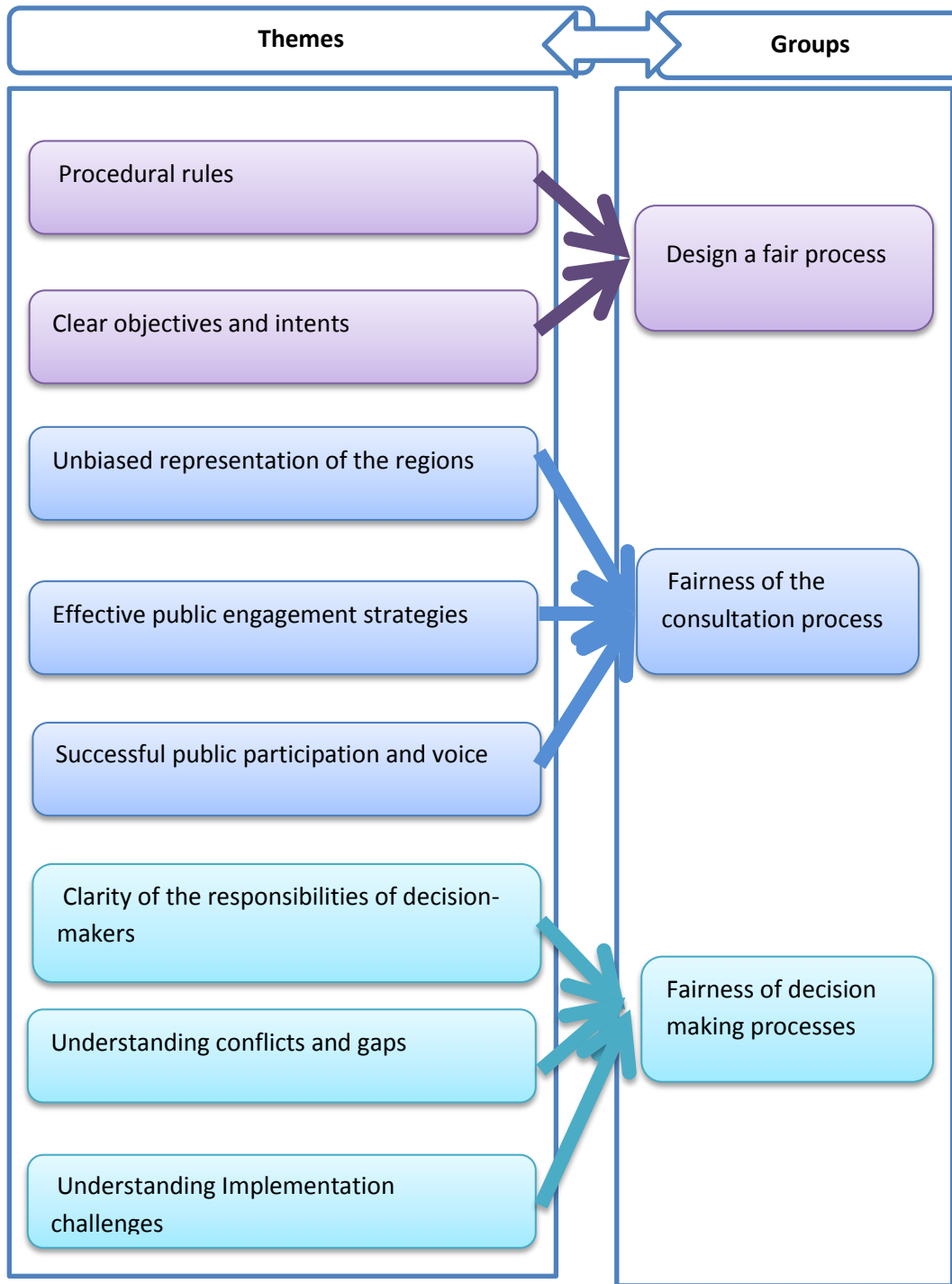


Figure 4.5 The result of data analysis (Themes and Groups)

Chapter 5 Design a Fair Planning Process

The empirical part of the research is guided by the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 3. Empirical data were collected, coded, and analyzed to identify the overlapping themes as discussed in Chapter 4. The results of thematic and content analyses are classified into three main groups: 1) designing a fair planning process, 2) conducting a fair public participation process, and 3) conducting a fair decision making process. These three themes are discussed in the next three chapters to achieve the second and third research objectives and thereby answer the first research question: “How did public and stakeholders in Alberta perceive the fairness of the regional planning process?”

This chapter presents and discusses the critical components necessary for the design of a fair planning process. The empirical data from in-depth interviews, public web documents, and government documents are employed to support the discussion. The results of this research show that there are two important parts in designing a fair planning process: (1) following procedural rules and (2) having a clear vision and objective.

5.1 Procedural Rules

The goal of a regional plan is to identify various development strategies for a given region and to develop public policies for balancing and integrating social, economic and environmental goals. As a result, regional planning often needs a strong process that connects various planning functions together during the design process. To achieve this, the planning process needs to outline the vision of the plan, define the planning objectives, and clarify roles and responsibilities of those involved (Wong and Hofe, 2008). It is also important to engage the public and to allow the public to have some control over the decision-making power in the planning process (Wong and Hofe,

2008). It is argued that a strong planning process should set out the timeline, use the most effective tools, and make use of available scientific data and information (Wong and Hofe, 2008). The design of the regional planning process has to follow some procedural rules to assess the available resources and utilize financial and human capacities. Based on the empirical data analysis, five essential components in designing a strong and fair planning process are: i) consistency; ii) transparency; iii) use of the most accurate information; iv) ease of understanding; and v) minimizing bias or ethicality. These essential components are repeatedly mentioned throughout the in-depth interviews by key informants, and emphasized by public documents and government documents as critical rules in designing a fair planning process. Each of the five components will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.1.1 Consistency in planning process

Consistency is perceived as a critical component in the design of the planning process. The majority of the participants from in-depth interviews, and most public web documents and government documents discuss the issue of consistency. However, understanding of consistency varies from in-depth interview participants to public and government documents. Some focus on consistency in responsibilities, while others emphasize the consistency of plan's objectives and vision. Government documents in both study areas indicate that a logical, consistent, and systematic planning process contributes to more transparent decisions, more creative problem solving, and greater likelihood of public agreement, acceptance and support (GD# 9, #89).

Consistency in the organizational structure is a component that leads to designing a strong planning process. Twenty five percent of participants in SSRP believe that applying procedures in a consistent manner leads to fairer decisions across sectors and over time. A lack of consistency in the organizational structure of government staff creates confusion during the planning process. These frequent changes of agencies' responsibilities may cause the realignment of individual duties which break the work

routines and create knowledge continuation problems. For example, in the case of SSRP, reorganizing the Department of Environmental Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) is considered an important factor causing inconsistencies in the planning process of SSRP. One participant notes the following:

“I am not sure how it [ESRD] was organized. Now, I think they have a planning division. ESRD was Environmental Sustainable Resource Development. I think ESRD has a land use division. They have a land use secretariat, probably you have heard about that. I think they are focused on the planning. There are other divisions, like operational division, for example, fish and wildlife division. They dissolved the fish and wildlife division, and people in Edmonton in fish and wildlife were moved to the policy [division]... As a result of [all these] organizational changes, the staffs are not comfortable with their responsibilities” (KI #3).

Another participant links consistency in organizational structure to an efficient and effective decision making procedure. She/he mentions that the transfer of management responsibilities because of organizational changes lead to confusion and delay in the progress of the planning process. One particular example she/he mentions is how the changes in ESRD led to some (undefined to her/him) responsibilities and duties falling under the tourism department (KI #10). While the issue of consistency in organizational structure is reported by some participants, public documents and government documents do not provide any information about the importance of consistency in roles, responsibilities, and duties in the regional planning processes.

The second aspect of consistency is related to the vision and objectives of the regional plan. Many key informants from the Lower Athabasca are concerned about the lack of consistency between the objectives in the final version of the plan and the objectives in the draft plan. One of the key informants mentions that:

“LARP set a kind of direction from the regional advisory council, including a recommendation for far more conservation areas that actually did not happen in the final edition of the plan, and actually there was no discussion about why or how that recommendation disappeared at the final version of the plan” (KI# 12).

The analysis of public web document also reveals that people have raised some

questions about the consistency in the plan's objectives. This research reveals that the plan is often too general. Not only are the objectives inconsistent, but they are sometimes contradictory. For instance, in the case of conservation of caribou habitat in LARP, the final plan supports protecting the wildlife habitat areas and at the same time supports development of oil sand companies in the same area, even though it is set aside just for wildlife conservation in the draft plan. Another example is the Castle Mountain area in SSRP. According to the draft plan this area needs to be protected because of endangered species and issues with biodiversity. This area will, however, be developed for recreational purposes in the final plan (PWD #57).

The analysis of public documents also reveals that the plan objectives should be consistent with other legislations and proposals which will fall under the regional plans. Public documents provide some examples about the consistency of the regional plan objectives with the city of Calgary development plans (e.g. Calgary Metropolitan Plan and Calgary Regional Partnership). For example, one public document from the city of Calgary⁴ indicates that there are consistency issues regarding local autonomy and regional objectives in Calgary Metropolitan Plan legislation and the SSRP (PWD #14). Another public document highlights the consistency of watershed management with the regional plan's objectives about developing the Surface Water Quality Management Framework (PWD #99).

The analysis of government document shows that the consistency between objectives and regulation is important for the planning process, and consistency was considered through the planning process. For example LARP states that "the LARP is designed to help achieve the three desired province-wide outcomes of the Land-Use Framework. The regional vision describes the desired future state of the Lower Athabasca Region, and is consistent with the outcomes and principles of the Land-Use

⁴ The City of Calgary's Response to the Regional Advisory Council's Advice to the Government of Alberta for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, December 2011

Framework” (LARP, 2012, p36).

5.1.2 Transparency in planning process

Transparency is considered an important element of a strong planning process since it is repeatedly mentioned by key informants, public documents, and government documents. Transparency is a multifaceted concept linked to various broad concepts such as clarity, accessibility, logic, accountability, openness, truth, and integration (Drew and Nyerges, 2004). Various key informants indicate that “The planning process should be more transparent” (KI #1, #4, # 6). This analysis shows that the public ask for more transparent decision making and public consultation processes.

Seventy percent of all interviewees believe the current planning and decision making process in both regions should be more transparent. One participant from outside of the government notes that:

“There should be much more equity and the decision making process has to be much more transparent. [Decision makers] have to have much more bilateral communication and discussion... The critical thing is the government [as a decision maker] has to put resources into [the transparent planning processes]”. (KI #12)

Like in-depth interview participants, public and government documents indicate that using scientific methods in the planning process enhances transparency in the decision making process. The key informants who are familiar with cumulative effect management systems support the planning process, especially RAC decision making process. One of the participants from WPACs quoted:

“I am a proponent of informed decision making that has been put together by the regional advisory council to liberate the decisions. Using scientific methods shows how information was interpreted. This... allows some transparency”. (KI #2)

One public document notes that the draft plan (SSRP) ensures transparency by using scientific methods (PWD #1). Other public documents assert that a

transparent process should include science-based criteria, indicators, and thresholds for management and monitoring programs and should provide justification for the definitions of criteria, indicators, and thresholds. LARP (2012, p40) defines a transparent system where information ranging from raw data to analyses is publicly available to enable those concerned to conduct their own studies and draw their own conclusions. The government documents also argue that the public annual reporting system and technical monitoring networks introduced in the plan will maximize transparency in various dimensions of resource and environment management.

This research also shows that in the planning and decision making process, appealing mechanism needs to be more transparent. One of the key informants, who was familiar with environmental laws, argues that the regional plan is not transparent and clear since there is no clear appeal mechanism designed in the decision making process. At the same time, some of the key informants and public documents ask for more transparency in planning and decision making about first nation rights, conservation areas, ground and surface water, recreation, and property right (KI #1, #2, #5, #7, #13 and PWD #5, #6, #32, #42 #91, #99).

There are various parts of the public consultation process which need to become more transparent. Approximately 50 percent of the participants call for increased transparency in two critical aspects of public consultation processes: (1) selection of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members and (2) clarifying RAC's responsibilities and roles in the consultation process. Almost half of the key informants from both regions argue that the RAC members were chosen based on political preferences, so the process was not open and transparent. Other key informants also argue that confidentiality of RAC's meeting content was a barrier for an open and transparent consultation process.

5.1.3 Using accurate information

The key informants, public documents, and government documents agree that

a fair planning process should use the most accurate and up-to date data available in the regions. Lukasiewicz et al. (2013) also indicate that using accurate information improves fairness in addressing environmental needs by increasing objectivity. On the other hand, when the necessary scientific data are missing or are incomplete, it can unintentionally disenfranchise some sectors or groups of people. Therefore, accuracy and quality of information are influential elements in a fair planning process.

All of the interviewees and government documents agree that the current regional plans used the best available data in Alberta. The planning process uses a knowledge-based management approach to collect appropriate information about each region. Planners, government, private sectors, industry, RAC members, and public participants had the opportunity to bring more information to the planning process as government documents (#2, #4, #8, #14, #35, #99), key informants (#2, #5, #13, #14), and public documents (#14, #35, #61).

However, there are some concerns about the quality and availability of data related to water, biodiversity, and social subjects. For example, the key informants and public documents argue that when creating surface water and groundwater management frameworks, the planning process needs to collect more detailed information (KI #6, #13, #16, PWD #17, #78, #97). Reflecting this, one of the key informants, who is a planner in the Alberta's regional planning processes, mentions that:

“In my experience, being involved in regional planning, we used the information we have. The time frame for doing regional plans is tight; we are trying to finish regional plans for all of the seven regions in Alberta fairly quickly. We are trying to get it done, so we are not collecting new information for most of the part. We are using the information that we have... Maybe a good example is [information on] groundwater in the LARP and draft SSRP. We would like to set up groundwater framework. There is not enough information to actually do the complete framework” (KI #14).

More than 60 percent of participants are concerned about the availability of

groundwater information and quality of data in monitoring the surface water.

The second concern about data and information in the planning process is the challenges of developing integrated data and information, identified by key informants (#5, #10, #14) and public documents (#13, #14, #17) argue. For example, one of the key informants (#10) believe various sectors that provide information for the planning process were not ready to share the information and collaborate in creating integrated databases for integrated resource management. Since the planning process is constrained by time and developing an integrated database is time consuming, collecting data from separate sources and creating a meaningful database for analysis have been challenging. Consequently, 40 percent of the key informants argue that the integrated databases used in the planning process were not accurate enough and were missing some important information, even though the planning process used the most up to date information available.

The third concern raised by the key informants (#1, #3, #4, #15) and public documents (#9, #20, #28, #55, #98) is about the quality and quantity of data that are publicly available on the planning process. The empirical analysis shows that the fair planning process presents data and information in ways that supports the decision and outcomes of the plan. Around 65 percent of the key informants and 25 percent of public documents mention that the planning process documents which were publicly available, did not provide adequate information to support the outcomes and decisions that were made in the planning process. One of the informants (#10) mentions, the regional plans did not provide a balanced coverage of information to support why some decisions were made. For instance in SSRP, the plan provides technical and detailed information about the specific water quality monitoring system. However, it does not provide clear information on who was responsible for implementing the water quality monitoring system (KI #10). Public documents also support key informants' belief that the information shared with the public is very general, creating uncertainties and

conflicts of interest (PWD #17, #14, #26, #49, #55). For example, public web document number 14 indicates that more information should be provided to address how cumulative effects management affects the existing activities and future sustainable development of the city of Calgary. The key informants who were directly participating in the planning process, such as RAC members and planners, mention that there were significant differences between the quality and the quantity of the data that were publicly available and the data that was used in the planning process (KI #6, #12, #14, #5, #13, #7, #10). The empirical data analysis reveals that the RAC members were impressed by the extensive volumes of data provided by the government for consultation during the planning process. On the other hand, the public and stakeholders did not have access to adequate amounts of information and they were concerned about the quality of information used in the planning process.

5.1.4 Comprehensible and easy to follow

The empirical analysis shows that a fair planning process should be understandable and easy to follow. Fourteen out of sixteen key informants mention that a fair planning process should be easy to follow and all phases and responsibilities should be determined clearly. The planning process should be designed in a way that prevents wrong interpretation and misconception. A fair planning process also prevents confusion and ambiguity about how the whole planning process works. Several government documents also reflect that the planning process must be easy to understand, and easy to follow by public, stakeholders, and government staff (GD #4 and #89).

It was also found, that the implementation of the plans' proposed strategies are difficult and challenging. According to the various key informants, who are part of water stakeholders and local governments, the policies and responsibilities for implementing the plans' strategies are not defined clearly in the plan or draft plan for the LARP and SSRP respectively (KI #2, #3, #16, and #9). There are lots of details that need to be filled in before the stakeholders and local governments can follow the plan's strategies.

Participants from WPACs were also concerned about the challenges ahead of implementing unclear policies and the ambiguous plan. For example, one participant mentions:

“We do not know how [the plan] is going to work and I am not sure that the province knows either. They are not able to give us answers on that.”
(KI #8)

Government documents also reflect that the experience gained developing LARP have a positive impact on the process of developing the SSRP since they provide a better understanding of the planning process and the cumulative effect management for the decision makers and public (#65, #68, and #74).

Public web documents and government documents tend to explain the planning processes to provide a better understanding of the final plan. For example, public documents (#58 and #99) and government documents (#10 and #44) introduce the RAC members, and detail and explain RACs' responsibilities. Similarly, public documents (#15, #13, and #41) and government documents (#4 and #89) explain various legal terms such as property rights in an understandable way. Key informants (#2, #5, and #15) and public documents (#75 and #79) also indicate that explanations and debates in the public forums help the general public understand the planning process and the plan's objectives better, so they can follow the planning process. Therefore, they can provide meaningful inputs into the planning process and contribute more effectively to the development of the plan.

5.1.5 Ethicality (Suppression of Bias)

It has been argued that “suppression of bias” is an important criterion to evaluate fairness of a planning process (Tyler 1988). There are different views on the meaning of an unbiased planning process in the literature. Luo (2005) argues that an unbiased process needs to satisfy the followings conditions: (1) there is no discrimination against participants in the process during the preparation and the execution of the plan; (2)

power for influencing and controlling the process is distributed equally among the participants in the planning process, and (3) all related procedures are designed for the sake of development and growth of the regions. These conditions are examined in the empirical study.

The bias in the planning process is mentioned by 88 percent of key informants and 78 percent of public web document; this suggests that a fair planning process must suppress personal influence and bias and be ethical. Approximately 80 percent of the key informants and public documents believe that the planning process was biased towards specific individuals and objectives. One of the key informants (#14), who is a planner, mentions that the nature of regional planning is embedded in political, socio-economic, and personal biases:

“There is always going to be some human bias in all of the planning. The best concrete information will be interpreted by humans. The value of Alberta regional planning is that we heard from various perspectives, [such as RAC who are] key part of the plan” (KI #14).

In order to suppress bias and personal influence, the planning process should use collaborative approaches. Despite the use of a collaborative approach (e.g. using RAC and public consultation process), the key informants and public documents believe that there were clear biases in the planning process. The participants and public documents from Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan reveal that the plan was biased in favor of oil sands and industry. For example, one of the key informants (KI #5) points out that the oil and petroleum industry exercised what amounts to a veto power over the initiatives that could harm them in the RAC consultation process. Similarly, the first page of one public web document (PWD #12) reflects that:

“The reality is that LARP will allow for massive expansion of oil sands development that already violates our rights, and is causing environmental and health problems,” (PWD #12, p1)

Another example of biased pointed out by key informants and public documents in SSR

was about political bias. Approximately 80 percent of in-depth interview participants in SSR indicate that decisions made in the regional planning process were politically biased. As one of the participant's states:

“I do not think there can be personal biases if you are basing [the regional planning process] on science, but again political decision are not based on science” (KI #2).

The findings indicate that the plans in both regions are in favor of economic development. One public web document states:

“Despite the repeated use of the word “balance” throughout this vision and document, the South Saskatchewan RAC recommendations are clearly based on a fundamentally biased framework of economy first and other values last” (PWD #43, p1).

The government tried not to use the word ‘bias’ in documents and hoped the new approach of land-use management and planning based on ecosystem-management and scientific methods did suppress biases and personal influences.

In conclusion, the planning process used various approaches to create unbiased process to ensure fairness in development of the plan. However, this study shows that some biases toward specific individuals, groups, and objectives still exist.

5.1.6 Summary

In summary, five components are identified as procedural rules. These rules have a direct impact in designing a strong and fair planning process according to the literature and this study. Consistency, transparency, use of accurate data and information, having an understandable process and ethicality are considered the most important rules.

Moreover, this study provides a deeper insight into the perception of the key informants, public documents, and government documents with regard to each procedural rule. For example, the consistency of the planning process was violated by the organizational change in Alberta ESRD. Moreover, lack of transparent decision making and public consultation processes threatens the procedural justice of the process.

The analysis also reveals that use of accurate data and information is compromised when the integrated databases used in the planning process are not accurate and incomplete. The ethicality of the planning process is questioned when biases toward economic objectives and political interests are observed. The planning process is not easy to follow because lots of details needed were missing/absent related to responsibilities and implementation of the process. Consequently, this study reveals that the planning process partly fails to satisfy the identified criteria to ensure fair planning process.

5.2 Clear Regional Plan Objectives and Intentions

These case study analyses reveal that a clear vision and objective leads to a fair planning process. The plan objectives are a guideline for designing various phases of the plan (See figure 2-2). General objectives for the Alberta regional plans are introduced by ALSA (2009) and LUF (2008). Alberta's regional planning process employs two scientific methods, Cumulative Effect Management and Integrated Resource Management, to identify the objectives for each region. This study shows that the public and stakeholders support the use of these scientific methods. Moreover, key informants, public documents, and government documents argue that in order to have a fair planning process, it is necessary to have the role of public participation clearly specified and the plan vision clearly explained. This study also shows that objectives of the planning process are unclear which is expressed by key informants and public documents. Despite the fact that the planning process uses CEMS and IRM, a lack of clear role of public participation and a lack of clear explanation of the plan vision are identified as obstacles in having a fair planning process.

5.2.1 Cumulative Effect Management System (CEMS)

CEMS is a strong scientific method which is used in the planning process to create a clear vision and objectives for each region and more than half of the key informants and

the government documents approved of this system. They argue that CEMS is a scientific method and improved the perception of a fair process by increasing transparency and consistency (KI #2, #5, #8 and GD #2, #11, #52, #89). The government documents indicate that Alberta Environment is leading a shift towards cumulative effects management system (CEMS), to create an adaptive management approach by creating the regional plans as a regulatory framework (GD #43).

The key informants from WPACs (KI #2, #7, #16) and twenty percent of public documents believe that cumulative effect as a the new government management approach have a positive impact on the fairness of the planning process. It is believed that CEMS guides the planning process based on clear scientific approaches, rather than political preferences. For example, one of the in-depth interview participants argues that using CEMS is a good start, since it is a scientific method that assures an effective development and delivery of environmental, social, and economic outcomes (KI #2). WPAC's participants have a positive perspective on using CEMS since by using it, scientists can clearly explain the environmental degradation issues. The scientists can also use CEMS to set the trade-offs and limits to support the environment:

“The government needs to do a good job to explain what the current issues are and what the cumulative effects are. In a simple way they have to explain to people that 90 percent of our water supplies comes from the eastern slopes and there are decisions they have to make and some trade-offs that have to be made” (KI #2)

WPAC's participants also add that using cumulative effect management provides better, more efficient, and smarter ways to plan and manage natural resources. CEMS creates the “Management Framework” which sets the thresholds and monitoring systems to plan and manage resources across Alberta. Government document (#4) also provides an example to explain the role of CEMS in water management in the region (pages 15-16):

“[The result of CEMS] specifies the cumulative water withdrawal limits that industry must meet on a weekly basis, based on categories of naturally occurring flow conditions. The actions and withdrawal

limits were developed based on aquatic habitat requirements, water needs, and existing options for reducing withdrawals.”

Participants who were involved in the planning process also advocated modelling and forecasting based on CEMS since it is an effective approach for identifying objectives for current and future development of regions (KI #5, #13, #14). LARP (2012) indicates that the Lower Athabasca River Water Management Framework is an example of an implementation of CEMS which sets a strategy for managing and monitoring cumulative water withdrawals by oil sands companies. In summary, CEMS has the ability to identify clear regional objectives which lead to transparent and fair planning processes.

Although the planning process used CEMS to identify clear objectives and to create a strong and fair process, it is found that there are some concerns and confusion about how the plan will be implemented. For example, Barretto et al. (2013) share their concerns in the form of interesting questions: ”how cumulative effects management is implemented in a region where the water allocation limit has been reached?” and ”how CEMS deals with the overlap between the location of energy and mineral resources and urban areas?” (PWD #29). Even though these and other questions were raised before the South Saskatchewan Region draft plan was released, the draft plan did not provide a clear answer to these kinds of questions, as the key informants (#1, #3) and public documents (#35, #58) argue.

5.2.2 Integrated Resource Management (IRM)

The empirical findings in the study area show that the use of IRM in the planning process is facilitate the success, since it helps to identify clear objectives, and leads to a fair process. Approximately 40 percent of the key informants believe that applying IRM in the planning process is necessary. Such findings are well supported in the literature. Parad (1994) also argue that IRM is designed to improve the perception of procedural fairness in resource management. IRM is also designed to deal with the complexity and interconnectedness of natural and human systems.

Moreover, IRM is a flexible and adaptive approach that integrates policy objectives, organizational structure, data gathering approaches, and community involvement (Charnay, 2011, Ako et al., 2009).

Many key informants are concerned about how their interests were integrated into the planning process. The key informants (#6, #12, and #15) and public documents (#3 and #35) from Lower Athabasca argue that integration did not happen either during the planning process, after the plan became an official document, or during the implementation and the monitoring stage. One of the key informants believes that:

“The information was not integrated; stewardship was not ready to put the information forward, sectors did not participate that much either, so the integration did not happen to the extent that was expected.” (KI #16)

Public web documents also support key informants’ perspective (PWD #3 and #56).

There are some challenges in integrating public and private land in the planning process since there is a strong opposition from landowners, industry, and private sectors which is mentioned by all key informants and 40 percent of public documents (#3, #35, #54, and #56). One of the public web documents states that:

“The ALSA is an ambitious legislation, which attempts to integrate land-use planning and development policy across the province, covering both private and public lands, and binding local governments and provincial boards and land administrators. Decisions taken in balancing social, economic, and environmental interests are political judgments by the Alberta Government. [...] There may, however, be legal consequences in the form of compensation owing to holders of existing legal rights and interests that may be affected by its decisions.” (PWD #3, p48)

In support of the public documents, some of the key informants argue that the unclear policies which attempt to provide an integrated strategy to manage the development of public and private lands create some legal issues in development of LARP (KI #6, and #13). These issues were about the level of provincial control over private land development which is known as “property rights”. These issues

are addressed by the Alberta Land Stewardship Amendment Act according to the government documents (# 54 and #73). By the time the planning process proceeded in the South Saskatchewan region, the property right issues were resolved. However, the concerns regarding integrating water management capacities in the planning process are not addressed in government documents.

In conclusion, this analysis shows that applying IRM and its scientific method facilitates reaching clear objective in a fair planning process. Although, Alberta's regional planning process applies IRM to provide clear objectives about integration of land and water resources, these objectives were not clear to the public and stakeholders.

5.2.3 Regional Vision and Objectives

Clear visions and objectives are critical components for a strong and fair planning process. This study found that in order to identify clear objectives, Alberta's regional planning process uses both a collaborative approach and scientific methods. Despite the fact that the planning process uses various approaches to identify the vision and objectives for the regions, key informants and public documents argue that these objectives are far from being clear and transparent.

The collected data show that the plan vision and objective are devised and modified in the planning process through the following steps: (1) the first draft of the vision and objectives of Alberta's regional plans is introduced by RAC in the terms of reference document, (2) after announcing the draft publicly, the government asks for public input and feedback on the document, (3) the draft document is updated based on public input, and (4) the final draft is sent to the Cabinet for final approval (KI #6, #14 and PWD #29, #41). Although the planning process uses a collaborative approach, some concerns are raised about the various steps of the process.

The first and the most common concern is that feedback and input on plan vision

and objectives are collected at one of the earliest stages of the planning process, when people are not aware of the plan. As a result, the participation rate is not high (KI #1, #2, #5, #14, and PWD # 29, #41, #58). The second concern is that the vision and objectives are politically selected (KI #2, #5, and PWD #64, #99). Many believe that the government chose the vision and objectives in too general terms in order to keep all participants happy. One of the key informants indicates that:

“The vision statement is so big that it might be controversial. We should ask what it means. It is broad and not clear, so the trade-offs are not clear or even set” (KI #9).

Similarly, a public web document indicates that the regional plan must recognize that there are times when the interests of “water production and water quality” will clash with people’s “economic interests and their enjoyment” (PWD #3). This research reveals that the public and stakeholders argue that the plan needs to make it clear what the priorities are in particular areas and how the plan objectives and their trade-offs are determined.

5.2.4 Clear Role of Consultation and Participation

Participation and consultation are two critical components in Alberta’s regional planning processes. The results of the analyses indicate the importance of participation and consultation for stakeholders’ perception of fairness in the process. All of the in-depth interview participants were concerned about the strategies that have been used for public participation and consultation in Alberta’s regional planning processes.

Participants argue that the planning documents did not emphasize the public participation strategies. Moreover, the planning documents did not provide clear information about responsibilities of the RAC as the consultants in the planning process. Participants also believed that a fair procedure should define the rules of the process and the available participatory mechanisms in advance. Sixty percent of public documents are concerned about the participation policies in Alberta regional plan. For example

Roth et al. (2011) explained how public reaction changed the participation policies:

“The intent of ALSA was to make regional planning a purely political and legislative function in order to avoid any obligations of administrative fairness that could subject regional planning to review by the courts. Public reaction to ALSA forced the Government to reverse course completely... [As a result] public consultation became mandatory before a regional plan can be adopted or amended” (PWD #3, p1).

Public web documents indicate that participation is critical for fair procedure. Public participation provides opportunities for people to influence the government and industry to create stronger protection for the land, environment, and people. Likewise, government documents emphasize the need to provide more opportunities for stakeholders and Albertans, especially aboriginal groups, to participate in the planning process. The government documents also add that the plan’s procedure needs to be reviewed to ensure fair and equitable participation (GD #52).

In summary, this research shows that the government, the public, and stakeholders believe in the importance of public participation in the planning process. However, there are some concerns that the plan does not address the policies related to public participation in the process adequately.

5.2.5 Summary

In summary, the participants in the in-depth interviews argue that the plan vision and objectives have a noticeable impact on the perception of a fair planning process. This argument is supported by the analysis of public documents and the government documents. The visions and objectives of a plan are derived from the methods and strategies that were used to develop it. For example, Alberta’s regional planning process uses scientific methods, Cumulative Effect Management System (CEMS) and Integrated Resource Management (IRM), to identify the visions and the objectives for future development.

More than 40 percent of the participants support using CEMS and IRM in the planning process. Interviewees believe that the use of scientific methods enhance the perception of fair process which leads to a transparent and consistent process. The results indicate that a vision derived from public consensus and scientific methods boosts the perception of procedural justice. Although, providing a clear objective about integration of natural resources in the planning process was not apparent to the public and the stakeholders.

This study also reveals that the clear role of public participation in the plan and an explanation of the regional vision are needed to facilitate reaching plan's objectives. Despite the criticism, public participants and stakeholders hope the government learned from the SSRP and LARP experiences and adjusts the consultation process to improve the perception of procedural fairness.

5.3 Summary discussion

The main intent of this section is to compare the findings of this research and the procedural justice literature. A number of studies have analysed procedural justice in context of water and land use planning around the world. These studies indicate that an unbiased framework is consistent (Leventhal, 1980), transparent, (Luo, 2005) accurate (Leventhal, 1980, Lind and Tyler, 1988), understandable, easy to follow (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003), and ethical (suppression of bias) (Leventhal, 1980, Lind and Tyler, 1988). It is concluded that procedural rules are critical components of the fair process (Lukasiewicz, et al, 2013, Kerselaers et al., 2013, Leventhal, 1980, Lind and Tyler, 1988, Nancarrow and Syme, 2001, Dolan et al., 2007).

This study identifies procedural justice components in the design of the planning process which are consistent with those identified in the literature (see Table 5-1 and Figure 5-1). In addition, a clear objective and vision in the planning

process is an important factor to ensure fairness in the decision making process (see Table 5-2 and Figure 5-2).

The literature review reveals that when the planning process is consistent during the whole planning procedure, people's perception of it might change over time and they may accept the planning process as a fair procedure even when the outcomes might not be considered fair. Lange et al. (2008) argue that consistency in administration systems was considered a crucial component to ensure fair water transfer in New Zealand. As revealed by this case study, Alberta's planning process needs to be improved to become more consistent. A lack of consistency in the organizational structure and the plan objectives is a critical barrier to reach fairness in the planning process.

Leventhal (1980) argued that procedural justice leads to transparent decision making process. Various studies show that an important aspect of any planning process is the requirement for transparent and clear information about the plan and decision making process. Zoellner et al. (2008) studied various planning process in Germany. They argue that the planning process should be transparent since if people feel left out of the process and decision making, they will be more likely to oppose these processes. This research shows that to ensure a fair planning process, Alberta's regional plans need to become more transparent and that current decision making and public consultation processes need to be clear and more transparent.

Accuracy is an essential component of a fair planning process to ensure informed decision making (Lawrence et al., 1997). Kerselaers et al. (2013) who worked on the rural land use planning process in Belgium indicated that creating accurate databases for the planning process is not easy. Kerselaers et al. (2013) indicate that missing or incomplete data can unintentionally disenfranchise some sectors by changing the plan's outcomes. Many scholars argue that collecting and

organizing integrated information is one the most challenging parts of a fair planning process (Lukasiewicz, et al, 2013, Nancarrow and Syme, 2001, Dolan et al., 2007). This study reveals that the government of Alberta provides the most up-to-date and accurate data that is available for the planning process. Although, some key informants note that integrated decision making systems would have benefited from an integrated data and information database which needed more time to be collected and organized.

Many scholars argue that a fair planning process needs to be easy to understand to improve the perception of fairness and public trust (Dolan, 2007, Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Lawrence et al., 1997). Kerselaers et al., (2013) who studied the rural land use planning process in Flanders argue that farmers who were interviewed asked for a more understandable decision making process. These farmers asked the government to simplify the planning process in ways to make it more understandable and easy to follow. The analyses of Alberta's regional planning processes reveal that it is easy to follow at the general level. The government provides access to documents and explains the process clearly on their official website. However, key informants from various sectors, including WPAC, irrigation districts, and municipalities, and public documents (#32, #32, and #48) argue that the plan is too general, which causes difficulty in implementing or assessing the results. Moreover, participants note that because of the general nature of the policies, the process might result in conflicting outcomes, which are inconsistent with the principles of fair process.

Various studies identify that a fair decision making process minimizes discrimination against various sectors and creates an open channel for discussion of various views and perspectives (Leventhal, 1980, Innes, 1996, Dolan et al., 2007). Other studies indicate that using collaborative approach in land use planning increases public influence and decreases individual influences in the decision making process (Healey, 1997, Margerum, 2001). This study identifies that Alberta's regional planning

process uses a collaborative and scientific approaches (CEMS and IRM) to minimize bias and the influence of individuals. However, results of the in-depth interviews and public documents reveal that some economic and political biases are felt by the public and stakeholders, which have negative impacts on the perception of fair process.

The empirical analysis of this research identifies that clear regional visions and objectives improve the perception of fairness in the planning process. The importance of clear regional visions and objective is not discussed in the literature. Many studies indicate that plan visions and objectives are critical components in the decision making process, however their effect on procedural justice is neglected in the literature.

This research shows that the public and stakeholders are worried about visions and objectives of LARP and SSRP. These visions and objectives are general and unmeasurable. Moreover, the lack of defined strategies for public participation and consultation in the decision making process also concerns the public and stakeholders.

In conclusion, as Lukasiewicz et al., (2013) note ‘if fair outcomes cannot be guaranteed, then at least a fair process can be sought, and, this will heighten the possibility of fair outcome’. However, there are challenges in identifying components of procedural justice related to the design of the plan. Ambiguity of the concept of fairness, limitation in data and information collection, case related objectives, and cultural differences are some challenges in identifying a uniform theme for all case studies. In this research, collecting more public opinion data helped in generalizing the finding to other case studies. This research identifies that procedural rules and objectives of the planning process have direct impact on the perception of procedural justice in Alberta’s regional plans.

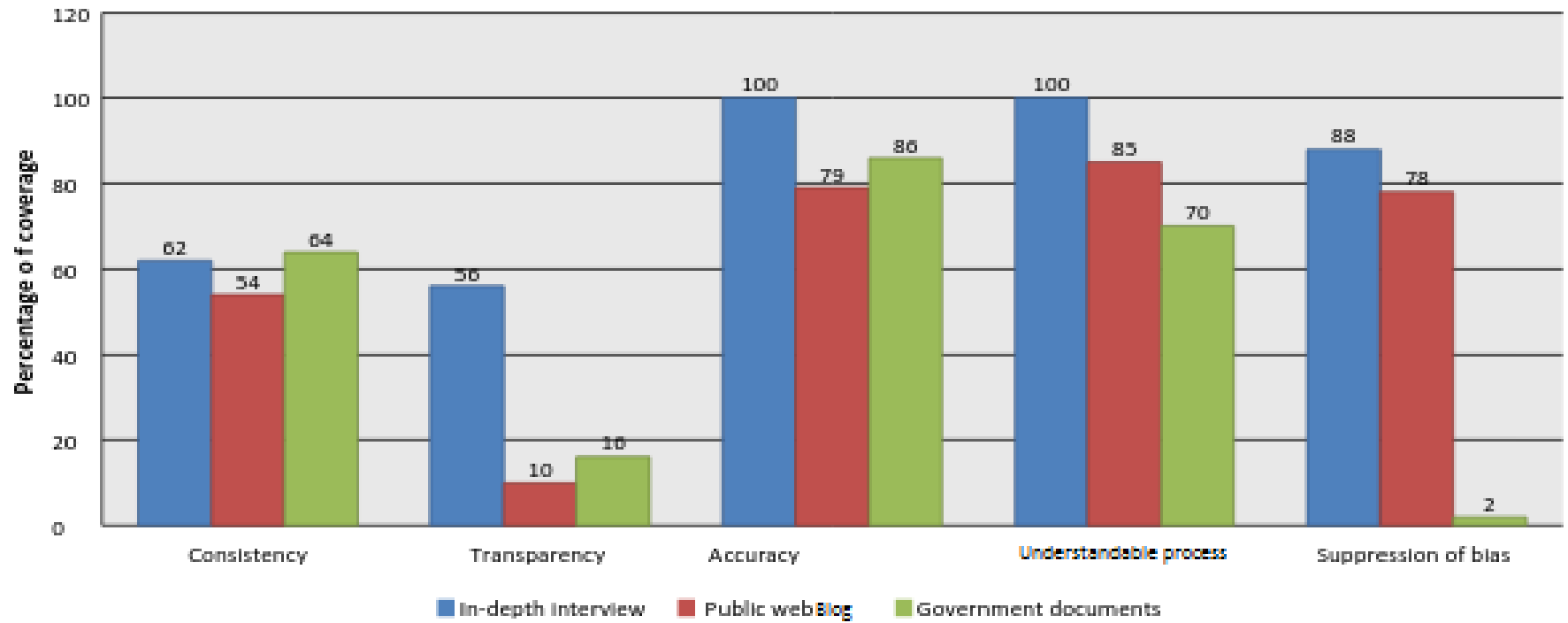


Figure 5.1 The result of Content Analysis for a strong plan design process

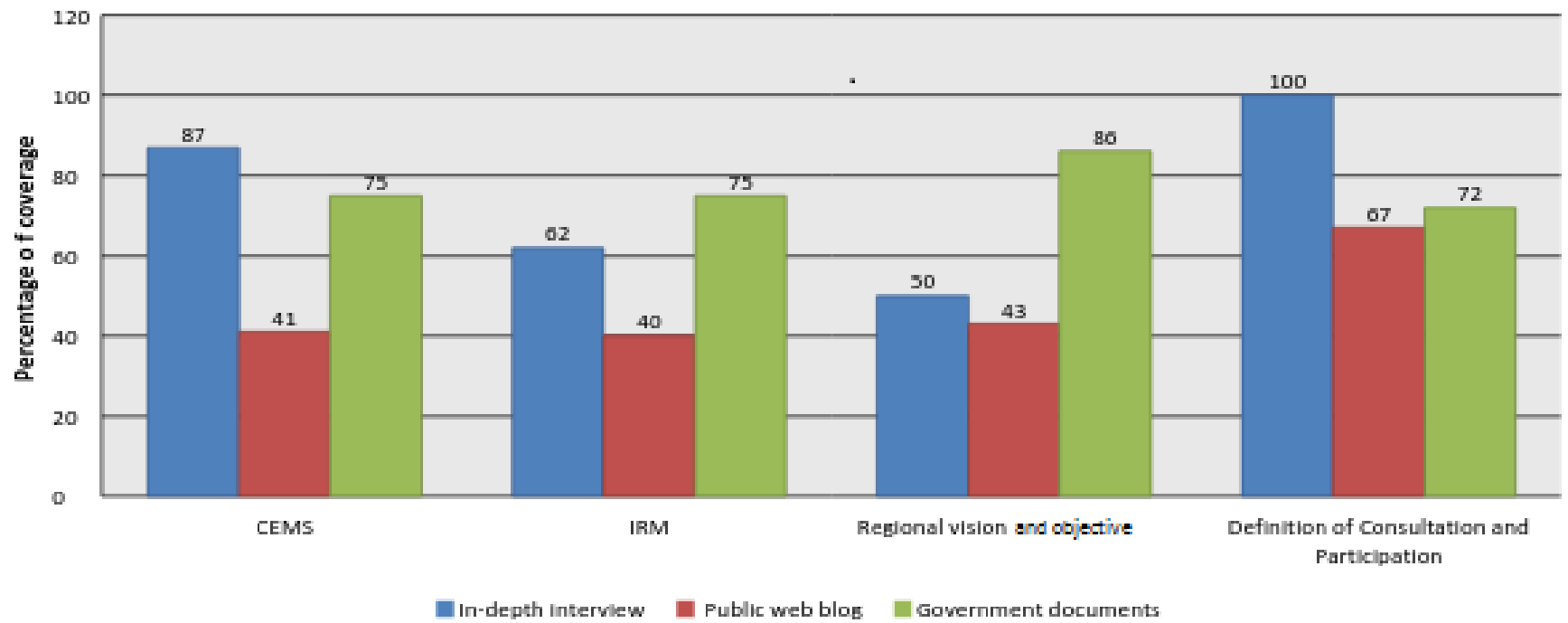


Figure 5.2 The result of content analysis for the clear objectives and intents in the planning process

Table 5.1 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to design of Alberta’s regional planning process

	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Procedural Justice Components in Design of the Process	Consistency	Argument # 1: A fair process is consistent in responsibilities and objectives, so consistency in the planning process should improve	Strong	Eleven out of 16 key informants mention that consistency of the planning processes should be improved. Around 50 percent of government document argue that consistency is an important factor in the planning process.
		Argument #2: There is inconsistency in responsibilities and roles in SSRP after organizational change	Moderate	Twenty five percent of key informants mention the issue. Four out of 10 participants from SSRP criticize the reorganization strongly. There is not enough evidence in public web documents and government documents
		Argument #3: There is inconsistency in objectives and vision in various stages of the planning process in both regions	Strong	Sixty percent of key informants express the need for consistency in objectives. Six of 6 participants from Lower Athabasca explain the difference between the RAC document and final plan, as did 40 percent of the public web documents
	Transparency	Argument #1: The planning process should be more transparent	Strong	Around 70 percent of the key informants indicate that transparency will improve the perception of fairness in the planning process and that the plan need to be more transparent , Supported by public web documents and government documents
		Argument #2: Using scientific method in the planning process enhance transparency	Minimal	Two participants explain that scientific methods are transparent , as did 6 public weblogs and 6 of government documents
	Accuracy of information	Argument#1: Regional plans should use most accurate data and information	Strong	All the key informants as well as public and government documents support this argument
		Argument #2: The planning process should use more accurate informant to plan groundwater and surface water	Strong	Sixty percent of participants argue that there are some information missing in ground water and surface water
		Argument #3: The regional plan should present the information that it uses in the process clearly and in suitable scale	Moderate	Some key inforamnts and public web documents express their concern that the regional plan present information on a broad scale which is confusing for the public. While government documents mention that the plan used scientific method.
	Ease of operation and understandable	Argument #1: Fair process should be understandable and easy to follow	Strong	Out of 16 participants 14 believed that a fair process should be understandable this is supported by public web documents results.
	Suppression of bias (ethicality)	Argument #1 The planning process should suppress bias and influence of individual.	Strong	Around 80 percent of the key informants express the concerns that they felt bias in the planning process. LARP key informants felt the plan is biased toward the benefits of oil sand industry . SSRP key informants are concerns that there are political biases.

Table 5.2 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to design of Alberta’s regional planning process

Procedural Justice Components and Objectives’ of the plan	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
	Cumulative Effect Management System	Argument #1: Using CEMS is a good start to improve the perception of fair process	Strong	Eight out of 16 key informants mention that CEMS improve the perception of fair process by increasing transparency and consistency. Twenty percent of public web documents talk about cumulative effect as a the new government management approach. Government documents also believe using CEMS help the process
	Integrated Resource Management	Argument #1: Using IRM is necessary in the regional planning process to improve the perception of fair process	Moderate	Approximately 40 percent of the key informants indicate that IRM is necessity but they are not sure how it will be used in the planning process
		Argument #2: Using IRM on public and private land created confusion in the planning process	Strong	This issue is repeatedly mentioned by key informants, public documents and government documents as a property rights issue and issues around integrating public and private land
	Regional vision and objectives	Argument#1: The visions of the regional plans are too general	Strong	Most of the key informants as well as public documents argue the vision might lead to conflict
		Argument #2: The vision and objectives of the regional plans should be clear and comprehensive	Moderate	Around 40 percent of participants emphasize the need to have a comprehensive vision which enhances transparency and perception of fair process.
	Role of participation and consultation	Argument #1: Public consultation strategies should be clear	Strong	All of the key informants are concerned about strategies that have been used for public participation and consultation in Alberta regional planning process Sixty percent of public web documents are concerned about the participation polices in Alberta regional planning process.

Chapter 6 Fairness of the Consultation Process

A review of the literature on procedural justice reveals that public consultation is an essential part of a fair planning process (Herian, et al. 2012, Duram, 1999, Lawrence, et al. 1997, Syme and Nancarrow, 2006, Ptaszek, et al., 2013). This chapter discusses essential components of a fair public participation and consultation process based on the analysis of stakeholder interview transcripts, public documents, and government documents.

This research identifies that a fair public participation and consultation process consists of three important components: i) unbiased representation, ii) effective public engagement strategies, and iii) voice. In the case of Alberta's regional plans, unbiased representation is focused on the composition of the Regional Advisory Councils (RAC) and their responsibilities. The analysis also shows that using public engagement strategies in an effective way improves the public participation rate and enhances the public reception of the plan's outcomes. Opportunity to participate (voice) allows people to provide their input and opinions through public hearings and participation in decision making process.

6.1 Unbiased Representation

According to the published government documents, the regional planning process in Alberta provides ample opportunities for the public, stakeholders, and regional experts to participate in the process. However, data analysis shows there are some challenges in the consultation process. The first step in the Alberta regional planning process is the establishment of a RAC, which is "representing a range of perspectives and experience in the region", and whose members are appointed by the government (LUF, 2008). RAC members are selected from provincial and municipal governments, industry, non-government groups, aboriginal community representatives, other relevant stakeholders,

and planning bodies. RAC members provide advice to the government developing the plan and setting land use option trade-off and thresholds based on cumulative environmental effect. All of the key informants and about 60 percent of public web documents expressed the view that RAC is an additional layer of public consultation that has the potential to improve public participation in Alberta's regional planning process. However, 60 percent of the key informants and less than 20 percent of the public web documents indicate that there are some difficulties associated with RAC's involvement in the consultation process. These challenges are associated with the selection of RAC members and reflected by the ambiguity of RAC's responsibilities.

6.1.1 Selection of Regional Advisory Council

This research shows that there are some noticeable gaps in the process of selecting RAC members. These gaps have a negative impact on Alberta's regional planning process, since almost all of the key informants and 60 percent of the public web documents indicate that RAC is an important part of Alberta's regional planning process. They argued that RAC members bring various ideas to the table and integrate the experiences and perspectives from various interests. One of the key informants indicated that:

“RAC was selected by the province. It was meant to be composed of representative of various sectors: municipal sector, industry preservation group, and the public. [RAC to my knowledge was [composed of various] technical [experts]” (KI # 14)

More than 60 percent of the key informants and one of the public web documents question the fairness of the process and allude to the selection of RAC members as one of the key concerns (#12). These key informants argue that the process by which the Cabinet selected and appointed the RAC members could not create a comprehensive team of experts which represents the region. For example, the key informants who were former RAC members and public document number 12 state that some stakeholder groups were not represented in the RAC in both study regions (LARP and

SSRP). One of the former RAC members stated that:

“[The RAC consists of] 14 of us as whole individuals. That is a lot of experience. Even though, we are not representative of our sectors. There was nobody from Alberta recreation center. [There was] an aboriginal sector representative, he was from one of the First Nation tribes. There was really nobody from environmental sector. There was just one person from a water group.” (KI#5)

Another RAC member stated that:

“There were many gaps, the environment, hydro dams, and the first nations; there are some huge cultural gaps. The industries [and] agricultural sectors [were] well represented.” (KI#13)

The key informants argued that a lack of environmental sector members in the RAC has a negative impact on the perception of the fairness in the planning process, since the RAC needs to balance economic, social, and environmental goals (KIS#5, #7, and #13). The key informants believe that although the number of RAC members is limited, the government needs to select representatives from many special interests groups such as those representing the environment and the first-nations (KIs 5, 7, 13, 14, and 15). Almost none of the public web documents provide any specific information related to the selection of RAC members (public document 12 was the only exception). On the other hand, the government documents provide general information about the selection process and detailed information about each individual who was appointed as a RAC member. For instance, the government documents show that the government sends emails to various sectors in the region and asks individuals to declare their interest before becoming a member of the Regional Advisory Council (GDs #14, #40). Other documents also provide detailed information about individual RAC members (e.g. information about their responsibilities in the sectors, and their interests and their expertise)(GDs #5, #10, #14, #40 #42, and #68).

To sum up, analysis shows that the government attempted to select a comprehensive team of experts to secure a strong consultation process. However, the absence of

environmental groups and some other sectors are so noticeable that it undermines the fairness of the selection process and the representativeness of the final RAC.

6.1.2 RAC's Responsibilities

The analysis of interview materials and public and government documents show that RAC's responsibilities should be further clarified. This is because the clarity regarding the responsibilities of the members of the planning/advisory body leads to strong and transparent planning process (Lind and Tyler, 1988). In the study areas, there are three aspects of RAC's responsibilities that are considered unclear to the public participants in the planning process. These aspects are identified as: (1) the effect of RAC's advice on the final decisions, (2) confidentiality of RAC meetings, and (3) RAC's consultation process.

The first concern is about how RAC's advice is dealt with during the planning process. LUF (2008) indicates that RAC, as a multi-stakeholder committee, provides advice and reports to the government. The key informants and public web documents argue that stakeholders and public participants would consider the planning process to be fair if the government respected and valued the advice provided in the reports of the RAC and developed the plan according to this advice. One of the key informants explained:

“[RAC] intended to cover a lot of interests. [RAC] reports to the government. The Government will [choose which] information and advice [to use]” (KI#5)

Approximately 70 percent of the key informants and 30 percent of the public web documents express the concern about the effect of RAC's advice on the regional plan outcomes. One of the key informants who was a RAC member believes that even in the RAC consultation process, it was not clear how the RAC's recommendations would be used to develop the plan. She/he added that the advice of RAC was to inform the

Cabinet directly. However, she/he was sure that RAC's advice was changed by the Land Use Secretariat before being presented to the Cabinet (KI #13). The same concern was raised by another RAC member who mentions that she/he talked personally to the minister and the minister did not know the details of RAC's advisory document. Public web documents also raise questions about the value of RAC's recommendations in developing the plans. For example, one public document states that RAC's proposal should not be changed or ignored through the planning process (PWD #13). This document also argues that ignoring RAC's advice will damage the integrity of the whole process.

The second concern is about confidentiality of the content of RAC's meetings. In the planning process, RAC members were not allowed to talk about the issues and challenges that are discussed in RAC meetings outside of the RAC. This confidentiality of the content of RAC meetings was considered a barrier to proper consultation. Half of the key informants believe that RAC members should have the freedom to consult with experts about the challenges and issues of the region. Key informants who were former RAC members, indicate that while they tried to keep the confidentiality, they did consult with various experts about the conflicts and issues which were raised in the planning process. Key informants believe that confusion and uncertainties about the confidentiality of RAC meetings had a negative impact on the fairness of the process (KIs #1, #6, and #7). Twenty percent of the public and government documents also expressed concern over the confidentiality of RAC meetings. The Public web documents and key informants conclude that the confidentiality of RAC meetings changed the perception of the Alberta's regional planning process from being an inclusive process to an exclusive procedure (PWDs #12, #27, and #35, KIs #1, #5, and #13). Government documents also identify the issues raised about confidentiality of RAC meetings. These documents reveal that the confidentiality of RAC meetings will change for the next plans to improve the planning process (GD #54, and #76).

The third concern is about the obstacles expressed during the consultation process and the RACs' meeting. Approximately 40 percent of key informants argue that RAC members were faced with obstacles when accessing information that was not presented by the government (KIs #1, #5, #6, #7, and #13). Key informants who are former RAC members indicate that the data, information, and analysis for the RAC consultation process were provided by the government and planners. In specific cases, when RAC members realized that the data is not sufficient, they could ask for more data, but they could not provide data personally in the meeting, unless it was approved by the Cabinet (KI #13). As a result, some RAC members felt that the RAC meetings were directed to value economic development over the social and environmental goals.

Informant #7 addresses another challenge in the consultation process by arguing that the RAC meetings would be fair if all RAC members had the same resources and information about the current and future development of the region. However, in the RAC meetings, some representatives had more support and resources from their sectors than other members (KI #13).

Ambiguities around how RAC represented each sector are another challenge in the consultation process. For example, some key informants believed that the concept of representativeness of RAC members was confusing. Key informants argue that it was not clear whether each person should participate as an advocate of their sector or as an expert with a specific knowledge of the region (KIs #5, #6, #7, and #13). Some of the key informants who were former RAC members argue that they felt that some RAC members tried to advocate their sectors' interest in the RAC meeting (#13, #7, #6).

Despite the fact that, these members were nominated by their sectors, they had to participate as experts and irrespective to the interest of their sectors to provide advice on future development of the region.

One of the key informants, when describing the RAC consultation process argues that one of the noticeable challenges was the ultimate power of the chair in leading the

discussion and deciding which subjects should be discussed. She/he mentions that some issues were not discussed because the committee chair did not put it on the agenda. She/he mentions that

“There were two people from oil and petroleum industry, and they always have the deal virtually. The chairman always [listened] to them. [When] we get to the initial wetland policy, some [groups] tried to push the No Net Lost Approach. [People from oil sand industry] said no and the chairman said we are not going [to discuss this issue]. I wish I had that kind of influence” (KI #5).

She/he adds that the consultation process continued after the chair decided which subjects should be discussed in the RAC meeting. These subjects were put to a vote and in case of conflict voting was held anonymously. She/he explains that RAC members had an equal vote in reaching the majority on subjects that the chair agreed to discuss. This research reveals that lack of ability to shape the meeting agenda by RAC representatives is a widespread concern.

More than 60 percent of the key informants identify the issue of adequate consultations with stakeholder groups. For instant, informant #6 indicated that in LARP’s RAC meetings, the member who represented the First Nation group just participated in meetings and repeatedly reminded the RAC and the government that this consultation is not sufficient for first nations. Other key informants added that they felt that RAC consultation could improve if there were some representatives who advocated for environment or recreation.

Despite these obstacles, 60 percent of the key informants and 20 percent of the public web documents believe that the RAC meetings were successful and fulfilled their purpose of integrating various interests and experiences into the process of decision making. For example, a RAC member states that:

“I have to say, all of the people in the council; they are highly intelligent and motivated and they have their own interest that reflects the diversity of the primary issues in the southern Alberta” (KI #13).

Informant #5 also adds that

“Working with them [RAC members] was a very nice experience. People who were in the advisory council were really intelligent, very engaged, and very knowledgeable. And as a result, we had very rich discussions and it was intellectually really rewarding and I can say they did good work”

In conclusion, although RAC was considered a successful experience, three aspects of RAC’s responsibilities need some improvement. To have a stronger planning process the effect of RAC’s advice on the final decisions should be clear, the problems associated with the confidentiality of content of RAC meetings should be addressed, and RAC’s consultation process should be described more clearly.

6.1.3 Summary

In summary, the RAC process is successful and empowers public consultation (KIs#1, #5, #6 and PWDs #12, #13). Although there are some challenges in the RAC consultation process which raise some questions among the public and stakeholders about the fairness of the planning process.

This research identifies issues around selection of RAC members and ambiguity of RAC’s responsibilities. The selection of the RAC members was questioned when the environmental groups and some other sectors were not selected by the government in either region. The unclear responsibilities of RAC members caused some concerns about the effect of RAC’s advice on the final decisions and the confidentiality of RAC’s meeting contents was seen an impediment to a fair process (KIs#1, #3, and#5).

6.2 Regional Plans’ Public Engagement Strategies

The public engagement strategies are considered to be a critical part of the consultation process by many scholars (Shannon, 1999). These strategies create an awareness by which people begin to understand their political role, the need for a legitimate conciliation of interests, and the need for their contribution to the planning process (Bruña-García and Marey-Pérez, 2014). This research shows that public

engagement strategies in Alberta's regional planning processes have three main parts: (i) advertisement of public participation opportunities, (ii) the introduction of various tools to facilitate public participation, such as online workbooks and open houses (iii) and following a focus group strategy to manage public meetings.

6.2.1 Advertising Public Participation Opportunities

Jonsson (2005) argues that advertising the participation opportunities affects procedural justice because well informed participants feel they are part of the process. Even though some people cannot actually participate, they may remember the process and opportunities for participation (Beierle, 1998).

The analysis shows that Alberta's regional planning process used various strategies (e.g. TV ads, local radio ads, poster, weblog) to inform people about the planning process and public participation opportunities. The advertisement in local radios, TV, and newspapers were not considered successful because very few people mention these strategies; only 3 of 16 interviewees and 2 out of 100 public web documents mentioned them (KIs #2, #4, #3, and PWDs #13, #56). On the other hand, web advertisements were considered more effective, with 80 percent of key informants and 60 percent of public web documents discussing the government website and advertisements for public meetings on the internet. To sum up, the type and quality of advertisement strategies affect the effectiveness of informing public and stakeholders. In both regions, advertisements on websites are mentioned more often than other type of advertisement strategies.

6.2.2 Public Engagement Tools

Selection of effective public engagement tools is an important part of a public engagement strategy (Shannon, 1999). Alberta's regional planning process employs two different sets of tools to engage public participation. Completing an online workbook and participating in open houses were two tools by which the public could provide their input (GDs #4, and #89). These public engagement tools are selected to

reach a wide range of public participants. Workbooks are designed to provide a participation opportunity for people who do not have the time or interest to participate in person. Open houses are designed for participants who want to talk face to face and discuss issues in person with government staffs (KIs #7, #16, and PWDs #13, #57). However, public participants faced some challenges when they used these tools to provide their input into the planning process.

6.2.3 Workbook

Seventy five percent of interviewees and thirty percent of public web documents identify workbooks as a tool for public participation. Some of the participants who completed the workbook indicate that it was too long, time consuming, and sometimes confusing (KIs#2, #3, #4, #16, and #5).

A participant from a WPAC argues that the design of the workbook seemed confusing to some people. As a result WPACs, with the help of other environmental groups, held some sessions for the public on how to complete the workbook. However, these sessions had very low attendance (KI #2). This research is not able to comment on challenges associated with completing the workbook according to the public web documents because these documents just referred to the online link and asked people to complete the workbook. On the other hand, the government documents reveal that the workbook had some serious shortcomings. For example, the numbers of completed workbooks are insufficient for rigorous statistical analysis (GD#3, #45, #51, #56, and #57). Despite the fact that more than 1000 workbooks were collected in the second phase of the planning process (“Input on Vision”) (see Table 6.1), some of these workbooks were not fully or incorrectly completed. In addition, the rate of completing workbooks dropped drastically after the second phase in the Lower Athabasca region.

Workbook’s shortcomings and challenges as a public engagement tool forced Alberta regional planning process to use open houses as the other public engagement

tool (GDs#3, #45, #51, #56, and#57).

Table 6.1 Analysis workbook, Government of Alberta, public document summary

Consultation Phase	LARP	SSRP
Phase 1, Public Awareness (LUF, ARP)	NA	1,109
Phase 2, Input on Vision	1,103	1,302
Phase 3, Input on Draft Plan	329	TBA

Table 6.2 Participation states, Government of Alberta

Consultation Phase	LARP (stakeholder/ public)	SSRP (stakeholder/ public)
Phase 1, Public awareness (LUF, LARP)	Not Available	500
Phase 2, Input on Vision	490/270	682/295
Phase 3, Input on Draft Plan	460/320	TBA

6.2.4 Open houses

Most of the key informants and public web documents argue that the open houses need to be organized more effectively to reveal the ideas of the public and stakeholders (KIs #2, #3, #5, #14, and PWDs #3, #15, #76). The public meetings were designed to collect the public input but did not empower the participants to directly change or influence the planning process or the plans outcomes. Many scholars have argued that the design of public meetings has a direct impact on the perception of fairness because it reveals to what extent the public can influence the planning process (Wengert, 1976, Arnstein, 1996).

Personal observation via participating in public meetings and various open houses shows that the open houses were organized in two sessions; a session for the stakeholders and a session for the public (see Table 6-2). These sessions were usually held in the morning and afternoon, respectively, on the same day (GDs #4, and #89).

Stakeholder's session started with planners first presenting a short summary of the plan's proposed outcomes (Personal observation, 2013). Stakeholders who were sitting on a round table with groups of 3 or 4 people had a chance to provide their input about each topic (KIs #3, #16 and observation). All ideas, criticisms, and compliments were written down by the facilitators on each table and the discussions at each table were summarized and presented on sticky notes on the wall. Stakeholders could ask questions about technical issues. If the facilitator was unable to answer the question, the planners who were experts on that subject came and explained the subject. Stakeholders had the opportunity to change their locations and join other tables during the day (KI #8, and observation). At the end of each session stakeholders could review all of the sticky notes and provide additional comments.

Some of the key informants who were participating in these public meetings argue they were not able to communicate with larger number of people. An informant from the irrigation districts argues that:

I was at the table that had a woman [who did not agree with water transfer]. I was able to talk to her [and explain why water transfer is essential in some cases]. That was between me and that person, it was not part of the process. It (the explanation) was never mentioned in the meeting so [this] was one example that the meeting is not perfect (KI #3).

The stakeholders argue that the design of the morning sessions did not provide direct opportunities to change the proposed plan outcome.

The afternoon session of open house was designed for the general public. The design of the meeting was different from the stakeholders because there was no presentation and the specialized planners left⁵ (personal observation, 2013). The

⁵ In the meetings there were two different types of experts. First group are the general planners and facilitators that can answers the general question about the plan. Second group are the planners with special expertise for example planners who are specialised in the energy related issues or in the Forestry

main framework of the planning process was presented by government staff in the form of various posters. The public could see the sticky notes on the wall which had a summary of the stakeholder discussions. The ideas of the general public participants were written down on a separate sheet of paper by the facilitators. The personal observation shows that some of the people in the afternoon session argue that open houses did not represent their ideas. However, they also argue that having open houses is better than not having them.

In conclusion, empirical analysis shows that the open houses need to be improved. Both participants in the morning and afternoon sessions argued that the design of the meetings did not empower them to change the proposed plans' outcome directly (KIs #2, #8, #4, and personal observation).

6.2.5 Managing Public Participation by Using Focus Groups⁶

Alberta's regional planning process employs focus groups as a strategy for public engagement. Some scholars have found that the use of focus groups improves the quality of public consultation. When people in a group share same interests, they reach agreements more often (Shannon, 1999) and they are less overwhelmed with different interests and disputes. On the other hand, some scholars found that using focus groups led to biased results, because this method limits the variety of interest and ideas (Lane, 2006).

In Alberta, there are three different focus groups for public consultation: 1) open houses for stakeholders, 2) open houses for the general public and 3) extra opportunities for first nation communities to participate in specific open houses (KI #14). Some key informants believe that the use of focus groups created a better experience for them than

related issues.

For the stakeholder open houses the two groups of expert were answering the questions in the meeting but for the general public the second group of expert left the meeting.

⁶ The use of focus groups is a qualitative method which works with group of people who are asked about their perceptions, opinions. These people are selected because they have certain characteristics in common that relate to the topic (for example open houses which is just targeted for stakeholders).

previous public meetings that they participated in. An informant from a WPAC indicates that:

“They did a very good job [to] have [two different meetings]: The stakeholders meeting and then public meeting. That was a great idea because there are so many stakeholders that they want to get their input. [Stakeholders meetings] are going to overwhelm public process. [It] was a great idea to have them separately” (KI #2).

Twenty percent of key informants and fifteen percent of public web documents support the use of focus groups to manage the public consultation process.

Key informants and public documents expressed that manage public participation using focus group lead to variety of views on the issues of participation. Some key informants argue that stakeholders who had specific interests were not representing Albertans since they want to direct the plan in a way that satisfies their interests (KIs #11, #12, #8).

This research was not able to access any information regarding the First Nation consultation process because their consultation process was separate. Moreover, participating in these meeting were challenging since they were not advertised clearly. As a result, it is not possible to make any conclusions about the First Nation perspective on the planning process.

In conclusion, using focus groups creates a controllable public consultation process since it reduces conflicts between participants. However, a more inclusive public participation process would have ensured that the voice and interest of minorities would have carried more weight. There is some evidence that using focus groups disenfranchised some minority groups and communities.

6.2.6 Summary

The public engagement strategy for the planning process in Alberta was designed to create a successful experience for the public sharing their concerns and ideas with the decision makers (GDs # 12, # 43, and # 76). Although the planning process used various

strategies, most of the key informants and public web documents argue that the strategies for engaging the public, especially the First Nation communities, need to be improved to create a better perception of fairness in the planning process (KIs #1, #2, #4, #6, #13, PWDs #6, #56, #77, #83, and GDs #2, #3, #9, #57, #89).

6.3 Effective Public Participation and Voice

Many scholars believe that effective public participation and voice are important criteria as they promote the perception of a fair process (Lukasiewicz, et al, 2013, Kerselaers et al., 2013). Effective public participation increases the accountability of decision-makers; it legitimizes decision-making, and makes decisions more acceptable by citizens (Kerselaers et al., 2013, Solum, 2004). Effective public participation and voice engender public trust towards the government and empowers citizens (Leventhal, 1980, Solum, 2004). Based on the data collected in this study, two main components are identified as necessary to ensure effective and successful public participation: i) The government must value public input and ii) the government should create bilateral communication. All of the key informants and 70 percent of the public web documents indicate that valuing public's input and creating bilateral communication during and after the public participation process determines the success of the planning process.

6.3.1 The value of Public Input

Scholars argue that planning and the decision making process should take the concerns of public participants into account and value the public inputs to ensure procedural justice (Lind and Tyler, 1988, Kerselaers et al., 2013 , Syme et al., 1999). This viewpoint is supported by this research as all key informants and 60 percent of the public web documents indicate that the public inputs need to be valued and used in the decision making process.

In the study areas, approximately 70 percent of the key informants and 40 percent of public web documents argue that the current public participation process was flawed and

inadequate (KIs #2, #3, #4, #5, #11, #12 and PWDs #13, #46, #89). For instance, a key informant indicates that:

“I think public participation process was flawed. The government tend to have open houses. [The government] likes open houses because people cannot grandstand. [Open] houses are some sort of structure meeting. [Open houses] are not a real way to [participate]”. (KI #5)

Key informants and public web documents also argue that there was not broad public participation in the open houses. They argue that the main purpose of public consultation was to gather input while the public did not have any control over the process or the decision making (KIs #2, #3, #4, #5, #11, #12 and PWDs #13, #46, #89).

Despite the fact that the planning and decision making process should value public input, the empirical analysis shows that participants were concerned about the value of their input. Around 60 percent of key informants and 40 percent of public web documents reflect that the government did not use their input in the decision making process (KIS#2, , #5, #11, and PWDS#4, #38, #46, #57, #89). Other key informants and public web documents are also concerned about how their inputs were used in developing the regional plan. For example, informant #4 says that:

“The government just wants your idea about decisions that are made beforehand.”

Various groups argue that their voices were not considered during the planning process. These groups also argue that they use political actions to voice their interest. For example, some groups argue that talking to MLAs, protesting, signing petitions, or calling the premier of Alberta were better options to affect the planning process (KIs #2, #8, #16, and PWDs #13).

In conclusion, the empirical analysis reveals that the public participation process needs to be improved if it is to support a fair planning process and enhance public trust. Public participants argue that the consultation process was inadequate. They are also concerned about the effect of their input on the decision making process and the

development of the plan.

6.3.2 Bilateral Communication

Dialogue and communication means the exchange of information and ideas between public participants and the government (Frewer, and Rowe, 2005), such as when members of the public ask for more clarification about the plan's visions, process, and outcomes, and the government provides such clarification (Lind and Tyler, 1988). Dialogue and communication during the planning process lead to clarity and transparency which enhance the perception of a fair planning process (Beierle, 1998, Lind and Tyler, 1988, Lukasiewicz, et al, 2013).

The key informants and public web documents argue that the open houses and cyberspace provide various opportunities to communicate with the planners. All of the key informants indicate that the planning process provided mechanism to communicate through open houses where planners answered the questions. However key informants and public web documents are not satisfied or they are not sure if this mechanism worked properly. For example, informant #16 states that:

“[The government provides] a mechanism [for communicating] on the [ESRD] website. So a person could go on the website and offer ideas and ask for the clarification. I don't know that for sure [if you can get any response back]. Other than [cyberspace], the normal public meetings are the place that a person can go and then ask the question or ask for more clarification”.

The analysis shows that most of the public participants did not use the opportunity to ask questions in the planning process. Approximately 90 percent of key informants did not ask any questions personally and they did not know anybody who asked for clarification and got an answer from planners or the government. There were few key informants who used the opportunity to ask questions. Although they did not receive any answers or they were not satisfied with the answers that they did receive. Key informant #3 tried to follow up on some questions and comments which were asked earlier in the process, but because of

changes in the whole organizational system (that have been discussed in section 5.1.1) she/he could not get an answer from the government. Of the 16 key informants, just one have a direct experience of asking a question regarding the planning process (KI#16) and receiving an answer. However, she/he is not satisfied with the answer:

I got an answer. When they released the plan, I had a question about the wetland in the regional plan. I could not find them. They replied that [wetlands] are conserved under the forest land. I was not satisfied because wetlands are not forest. I asked them personally in the public meeting. Sending email has less chance to get an answer (KI #16).

The public web documents reveal that the public has a variety of questions depending on their interests in the planning process and the plan's outcomes (PWD #42). During the open houses, facilitators answered questions from the public and thereby created a better understanding of the planning process and its results (PWD #6). The analysis of the public web documents does not provide information about the government's response to the questions that were asked via cyberspace or email.

To conclude, this research shows that the planning process provided the opportunity for public participants to communicate with the planners. The quality of the communication between planners and public participants might not have been perceived as satisfactory as 90 percent of the key informants did not use this opportunity. Moreover, the few people who used the opportunity were disappointed with the answers that they received.

6.3.3 Summary

The empirical analysis reveals that the regional plans should value public input and communicate with public participants. Despite this, public participants are concerned about the value of public inputs. Some key informants and public web

documents express that the government already had made the final decision and public inputs therefore did not have much value (KIs # 3, #11, and PWDs #12, #28, #98). Public participants also argue that the quality of communication in the planning process needs improvement since questions were not answered clearly (KIs #2, #3, #4, #5, #11, #12, and PWDs #6, #13, #17, #69). Consequently the analysis shows that the public consultation process is considered inadequate and needs enhancement to ensure a fair process.

6.4 Summary-Discussion

The importance of public participation and public consultation has been widely recognized in the literature. Many scholars argue that the participation process should empower public participants (Rockloff, 2006, Wengert, 1976, Arnstein, 1996). The planning process should empower the public to influence the planning process and the outcomes of the plan.

Alberta's regional planning process provided various opportunities for members of the public and stakeholders during the public consultation process to influence the final plan. The planning process engaged unbiased representatives, used various public engagement strategies, and supported effective public participation. However, this research reveals that members of the public and stakeholders did not find that these opportunities provided any real empowerment to make any real difference. Therefore, there are some challenges in redistributing the decision making power in the planning process. Various studies show that other planning processes have faced similar challenges to ensure a strong and fair public consultation process (Rockloff, 2006, Wengert, 1976).

This research shows that there are some challenges in ensuring proper representation of the relevant interest in the region. The results reveal that there is a sense of bias in the selection of RAC members. Moreover, other challenges such as

RAC members' unequal access to resources and information, unclear responsibilities, and confidentiality of the RAC meetings are barriers impeding a fair consultation process (see Table 6-3).

A review of the literature reveals that various planning and decision making processes have experienced similar challenges associated with providing a fair and unbiased representation. Tompkins et al. (2008) argue that fair representation of a region or group is always challenging because there is not an exact instruction on how many representatives should be selected. In addition, other studies in Australia and the US show consultation is often dismissed as an ineffective exercise because it confers little decision making power (Ihrke and Newson, 2005, Tompkins et al., 2008). During the consultation process, government agencies played a critical role as they identified and provided the information to stakeholders and the public, designed the draft plan, and made the decision on thresholds and trade-offs (Lane, 2005, Loch, et al., 2013). To ensure a fair planning process, representatives who participate in the consultation process on behalf of the public need to have some control over the planning and decision making process (Rockloff, 2006, Wengert, 1976, Arnstein, 1996).

Alberta's regional planning process needs to use effective public engagement strategies (see Table 6-4). It needs to change its advertising strategies because most key informants did not recall advertised opportunities during the consultation process. The planning process's public engagement tools (e.g. workbook and open houses) did not capture the views of the public comprehensively. The regional planning process used focus groups as the only strategy to manage public consultation processes. This strategy has some shortcomings that marginalized some groups and communities.

Lind and Tyler (1988) argue that the quality of the public engagement strategies influence participants' satisfaction, and perception of procedural justice. Kerselaers

et al. (2013) reviewed procedural justice and distributive justice in rural planning in Belgium. They indicate that using effective public engagement strategies offers possibilities for learning and interaction. Such strategies can provide a better mutual understanding and increase the likelihood of bridging differences and leading to more creative solutions. These strategies also create time and opportunities for people to get used to the planning and decision making process. Therefore, people become more familiar with the plan and plan outcomes and this increases the probability of decisions and outcomes being accepted (Kerselaers et al., 2013, Lynch and Gregor, 2004).

This study found that the public consultation process in Alberta's regional planning process is inadequate. Public participants did not find it effective and successful (see Table 6-5). Almost all participants are concerned about the value of their input during the consultation process. The quality of communication in the planning process was not satisfying since public participant questions were not answered or the answers were not clear.

To ensure a fair public participation process, Wengert (1976) and Arnstein (1996) indicate that public participation should provide the power and hope for participants who want to change the process and alter the outcomes. As a result, public input should be valued and reflected in the final plan. Herian, et al. (2012) studied public consultation in Lincoln, Nebraska in the United States. They argue that the public participation process is of mutual benefit for participants and the government by identifying value conflicts and creating a sense of collaboration and teamwork. Kerselaers et al. (2013) also argue that participation should go beyond the public display of the plan and public hearing. Public input should have an actual influence on the planning process, especially when it comes to land use planning. However, land use planning processes are often expert-driven and the final decisions are therefore likely to reflect the preferences of professional planners and policymakers (Kerselaers et al. 2013, Glover et al., 2008). The

review of the literature supports the findings from this thesis research that the quality of public consultation affects the perception of procedural justice in the planning process.

In conclusion, this study identified three critical components in the planning process to ensure fairness of the process: (1) unbiased representation across regions, (2) effective public engagement strategies, and (3) successful public participation and voice (see Table 6-3, 6-4, 6-5). The public consultation process in Alberta's regional planning process needs substantial changes to satisfy the identified components and to ensure a fair process.

Table 6.3 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to unbiased representing the regions

	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Procedural Justice Components Related to Representing the Region	Selection of Regional Advisory Council (RAC)	Argument #1: RAC is a strong part of the Alberta regional planning process	Strong	All key informants mention that RAC brings various ideas to the table and integrate the experiences and perspective from various interests
		Argument #2: There are some concern about the selection of RAC members in both regions	Strong	More than 60 percent of key informants questioned the fairness of the process and allude to the selection of RAC members as the source of this concern.
		Argument #3: The number of RAC members should be limited to be manageable	Minimal	Twenty percent of key informants believe that the number of people who participate in the RAC should be limited because the timeline is so tight and larger groups need more time to reach consensus.
	RAC`s responsibilities	Argument #1: Clarity of roles and responsibilities of RAC improve the perception of fairness	Strong	Ninety percent of participants indicate the transparency of RAC`s role and responsibility improve the perception of fairness in planning process. This argument is supported by public web documents and government documents
		Argument #2: There are concerns about the way RAC`s recommendations are used to develop the plan	Strong	Approximately 70 percent of the key informants are concerned about how much effect the RAC reports have on the regional plan outcome. Public web blog analysis show differences between the RAC recommendations and the LAPR final plan rising questions about the value of RAC
		Argument#3: Confidentiality of RAC meetings limited RAC`s ability to function which degrades the perception of fairness of process	Moderate	Fifty percent of key informants believe that confidentiality of RAC meetings change the perception of the Alberta regional plan from being an inclusive process to an exclusive procedure

Table 6.4 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to effective public engagement strategies

	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Procedural Justice Components in public engagement strategies	Advertising public participation opportunities	Argument#1: The planning process should inform the public and encourage it to participate in meetings and open houses	Strong	All participants in in-depth interviews as well as public and government documents argued that the planning process used advertisement strategies to inform public and encourage them to participant in the planning process
		Argument #2: The government website was a successful advertisement strategy	Strong	Eighty percent of participants argue that advertising by web was effective however some groups do not have access to Internet.
		Argument #3: Advertisements in local radios, TV, and newspapers were not that successful	Strong	Just 3 out of 16 key informants mentioned other types of advertisement beside the web sites.
	Public Engagement Methods	Argument #1 Open houses and workbooks were two public engagement tools in the planning process	Strong	All of the key informants were aware of open houses as an opportunity to provide their input to the planning process. However, just 75 percent of participants were aware of workbook as an opportunity to provide their input.
		Argument #2: Filling the workbook is time consuming and sometimes confusing	Strong	Approximately 75 percent of participants in in-depth interviews argued that the workbook is too long and completing it is time consuming and sometimes confusing. The number of incomplete workbooks support this argument.
		Argument #3: Open houses are not representative of the ideas of stakeholders and the public generally, however it is better than nothing	Moderate	Fifty percent of key informants believe that open houses are not effective. Some public web documents also argue that although they participate in open house, they do not believe that can affect the outcome of the plan. The observations support the argument.
	Managing public Participation with Focus Group Strategy	Argument #1: Separating stakeholders and public session improves the perception of fairness in the planning process	Minimal	Out of 16 participants 4 believe that the stakholder process should be separate from the public process
		Argument #2: The planning process uses focus groups to manage public meetings in the consultation process	Minimal	Three out of 16 key informants mention the argument. Around 10 percent of public docuemtns had the same concers.

Table 6.5 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to successful public participation (Fifth theme)

	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Procedural Justice Components related to voice and public participation	Public Inputs' Value	Argument #1: The public participation process was flawed	Strong	Seventy percent of key informants as well as some public document believe that their inputs do not have any effect on the final plan.
		Argument #2: Talking to MLAs, protest, sign petitions, or call the premier of Alberta have more effect than participating in the process	Minimal	Frothy percent of public documents argue that the current public consultation process is not adequate, so public need to send their input via other tools such as talking to MLA
	Bilateral Communication	Argument #1: The planning process should improve bilateral communication	Strong	All of the key informants as well as public and government documents argue that the planning process needs to have an effective bilateral communication mechanism.
		Argument #2: Getting answers in open houses were more likely than sending emails	Moderate	Approximately 90 percent of key informants have not asked any question personally and they did not know anybody who asked via email. Public web documents show that they got answers to their questions.

Chapter 7 Fairness of the Decision Making Process

A review of the literature reveals that the decision making process is a critical part of a fair regional plan. The decision making process provides the means to agree on the visions and objectives of the plan (Lawrence, et al. 1997, Syme and Nancarrow, 2006, Ptaszek, et al., 2013). This chapter discusses the essential components of a fair decision making process based on an analysis of interview transcripts, public web documents, and government documents to provide an answer to the first research question: “How did the public and stakeholders in Alberta perceive the fairness of regional planning process?” and thereby achieve the second and third research objectives.

Based on this research, it can be argued that a fair decision making process contains three critical components. The first component is a clear statement of who has the decision making responsibilities and authorities. It focuses on the responsibility of the Land Use Secretariat and the government who make the final decisions in the planning processes. The second component is a clear understanding of conflicts and gaps. It focuses on how the Alberta regional planning process resolves conflicts and provides compensations. The third component focuses on the concerns expressed by key informants and in public web documents over the implementation challenges of the plans.

7.1 Decision Making Responsibilities and Authority

The decision making responsibilities and authorities are important elements in a fair planning process. According to the LUF, the government is the only authority permitted to make the final decisions in Alberta’s planning process. This decision making practice is a fairness concern among many key informants. The top-down management approach contradicts the purpose of employing the IRM approach which requires a collaborative

planning and decision making process. This research reveals that the public and stakeholders were especially concerned about: (1) the role of the Land Use Secretariat and the Cabinet in the decision making process and (2) the effect of lobbying and political interests on the decisions.

7.1.1 Roles of the Land Use Secretariat and the Cabinet

The majority of key informants and public web documents ask for a clear explanation about decision making authorities. The question of who is responsible for preparing the final draft is identified as a shortcoming of the current decision making process (KI #1, #4, #10 and PWD #2, #30, #42, #87, #99). For instance, one of the key informants claims:

“People want to know who is responsible for setting the thresholds in the draft plans which goes to the Cabinet for the final approval” (KI #4).

More than half of the key informants and 20 percent of the public web documents state that the Land Use Secretariat has the ability to prepare the draft regional plans in various ways according to her/his responsibility (PWD #2, #9, #10, #18, #31, #32, #41, #93):

“[Planners] are a team to get information and input from various departments for the planning process but [the Land Use Secretariat] is the person who put the whole plan together” (KI#14).

By law, the Land Use Secretariat is responsible for preparing regional plans, facilitating the implementation of the plan when they are developed and approved. It is also responsible for reviewing and monitoring plan’s effectiveness and updating the plan every 10 years (GD# 44).

The Land Use Secretariat was established by the Alberta Land Stewardship Act as part of the public service of Alberta and it is not a government department. Some of the key informants and some of the public web documents were skeptical about how the Land Use Secretariat used its responsibilities (KIs #4, #5, #16 and PWDs #54, #63,

#82). For instance, one of the key informants reflected that:

“The RAC’s advisory documents should be sent directly to the Cabinet. [The document] should not go [through the Land Use] Secretariat office. Although, I am sure that the RAC’s advice went to the Land Use Secretariat office, they [Land Use Secretariat’s office] modified the document and then sent it to the Cabinet.” (KI #7).

The lack of a clear description of the Land Use Secretariat responsibilities and decision making authorities in the planning raise concerns among the public and stakeholders.

During the planning process the Cabinet has absolute power, not only to make final decisions but also to determine how the public and stakeholders should be consulted. According to ALSA (2009) the public are not allowed to initiate judicial reviews of the regional plans (Passelac Ross, 2011). Stelfox (2010) believes that the Land Use Framework is the first, and by far the most top-down provincial government initiative which does not involve other governmental and non-governmental groups in final decision making processes (PWD#41).

Some key informants and public web documents argue that this absolute power in decision making has some shortcomings. For example, one of the key informants mentions that she/he was shocked when she/he realized that the Minister did not know that RAC’s advisory report has two versions and also believes that the Minister needs to read the technical report which provides deeper analysis to support the decisions (KI# 13). Two public web documents are also concerned that the Cabinet might not be well informed about the planning process (PWD #14, and#28).

In conclusion, the decision making process for the development of Alberta’s regional plans is not designed to be collaborative and the responsibilities and authority of decision makers are not explained clearly to stakeholders threatening the fairness of the planning process.

7.1.2 Lobbying and Political Decisions

Lobbying and political influence by interest groups may threaten the fairness of Alberta’s regional planning process, especially when the Cabinet is the only authority

who makes the final decision. Fifteen key informants and 30 percent of public web documents argue that lobbying and political influence can change the final decision.

Four in-depth interview participants (25 percent) strongly believe that the final decisions in LARP were changed by political lobbying, which occurred in the last step before the Cabinet's approval, when the public and stakeholders did not have any further opportunity to influence the plan. Eight percent of the public web documents describe specific areas where industry lobbying changed the plan outcomes related to water and conservation areas (McDermott, 2012, PWD #59)

Some policies were not adopted in the final regional plan because of lobbyist influence. Policies such as "No Net Loss" for protecting wetlands and "the bound between Calgary Metropolitan Plan and SSRP" were the most important examples (PWDs #13, and #27). One of the informant's states:

"When people [who are in industry] do not like the conservation areas which are located on top of their land, they phone the minister and they book a meeting. They talk to [the Minister] and change the plan. They try to advocate lobbying for changes after the draft plan's stage when the plan is finalizing. I think there is not much you can do about it" (KI #13).

One of the key informants from a WPAC also adds that the groups who did lobbying in the background managed to get their interests recognized more than others during the planning process.

Half of the key informants and 22 percent of public web documents argue that Alberta's regional planning processes are in favour of some political interests. For example, all of the key informants in Lower Athabasca Region (LAR) believe that the international and political pressure on Alberta's government relates to oil sand development is the main reason why LAR was the first region to implement the planning process. One of the key informants indicates that:

"It was not a surprise that the Lower Athabasca was the first region for planning because of all the international concerns and all of the

attention on the oil sand.” (KI #12)

Key informants from the South Saskatchewan Region believe that the government tries to provide a plan that keeps everybody happy. A key informant from a WPAC argues that making decisions in the planning process is a political choice, because the Cabinet is the final decision maker (KI#2).

Alberta’s regional planning process and outcomes are sensitive to political pressure (KI #12, and PWD #99). LARP sets the number of conservation areas which should be bought from industry and then conserved because of its ecological values. After a year from the time the plan was approved, however, the government cuts the budget for protecting conservations areas and those approved conservation areas are still owned by the industry (KI# 12, and PWD#99).

In conclusion, lobbying and political influence are challenges for a fair decision making process. Key informants and public web documents argue that lobbying and political influences changed the final decisions which had a negative impact on public trust.

7.1.3 Summary

In a planning process, roles, responsibilities, and authority of decision makers should be explained clearly. In Alberta’s regional planning process there are some concerns about (1) the role of the Land Use Secretariat and the Cabinet in the decision making process and (2) the effect of lobbying and political interests on the decisions. Key informants and public web documents argued that lack of a clear explanation on decision making authorities (e.g. Land Use Secretariat) and absolute power of the Cabinet caused some challenges in the process. Moreover, the groups who lobby and use political influence in the backgrounds seem to have the power to change the final decisions.

7.2 Understanding and Resolving Conflicts

The procedural justice literature identifies that a fair decision making process pro-actively tries to resolve conflicts and disputes (Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013, Nancarrow, and Syme, 2004). It also indicates that understanding the value conflicts, designing an appeal system, and providing compensation can improve the perception of fairness and reduce injustice (Leventhal, 1980). Moreover, various studies reveal that a lack of an effective compensation process increases injustice (Kerselaers et al., 2013, Nancarrow, and Syme, 2004).

There are two critical components in Alberta's planning process which influence the fairness of the decision making process: (1) understanding the value conflicts and gaps; and (2) an effective appeal process. These components influence the process's ability to reach its objectives and resolve disputes and conflicts in the region.

7.2.1 Understanding Value Conflicts and Gaps

Boonstra (2006) argues that to ensure a fair planning process, value conflicts and conflicting interests should be considered in the decision making process. In this study the planning process provides various opportunities to identify conflicting interests. For instance, conflicting values and information gaps were identified during the process of data analysis (KI #4). Moreover, the RAC consultation process was designed to provide a better understanding of the conflicts of values and interests among stockholders (KI #5). For example, a key informant in favor of RAC consultation process states that:

I learned from everybody else during the planning process. I think you have to allow each of those sectors to talk about interests that are important to them. Then the government has still the role of decision making because they still have to balance the trade-off. [Even if the government could not resolve conflict] at least now, sectors have been educated about their values, interests and available data. (KI#13)

The public consultation process is also designed to facilitate an understanding of conflicting interests amongst the general public.

Key informants and public web documents do not express much optimism to solve

any conflicts in the planning process. Sixty percent of key informants and 30 percent of the public web documents argue that the planning process did not solve conflicts at all and that; on the contrary, it led to more conflicts. A key informant who was unhappy about RAC's conflict resolution process states that:

[RAC members] work for days to come up with the appropriate conservation area while in one meeting and one hour forestry just pushed back. They said it will cost us one point five million dollars and they reduced it from 30 percent conservation area to 6.9 percent (KI#13).

Four key informants argue that the planning process did not solve conflicts but it was a starting point to identify and solve conflicts in the future. A key informant who was a RAC's member thinks that:

...planning virtually creates conflict or emphasis on some sort of conflicts. In planning sometimes the government and planners do not resolve a conflict. They accept the conflict exists and then they make a decision and then they rationalize the decision and then they move on, so conflict will still be there. In fact at some time the government will come back and think about it again (KI#7).

Some of the key informants and public web documents argue that people should be optimistic about the planning process. The regional planning process provided/prepared the ground for identifying values which help to solve conflicts in the future (KI #7, 13, and PWD # 43, #65).

There are some important conflicts that the decision makers were not able to solve or provide sufficient solutions to in the planning process. For instance: i) protecting caribou habitats in LARP from oil sand development (KIs #6, #12, #16 and PWDs #12, #43, #68); ii) balancing tourism and water protection in the Castle Mountain area in SSRP (KIs #2, #3, #5, #13 and PWDs #7, #13, #17, #43); iii) resolving land-use conflicts such as urban development encroaching onto rural land; iv) property rights (KIs #2, #4, #8, #9, #15, and PWDs #21); and v) first nations issues (KIs #12, #14, #16 and PWDs #12). These challenges are considered important issues in the regions where the regional

planning processes are implemented.

In conclusion, the planning process is successful in identifying information gaps and conflicts. It also identifies the policy gaps and conflicts; however it does not explain how the plan can provide strategies and outcomes to solve these conflicts (GDs #82, #83, #31, #32).

7.2.2 Correctability

Correctability means that procedures must be in place to modify or reverse decisions through appeals and grievance processes. This involves the establishment of an appeal system and compensation mechanisms. Correctability was identified by Leventhal (1980) as a characteristic of a fair planning process. A fair process must have a clear and transparent appeal system after the plan has become a legal document to provide a formal way of changing its official decisions (Wendorf, et al., 2002). The correctability can be ensured through compensation mechanisms which are mainly financial contributions to compensate for land or other property loss or decreasing application possibilities (Kerselaers et al., 2013). Another form of compensation is to give new land or property in exchange for that being lost (Lawrence, et al., 1997).

The appeal process under Alberta's regional plans is based on requesting formal change after the plan has been approved by the Cabinet (ALSA, 2009 Division 3, p 36). Government documents explain that the Alberta regional planning process appeal mechanism and compensation process will be under various acts. For example TOR LARP (2009) indicates that:

In cases where conservation areas conflict with mineral tenure (as regards surface or in situation development), current policies and regulations (i.e., under the auspices of the Mines and Minerals Act) enable the Alberta government to cancel the mineral leases and provide compensation to the leaseholder. (PWD #4, p 14)

The same document also identifies that the implementation of regional plans follow the

laws of Alberta. All decisions that implement regional plans are made under existing laws. All rights to appeal are still under existing laws that are not changed by the LARP.

The empirical analysis shows that the number of key informants familiar with the appeal process in Alberta is low. Out of 16 key informants only two are aware of the compensation process. One of the key informants states that:

[People] can use the appeal system and they can get compensation based on the other acts like Mine and Mineral Act. But there was not any claim and any appeal process yet, until now (KI #15).

On the other hand, nearly 50 percent of the public web documents discuss appeal mechanism and how this mechanism works in Alberta's regional plans.

Alberta's regional plans have a complex appeal mechanism. This is a main reason why a very limited number of key informants are aware of it and many public web documents discuss this issue. One of the public web documents produced on behalf of the municipalities of Southern Alberta states that there are deep concerns about the lack of an appeal process or any flexibility to deal with future disagreement or conflicts in the planning process (PWD # 31).

In conclusion, the key informants and public web documents argue when legislation is complex; it is difficult to know what the plan's consequences will be and which compensations will be necessary. As a result, key informants and public web documents are not sure about how Alberta's regional planning processes will compensate unsatisfactory decisions and policies (KI #15). Moreover, government documents (e.g. #4) do not provide a clear explanation about how public concerns about the appeal mechanisms will be addressed.

7.2.3 Summary

The empirical analysis indicates that the ability to understand, resolve, and provide compensation for conflicts has a direct impact on the perception of a fair planning process (see Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2). The current planning process is designed to

provide a comprehensive perspective about value conflicts, information gaps, and conflicting interests. However, it did not solve, or provide sufficient solutions to, some important challenges in the regions.

The Alberta regional plans' compensation process fall under the existing laws (ALSA, 2009 Division 3, p 36). The government documents indicated that ALSA or the regional plans do not limit any existing rights to compensation and respect all existing appeal mechanisms under Alberta's legislations (GDs #4 and #89). However, key informants and public web documents still argue that some of the current appeal processes are not sufficient and too complex as they are divided among multiple pieces of legislation.

7.3 Understanding Implementation Issues and Challenges

Kerselaers et al. (2013) believe that to ensure procedural justice, decision making processes should provide a clear link between vision and implementation. This research found that a fair planning process must provide a clear insight into how plan outcomes and objectives will be achieved. Public web documents and key informants contend that the planning processes do not provide a clear description about how the plan strategies and outcome will be implemented. For example, one of the most important concerns in both regional plan documents is how the regional plan will use current resources and human capacity of the region to reach the desired water management outcomes.

7.3.1 Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) was put into effect on September first, 2012. One of the final focuses of the plan is that "air and water are managed to support human and ecosystem needs" (2012, p46, GD#9). There were some serious shortcomings in the planning process which have created challenges for implementing the outcome of the plan. The first challenge which is voiced by most of the key

informants and public web documents is that while the plan provides opportunities to integrate various sectors and organizations in the region integration in the Lower Athabasca region did not actually happen. For example, one of the key informants from WPAC states:

WPACs are working on “Water Management Framework” which set trigger scales for water flow. We are not working with LARP. LARP has its own team which works on Surface Water Framework. I think these two frameworks are parallel. We collect the same data as the other agent [LARP team]. [There are some differences in our data such as] the terminology [used in] data. Quality insurances, distributions, and limits are different (KI #16).

Six key informants from Lower Athabasca argue that the planning process does not provide a clear strategy to explain how various sectors in the regions will work together to implement the plan (KI #6, #11, #12, #14, #15, #16). Half of these key informants also believe that the lack of guidance on using current institutional resources had a negative impact on the perception of fairness in the plan (#11, #12 and PWD #3, #87). These key informants and public web documents also argue that the importance of local planning is not sufficiently addressed in the plan and during the planning process. The plan is silent on the implementation and coordination through the local and regional planning processes (KI #11, #12, and PWD #3). The key informants and public web documents asked for a clear and transparent process to define the role of local government in the implementation of the plan because local governments will be challenged to interact in a regional planning setting that does not provide an administrative framework or acknowledge impediments to the local implementation (KIs #16, #15 and PWDs #3, #54).

The second challenge is described by one of the key informants from the RAC who believed that the “Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River” should not be considered as an adaptive management framework. This key informant argues that because industry is not ready to work with the government on measuring the cumulative effects, setting limitation, or identifying the indicators, the

integration did not happen in the “Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River” (KI#6).

The third challenge is that the implementation of a regional plan is very sensitive to political decisions (KI #12, PWD#54, #32). For example, the implementation of the conservation areas in the plan was delayed because of a 30 percent budget cut for Alberta environment. This budget cut impacts: (1) the conservation and restoration of landscapes, water, and wildlife; (2) information on changing weather patterns; and (3) minimizing threats from pollution (PWD #93).

In conclusion, it is identified that three challenges are associated with implementing the plan in LAR: i) the integration of various sectors and organization that are responsible for implementing the plan did not happen; ii) lack of preparation for implementing the “Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River”; and ii) the sensitivity of implementation of the regional plan to political decisions.

7.3.2 South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Draft was released in October 2013. One of the outcomes of the draft plan is that ‘watersheds should be managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship’ (SSRP, 2012, GD #81, and #55). Even though the draft SSRP provides more detailed strategies to accomplish this proposed outcome compared to LARP, there are still some major challenges associated with implementing the plan. Key informants from various water sectors and public web documents express the view that the strategies are general and high level which created some challenges for implementing the plan’s outcome (KIs #2, #3, #4).

The first challenge is the lack of guidance on using current institutional resources. Personal observations during the “Alberta’s Regional Land Use Plan Integrating Water and Land Use” workshop suggested that participants from WPACs have some concerns about the outcome of the draft plan. They believe that even though they are participating

in various workshops, the objectives of the draft plan are still not clear to them (personal observation, 2013). They indicate that the plan introduces various policies and strategies that does not have specific content and argued that the “Surface Water Quality Management Framework”, which sets out the provisions related to management of the issues, is unclear. There are some ambiguity about how this framework will be woven into the existing monitoring and management of surface water quality in the region (KIs #2, #3, #4 and personal observations).

The key informants from the irrigation districts and WPACs ask for more clarification about how they will contribute to the implementation of the SSRP (KIs #2, #4). One of the key informants who was a RAC member reflects that during the consultation process, some RAC members tried very hard to put a reference to the WPACs into the draft plan document. Although that does not delegate any authority right now, it may be useful in the future because the plan document will be approved as a legal document (KI#13). Lastly, the key informants raised the same issue as LARP, namely that the plan does not discuss how current sectors in water management will be integrated into the regional plan management.

The second challenge is the ambiguity with respect to some parts of the plan. This is voiced by various public web documents and key informants. For example, Barretto et al. (2013) state their concerns about the implementation of the plan:

Given that water allocations are outside of the scope of the SSRP and outside of the jurisdiction of the regional advisory council, it will be interesting to see how cumulative effects management is implemented in a region where the water allocation limit has been reached. It will be difficult to properly implement cumulative-effects management without at least considering water allocations (PWD #29, p1).

Other public web documents related to the SSRP note that throughout the document, definition of several terms (e.g., conservation management area) was missing (PWD #17 and KI #3, #7, #11). These documents also argue that the plan is ambiguous and can be interpreted as reflecting a different understanding about each undefined term.

In conclusion, although the draft of SSRP provides more strategies for achieving the plan outcomes about water, public web documents and key informants still believed that the process was overly general and ambiguous. As a result, there will be challenges in implementing the plan's strategies.

7.3.3 Summary

Many scholars believe that a fair process facilitates the implementation of the draft plan so that its objectives and visions are met (Solum, 2004, Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013, Nancarrow, and Syme, 2004). Alberta's regional plans introduce the outcomes of the plan in various sections and provide strategies to achieve the outcomes. Key informants and public web documents in both SSRP and LARP argue that there are challenges in reaching water management objectives. Both plans contain ambiguous strategies to integrate current water management sectors into the regional plan management system. Lack of preparation for implementing "Groundwater Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River" and political notions of the plans' strategies are considered as main barriers to implement the plan in LAR. While, lack of clear definitions for some terms and conditions in the draft plan are identified as a challenge in implementing the plans' strategies in SSR.

7.4 Summary discussion

Decision making is one of the important phases in the planning process which links vision, plan, and implementation. The decision making stage in the planning process has a direct impact in the perception of procedural justice when stakeholders compare the final decision with the summary of public consultations (Kerselaers et al., 2013). This study identifies that the processes to be fair provide the most clear description of: (1) decision makers' roles and responsibilities in making final decisions (see Table 7-1); (2) gaps and solutions for conflicts; and (3) challenges and issues in implementing the plan to achieve its outcomes (see Table 7-2).

Alberta's regional planning processes are designed based on a top down management approach. Therefore, the public has no direct role in making the final decisions. Many studies argue that there is a low level of trust in the final decisions which are made based on a top down management approach (Huitema et al., 2009). To ensure a fair decision making process in a top down management approach, the plan needs to provide a clear and transparent description of decision makers' roles and responsibilities (Boin and McConnell, 2007). Alberta's regional plans should provide a clear description of decision makers' responsibilities to ensure a fair decision making process. Gross (2007) indicates that when the public feels that they know how final decision are made, they are more willing to accept the decisions resulting from the planning process.

The public and stakeholders are concerned about the final decision making process in Alberta's regional planning process. Reviewing the literature reveals that when only one group is responsible for making final decisions, lobbying and political influence are serious threats to the fairness of the process. Ambiguity of the Land Use Secretariat's responsibilities, absolute power of the Cabinet, lobbying, and political influences are identified as factors that altered (or had the potential to alter) decisions at the final phase of Alberta's regional planning process (see Table 7-1). Leahy et al. (2008) suggest that the power enjoyed by lobby groups should be provided equally for all participants in the planning process. They argued that building the public's trust will be extremely difficult if lobbying influence is not distributed equally. Kerselaers et al. (2012), when studying land use planning in Flanders, identified that political influence led to unclear and high level policies and decisions. They found that political decisions degraded the perception of procedural justice and led to conflicts and disagreement.

This study found that the planning process has the ability to identify value conflicts, information gaps, and conflicting interests. The procedural justice literature also showed that a fair process is able to identify and resolve conflicts. In addition, a fair procedure contains some opportunities to modify and reverse decisions by allowing for

compensations or appeals (Tyler et al., 2007, Solum, 2004, Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013).

Alberta's regional plans provide a compensation process to deal with the conflicting interests. This process does not limit any existing rights to compensation and respect all existing appeal mechanisms under Alberta's legislations. However, the key informants and public web documents argue that some of the current appeal processes are not sufficient and too complex as the plan's compensation process is divided among multiple pieces of legislation (see Table 7-2). Many studies also reveal that providing a fair compensation mechanism is challenging because of the complexity of spatial planning in the regions (Leventhal, 1980, Kerselaers et al., 2013, Syme et al., 2006). These studies argue that most of the compensation processes are complex and change over time. Therefore, the public and stakeholders thought that the impacts of the compensation processes were limited. In addition, Dolan (2007) identifies that complexity and uncertainty in providing compensation and the ability to appeal the decisions hamper the perception of procedural justice.

This study identified that the challenges in implementing the plans' outcomes are considered the final factor that affects fairness of the planning process. Various scholars indicated that in a fair planning process, there are clear links between vision, plan, and implementation (Kerselaers et al., 2013). Jonsson (2005) also argues that a fair planning process facilitates implementation of the plan's outcomes. A fair planning process provides clear guidelines on how the plan's objectives and outcomes will be implemented and who is responsible for implementing each part of the process (Tyler et al., 2007). However, this research reveals that there are issues in the planning process which lead to challenges in implementing the plan. The regional plans do not provide an administrative framework for, or acknowledge impediments to, local implementation. Moreover, the planning process did not defined some terms and conditions in the plan explicitly which will lead to confusion in the implementation phase (see Table 7-2).

Scholars who reviewed various planning processes indicate that planning processes are complex and implementing the proposed strategies is challenging. They argue that to deal with challenges, plans should outline the proposed strategies as clear as possible (Tyler et al., 2007, Solum, 2004, Leventhal, 1980). However, in Alberta's regional planning process, key informants and public web documents indicate that some gaps in the planning process, such as not using current institutional capacity in the region and unclear policies, will lead to challenges in the implementation phase.

In conclusion, a fair decision making process rests on three critical components: (1) clarification of decision-making responsibilities, (2) the ability to understand and resolve conflicts, and (3) the ability to address challenges and issues in the implementation of the plan (see Table 7-1 and 7-2). Also, the decision making process in Alberta's regional planning processes needs to become more transparent to satisfy the identified components and to ensure a fair process.

Table 7.1 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to clarifying decision makers roles and responsibilities

Sixth theme: Procedural Justice Components Related to Decision Making Responsibilities and Authority	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Role of Land Use Secretariat and the Cabinet		Argument # 1: Decision making authorities in Alberta's regional planning process should be more clear	Strong	More than 75 percent of key informants ask for more clarification about sectors that are responsible for setting the thresholds and prepare the final plan to submit to the Cabinet. As well as public web documents
		Argument #2: The Land Use Secretariat has the ability to improve Alberta's regional planning process	Moderate	More than 50 percent of key informants and 20 percent of public web documents believe that the Land Use Secretariat's have the power to improve public trust.
		Argument #3: The Cabinet is the final decision maker and needs to be more adaptive and flexible in decision making	Strong	All of the key informants and 98 percent of public web documents believe that the Cabinet can enhance the public trust and improve the perception of fairness of the process.
Lobbying and Political Decisions		Argument #1: LARP were changed by political lobbying which happened in the last step before the Cabinet's approval when public and stakeholders did not have power to change the plan	Strong	90 percent of participants indicated that the transparency of RAC's role and responsibility improve the perception of fairness in the planning process. This argument is supported by public web documents and government documents
		Argument #2: Alberta's regional planning processes are political	Strong	Approximately 70 percent of the key informants are concerned about how much effect the RAC report has on the regional plan outcome. public web blogsshow that differences between the RAC recommendation and the LAPR final plan rise some questions

Table 7.2 Summary of finding for procedural justice components related to Understanding gap and implementation challenges

	Component	Argument	Evaluation	
			Overall Support	Evidence
Procedural Justice Components Related to Understanding and Resolving Conflicts	Understanding Value Conflicts and Gaps	Argument # 1: The CEMS and IRM approaches are used to identify information gaps	Moderate	Approximately 40 percent of key informants and some public web documents support the argument
		Argument #2: Integrating information and expertise during the planning process provides a good opportunity for providing solutions which help to resolve conflicts	Strong	More than 60 percent of key informants and 30 percent of public web documents believe that RAC experiences provide a good opportunity for understating value conflicts and resolving them. Thirty percent of government document support this argument.
		Argument #3: the planning process is just a start to identify conflicts and it does not resolve conflicts	Strong	Around 60 percent of the key informants and 20 percent of public web documents believe that not only do Alberta’s regional planning processes not resolve conflicts they actually create more conflicts.
	Correctability	Argument #1: Alberta regional planning appeal process is complicated	Strong	Out of 16 key informants just 2 knew that Alberta’s regional plans have an appeal system. Public web documents are concerned about lack of appeal processes
		Argument #2: Alberta's regional planning process’s appeal mechanism and compensation process are under various acts.	-	This argument is mentioned by government documents and 15 percent of key informants.
	Procedural Justice Components Related to Implementation issues and challenges	Lower Athabasca Regional Plan	Argument #1: lack of guidance on using current institutional resources is considered as a negative impression on perception of fairness in the planning process	Strong
Argument #2: Environmental budget cut will have a negative impact on implementing the plans’ outcome			Moderate	Thirty percent of key informants and 20 percent of public web documents support this argument.
South Saskatchewan Regional Plan		Argument #1: The plan does not address how current sectors in water management will be integrated into the regional plan management system	Strong	Seventy percent of participants in SSR believe the plan need to more clearly explain how it will be integrated with other sectors
		Argument #2: The plan aims to integrate water management systems, but it only addresses water quality issues and not water quantity issues.	Moderate	Supported by 25 percent of public web documents

Chapter 8 Conclusion

This research evaluates the perception of procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process. This chapter provides a summary of the empirical analysis presented in chapters Five, Six, and Seven and discusses the connection of identified procedural justice components. It is followed by a document of policy implications for the development of future plans. Scholarly and practical research contributions are then identified and highlighted. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed and future research opportunities suggested. This chapter discusses the second research question: "What are the critical components of procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process?" and thereby achieve the third research objectives.

8.1 Model of Critical Fairness Components in Alberta

This research is designed based on grounded theory which uses both inductive and deductive thinking to identify procedural justice components. The analysis provides a clear picture of the critical components of procedural justice in Alberta's planning processes. The procedural justice components are classified in 3 groups, 8 themes and 22 parental nodes (see Figure 8.1). This research analysis shows that the identified results are compatible with the three phases in the planning process. The identified procedural justice components in the planning process include: (1) critical components in designing a fair planning process; (2) critical components of a fair public consultation process; and (3) critical components of a fair decision making process.

The conceptual model is designed to explain the logic behind the empirical data analysis and the results. Perception of procedural justice in case of the Alberta regional planning process can be thought of as a function of three groups of procedural justice components. Each group is a function of two or three themes and each theme can be described as a function of various components that is developed by analyzing the data

collected for this study (see figure 8.1). Symbolically, the logic behind this analysis can be described with the following equations

$$P J \sim G_1 + G_2 + G_3 \quad (8.1)$$

$$G_i \sim T_1 + T_2 \quad (8.2)$$

$$T_i \sim C_1 + C_2 + \dots + C_5 \quad (8.3)$$

$$C_i \sim (Interviews + Public.DOC + Government.DOC + Personal observation) \quad (8.4)$$

Table 8.1 Definition of terms in the equations

Sign	Meaning
PJ	Procedural justice
G	Groups of procedural justice components (3 groups)
T	Theme (8 themes)
C	Component of each themes

The results of this study also show that groups and themes are interconnected and each component has direct or indirect connections with other components. For example, transparency has a direct impact on the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet in the decision making process. However, identifying these connections is out of the scope of this research.

The empirical data analysis indicates that an ideal fair process for regional plans in Alberta has eight distinct themes. According to the key informants, public documents, and government documents, how the government addresses these eight themes when they design the planning process will influence the success of Integrated Resource Management (IRM) and Cumulative Effect Management (CEM) (see Table 8.2).

The procedural justice model organises the procedural justice components in Alberta's regional plan. This model simplifies the planning process and identifies the main characteristics of the Alberta regional planning process. This model breaks down different kinds of issues during the planning process which compromise the procedural justice and highlight the critical parts of the process that need to be clarified to ensure

procedural fairness.

Table 8.2 Themes for an ideal fair process for Alberta regional plans

Plan's design	Theme 1= procedural rules
	Theme 2= Clear vision and objectives
Public consultation process	Theme 3=Unbiased representatives
	Theme 4= Effective public engagement strategies
	Theme 5= Successful public participation (Voice)
Decision making process	Theme 6= Clarity of decision making responsibility
	Theme 7= Understanding and resolving conflicts
	Theme 8= Understanding implementation challenges

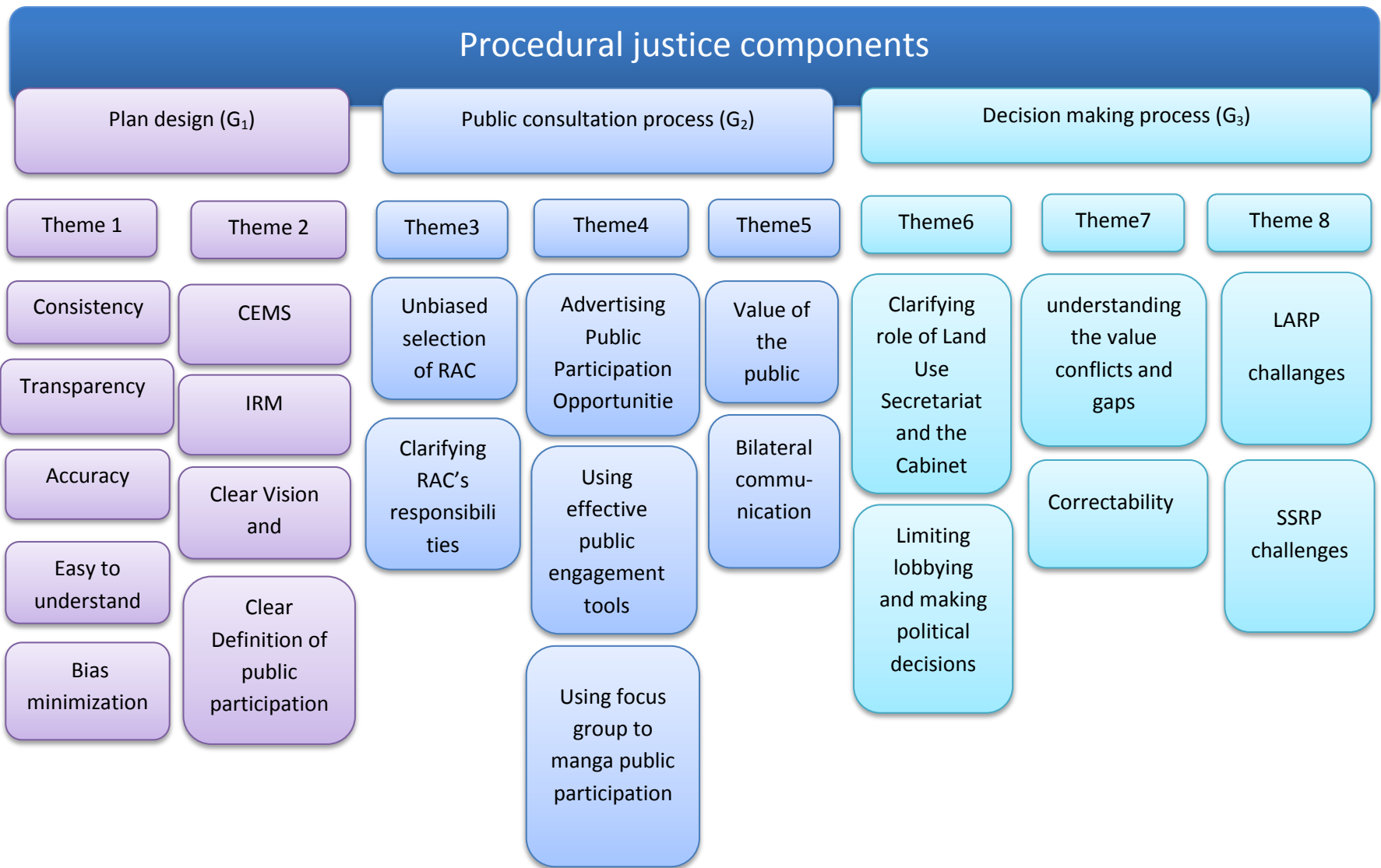


Figure 8.1 Procedural justice hierarchal model

8.2 Policy Implication

The integrated approach of managing natural resources has become increasingly popular. Social justice research is looking for tools to facilitate the acceptance and collaboration necessary for the planning process (Kerselaers et al., 2013, Nancarrow, and Syme, 2004). This section highlights the key findings in this study including how to design a fair process, conduct a fair public participation process, and conduct a fair decision making process.

8.2.1 Designing a Fair Process

The design of a fair process has various components. These components have been categorized into two main themes (T1 = procedural rules and T2 = clear vision and objectives). The key informants and public documents identified various components of each theme, such as consistency, transparency, accuracy and ethicality. These components create procedural rules. The government can enhance the perception of procedural justice in the planning process by emphasizing procedural rules. This study and the literature review support that improving the accuracy and transparency have the highest priority in designing a fair planning process. Accuracy and transparency are the components that are repeatedly mentioned by key informants, public documents, and government documents. If the government improves accuracy and transparency, it decreases the tension between competing interests in the regions. Therefore, reaching a social, economic and environmental balance is viable in the planning process (Kerselaers et al., 2013, Nancarrow, and Syme, 2004).

8.2.2 Fair Public Participation Process

This study found that integrated resource management should be achieved by giving all stakeholders an opportunity to participate, rather than striving to provide them with a predetermined outcome (Jonsson, 2005). According to the

literature, participatory processes contribute to effective policy making and decision making and hence promote the fairness and acceptance of the planning process (Bellamy, 2007, Kerselaers et. al., 2012). The results from this study indicate that to ensure a fair public participation process, the government should use unbiased methods to select the representatives of concerned regions. In addition, decision makers should provide sufficient opportunities and resources for early, informed, and meaningful participation which leads to a successful public participation experience. Consequently, in a fair planning process, public inputs are valued by the government. In addition, public's questions and concerns should be addressed by the planning teams and decision makers.

8.2.3 Fair Decision Making Process

The decision-making process has direct impact on not only procedural justice but also distributive Justice (Syme, et al, 2005). This study found that the decision making process in Alberta's regional planning process is designed from a top down approach. Furthermore, with legal support of ALSA (2009) all legislations about water, land, air, and biodiversity will have to follow Alberta's regional plans. Key informants and public documents expressed the view that the perception of a fair decision-making process will improve considerably if the planning process provides clear description of the decision makers' responsibilities for various layers in the decision-making hierarchy. It was also found that a clear, easy to understand, and fair appeal process will improve the perception of fairness in the planning process. Finally, the impact of value conflicts on the planning processes must be recognized. A fair decision-making process facilitates resolving conflicts while providing solutions to disputes about natural resource allocations in the region.

Table 8.3 Summary of results and arguments

	Theme	Component	Arguments	Support by literature
Design of the process	Procedural rules	Consistent	<p>A#1:Emphasizing procedural rules influence the perception of fairness support by studies in Australia and EU and supports with this research findings</p> <p>A#2: The planning process partly fails to satisfy the procedural roles</p> <p>A#3: Improving accuracy and transparency have the high priority to ensure fairness of the process.</p>	Strong
		Transparent		
		Accurate		
		Easy to understand		
		Ethical		
	Clear vision and objectives	CEMS	<p>A#1:Use of scientific methods in the planning process lead to clear vision and objectives</p> <p>A#2: Use of CEMS and IRM have a positive impact on the fairness of the planning process</p> <p>A#3: The planning process described as a general and confusing plan by public</p> <p>A#4: Ambiguity of the definition of important terms in the planning process leads to confusion.</p>	Minimal
		IRM		
		Clear vision		
Clear definition of public participation				
Public participation process	Unbiased representatives	Selection of RAC	<p>A#1: RAC considered a successful stage of the planning process which empowers the public consultations</p> <p>A#2: Lack of environmental groups in the RAC is identified as a concern</p> <p>A#3: Lack of ability to communicate with others and confidentiality of RAC's meeting context is identified as an obstacles to ensure fair process</p> <p>A#4: The result supporting the literature reveal that selection of RAC members are challenging</p>	Moderate
		Clarity of RAC responsibilities		
	Effective public engagement strategy	Advertising participation opportunities		
		Effective public engagement tools		
		Focus group strategy		

	Theme	Component	Arguments	Support by literature
	Voice	Value of public input	A#1: The results reveal that the public participation was inadequate A#2: Public argued they have to use political actions to voice their interests A#3: The results shows that the plan process provide some opportunities for public to communicate with planner A#4: public argued that the quality of these opportunities needs improvements	Strong
		Bilateral communication		
Decision making process	Clarity of decision making responsibilities	Clarifying role of Land Use Secretariat and the Cabinet	A#1: Although the planning process use IRM the cabinet has the ultimate decision making power A#2: The results reveals that the responsibility of Land Use Secretariat should be explained more clearly A#3: The groups who lobby and use political influence seem to have the power to change the final decisions	Moderate
		Limiting lobbying and making political decisions		
	Understanding and resolving conflicts	Understanding value conflicts and gaps	A#1: A fair decision-making process facilitates resolving conflicts A#2: The planning process is just a start to identify conflicts and it does not resolve conflicts A#3: Alberta's regional planning process's appeal mechanism and compensation process are under various acts. The plan's appeal mechanism is complicated	Strong
		Correctability		
	Understanding implementation challenges	Lower Athabasca region challenges	A#1: The planning process analysis reveals that the plans implementation will face some challenge A#2: The plan does not address how current sectors in water management will be integrated into the regional plan management system A#3: Environmental budget cut will have a negative impact on implementing the plans' outcome	Minimal
		South Saskatchewan region challenges		

8.3 Scholarly and Practical Contributions

This research evaluates procedural justice in Alberta's regional planning process. To accomplish this goal, the experience of those involved in developing the LARP and SSRP, public documents, government documents, and personal observations were used. The study is designed to provide both scholarly and practical contributions. The results from this study show which components in the planning process have positive or negative impacts on the perception of fairness and which components were missing. This study highlights additional steps that must be taken in order to ensure a fair planning process and enhance the acceptance of regional plans. This study also adds weight to one side of the debate in the literature on identifying a good model for evaluating procedural justice, such as identifying the critical components to consider when evaluating procedural justice. The strength of the evidence for the identified components is significant. Moreover, this research provides a practical insight into procedural justice in Alberta regional plans for scholars, planner, the government, stakeholders, and public participants.

Furthermore, additional clarity was added to each component of procedural justice which can improve the perception of fairness in the process for all participants, regardless of their level of influence in the decision-making process. The results also verified critical components identified in the reviewed literature for a fair process. This includes unbiased framework, informative procedure, legitimate representatives, active participation, and resolving conflicts. However, there were some differences in the critical components between the literature and the conceptual findings developed by this study which are highlighted in the Summary discussion in chapters Five, Six, and Seven. For example, the importance of clear visions and objectives and understanding implementation challenges during the planning process . This research also made a contribution to water management in LARP and SSRP by identifying the challenges and concerns in implementing the plan's water related strategies.

Findings of this research help to identify solutions for challenges in the experienced during the planning process in LAR and SSR. This will enhance the ability to deal with these challenges outcomes during the development of five future plans that will be started in the near future in North Saskatchewan Region, Red Deer Region, Upper Athabasca Region, Upper Peace Region, and Lower Peace Region. Consequently, the results provide a view on the strengths and weaknesses of Alberta's regional planning processes and on the public's and stakeholders' perception of a fair process. This study highlights the importance of case study research. In preparing for the data collection, various reports were found suggesting considerable challenges with providing an organized model for evaluating the perception of a fair planning process in land use and water management. Moreover, extensive data is needed to study all aspects of procedural justice in greater depth.

8.4 Limitation and Research Opportunities

Identifying the procedural justice components and arguments made in this study should be seen in light of several limitations related to the complexity of the procedural justice subject and qualitative research. Furthermore, understanding the limitations of the study highlights opportunities for further research.

This research attempts to include the views of various stakeholders and the public. However there was a problem in recruiting a representative of first nation communities in both regions. The representation could have been broadened to include representatives from more private sectors in agriculture and public participants, to broaden the understanding of a fair planning process in both regions. The research could have conducted a survey to have a broader and deeper perspective of the public's view about the regional plan and perception of fair process.

The process of coding text is ultimately subjective and difficult as many principles are hidden and implicit and must be inferred from the text, rather than being explicitly

stated.

The timing of the study limited the extent of the evaluation as other plans had not started yet and SSRP was still in the progress. Even though the LARP is approved, many key informants believed it is too early to evaluate the degree of the success of the planning process. Furthermore, based on the literature, the perception of participants about a fair planning process changes after the plan is implemented (Kerselaers, et al., 2013). This limitation offers opportunity for further study. It would be effective if similar studies were conducted for the next planning process in Alberta. Further studies can provide stronger support for identified procedural justices' components. Procedural justice is one of the main concepts in Social justice literature (Syme and Nancarrow, 2001, 1999, Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005). To provide better understanding of social justice in Alberta regional plans, future studies are recommend with respect to distributive justice. Distributive justice evaluates whether the plans outcome is perceived fair in terms of the distribution of resources between stakeholders. As a result, the future planning process can use these components to ensure the fairness of the process and enhance public acceptance of the plans' outcomes.

Procedural justice and social justice research in a variety of social, economic and environmental contexts facilitate research into the visions and objectives of various planning processes. In conclusion, it is hoped that this dissertation contributes to a greater understanding of the approach, and intends to encourage further study promoting fair planning and decision making processes.

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Appendixes

Appendix A - Letter of Invitation & Consent

Department of Geography

Dear _____;

My name is Parastoo Emami and I am a graduate student at the University of Lethbridge. For my thesis I am working on a project that is titled Evaluating Procedural Justice in Alberta Regional Plan: Study Area “Lower Athabasca Regional Plan” and “South Saskatchewan Regional Plan”. In particular I am researching the principles of social justice in water planning and management, with a focus on procedural justice concerning the way that decisions are made. As a part of this project, I invite you to participate in an in-depth interview on this topic. The interview should take approximately thirty minutes to one hour of your time, with a potential half to one hour follow-up interview. The interview(s) will be audio-recorded with your permission. The interviews will take place in your community in a location convenient to you. Participants will be provided a copy of the transcript from their interview.

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research. Your name and your organization's name will not be used at any time; results will be reported so that no individual respondent can be identified. If you feel uncomfortable with any question you need not answer it; however, the remaining answered questions will be included in the research project. Should you feel uncomfortable with any part of this study at any time, you are free to request your interview, in its entirety, be withdrawn from the project. There are no direct benefits in participating in this research to you as an individual; however you will be contributing to an improved understanding of water management and planning.

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and privacy. While the interviews will be tape-recorded, the voice files will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. The typed interviews will not contain any mention of your name, and any identifying information from the interview will be removed. Also, the typed interviews will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the University of Lethbridge while electronic versions of the interviews and transcripts will be kept on a password protected computer. Only my thesis supervisors and I, all under professional obligation to keep all information confidential, will have access to the interviews. All information will be destroyed in five years.

A short report summarizing the results will be published on the internet at <http://www.waterresearch.net> in advance of the final results being published as part of a Master's Thesis as well as in professional and academic journals and in conference presentations and proceedings papers to academics and policymakers. When using Individual quotes from the in-depth interviews, pseudonyms will be used and where appropriate reference will be made to the

type of stakeholder organization the respondent belongs to. At no time will an individual be identified.

If you have any questions or require further information about this study please contact me, Parastoo Emami, at 403-329-4407 or Parastoo.Emami@uleth.ca. *You can also contact my supervisors Dr. Wei Xu in the Department of Geography (phone: 403-332-4561; email: wei.xu@uleth.ca) or Dr. Henning Bjornlund in the Department of Economics (phone: 403-317-2884; email: henning.bjornlund@uleth.ca). Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge (phone: 403-329-2747 or email: research.services@uleth.ca).*

Thank you in advance for your interest in this project. If you are willing to participate, please sign this consent form below.

*Parastoo Emami, B.A.
Student Investigator*

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on Evaluating Procedural Justice in Alberta Regional Plan, and consent to participate in this study.

_____ *(Printed Name)*

_____ *(Signature)*

_____ *(Date)*

Appendix B - Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Pre-Interview Questions:

1. Role in Regional planning: _____
2. Region: _____

(Optional Questions)

- A. Gender:
- B. Age:
- C. Department you are working for:
- D. Short description of your responsibilities:
- E. How long have you been working in this position?

Thank you for meeting with me. Pull out a copy of the Letter of Consent and hand to participant. Did you have a chance to read the Letter of Consent? Do you have any questions that I could answer?

If the letter has been read and there are no questions: Do you agree to participate in the interview?

If yes: Have participant sign two copies (one for their records, one for interviewer records).

If no: Thank-you for your time. End interview.

If the letter has not been read and/or there are questions: Read or ask them to read the letter and/or answer any questions.

Do you agree to participate in the interview?

If yes: Have participant sign two copies (one for their records, one for interviewer records).

If no: Thank-you for your time. End interview.

Do you agree to be audio-recorded?

If yes: Start the recording and proceed to the next section of the interview guide.

If no: Do not start recording. Proceed to the next section of the interview guide and take notes.

There is a good possibility that the reviewers will ask you to conduct a grammatical editing for the interview questions because some of them as written will be difficult for participants to understand.

Interview Questions:

First set of questions are focused on “Unbiased Framework”; the prompt questions are designed to explore the various aspects of unbiased framework which is a first principle for defining a fair process.

1. Can you describe the framework of regional plans for your region?

Prompt questions: Why would this region need a regional plan? What are the main issues and challenges in your region? To what extent can this regional plan respond to regional challenges and issues? In your opinion does this regional plan collect the necessary information for decision making? What is your idea about the quality of information that this regional plan used for planning and decision making? In your opinion, does the planning process obtain accurate information about the region? Which sectors are responsible for providing information and data for planning? Does regional planning process have a clear and a step by step process? In your opinion, does the planning process allow personal biases to influence the recommendation? Does planning process allow for requests for clarifications or additional information?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you explain it more?

Second set of questions are focused on “Informative procedure”. The prompt questions are concentrating on two sub-criteria ability of providing Knowledge and preparing public for effective participation.

2. Can you tell me how does the regional plan provide the needed background to public and planners?

Prompt questions: What are the main subjects in the needed background? What are the main steps for introducing the needed background? Which sector(s) is (are) responsible for providing the needed background? Are there any differences between the needed background for public audiences and public participants? If there is, can you explain them? How much detail should be provided for filling the needed background for public participants? How do public participants prioritize their shared values in the planning process? Can public request more information about the plan or subjects related to the plan? In your opinion, do all people in the region have equal access to the needed background? In your opinion, can equal access to information and the needed background improve public participation? How does regional plan provide equal access to the needed background?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you explain it more?

The next sets of questions are focused on “legitimate representation”. Fair process should provide unbiased selection of agencies which are involved in planning process, rights for public to participate, and equal opportunity for public who will be affected by plan to participate. Question 3 is designed to explore various aspects of legitimate representativeness of the regional plan.

3. In your opinion, how does this regional plan provide representative participant for various sectors?

Prompt questions: How was the advisory council selected? How were other agencies that provide information and other services in regional plan selected? In your opinion are these agencies good representative for this region? Which sectors are the most/ least involved in the planning process? Based on the regional plan, who can participate in planning process? What are the main steps for inviting public participators? Do participants have equal right to participate? How does regional plan provide the equal right? How many meeting are designed for gathering planners? How many public meeting are designed for gathering stakeholders and public participants? Where are the public meetings held? Are they accessible for all participants? What strategies have been used to attract more public participants?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you explain it more?

Question 4 is concentrate on “Active participation”. Based on various procedural justice theories ability to express ideas and views (voice), control on process, and control on final decision (which can be made at the end on the process) are the main sub-criteria which defines active participation in the planning process. The proposed questions will look into various aspect of “Active participation”.

4. Can you tell me how does this planning process support active public participation?

Prompt question: How does regional plan supports different ideas and interests in planning process? How are different interests recognized during this process? In your opinion, whose interests are recognized the most during the process? How are the priorities in planning process chosen? Who is responsible in determining the priorities? Which categories of public participants are the most/least involved in the planning process? How do the participants receive participation feedbacks in the planning process before the plan becomes a legal document? How can planning process improve mutual relationship between the public participants and the planners? How does the public participation effect the final decision? How can the planning process improve public trust? Do public participants have a control on choosing the best solution that is proposed during the process? How can public participants choose between different final strategies or solutions?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you it explain more?

Question 5 intends to find answers related to how the planning process can “resolve the conflict”. Resolving the conflict has various sub-criteria. For example, Identifying shared value, ability to

make fair decisions, providing compensation for people who been harmed by decision, and ability of identifying and correcting wrong decisions.

5. Can you tell me how this planning process resolves conflicts?

Prompt questions: How many conflicts did happen during this planning process? Which conflict(s) was (were) most important? How many solutions were proposed for the most important conflict? How did the planning process choose between the proposed solutions? In your opinion, do you think fair decision was made for these conflicts? In case of conflict, who was responsible for proposing a resolution? Were the decisions representative of the choice of majority of participants? Did this plan provide compensation for people who were harmed by the decision in case of conflict? How did this plan provide the compensations? Can you give some examples of these compensations? Can public participants question the determined decisions? How did the plan review decisions before sending them for legal confirmation? How does the regional plan identify unsatisfactory decisions or mistakes during planning process? How does the regional plan change unsatisfactory decisions or mistakes during planning process?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you explain it more?

Question 6, will conclude the interview. In question 6, I will ask about personal perception about fairness in the regional planning process and what factors can be identified as effective factors for improving justice and reducing injustices in planning process

6. In your opinion, how can the planning process be improved to be a more just and fair procedure?

Prompt questions: With current knowledge about the planning process, if you start from the beginning, which part you would change to have more just and fair process ? In your opinion and with respect to providing equal opportunity for participants, which part of the planning process can be considered as the strongest/weakest part of the planning process? In your opinion, in theregional plan which factors can cause injustices during the planning process? Can you explain how? In your opinion, what are the important factors that make theRegional plan have a fair process?

Probing question: you mentioned, can you tell me why? Can you explain it more?

This is the end of interview:

- Is there anything that we have not discussed that you would like to tell me more about?
- Is there any advice you would like to give to decision makers in other Alberta regions?
- Is there any advice you would like to give to planners in other regions?
- Is there anything you would like to ask me?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. May I contact you if I have further questions?

Yes / No

Once the interview has been transcribed I will send you a copy for your review. Should you have any questions about today, about the contents of the transcript, or about the research project please contact me by email at Parastoo.Emami@uleth.ca or by phone at 403-329-4407.

Appendix C Government Documents List

GD#	Name	Links
1	Aboriginal Relations Grants & Funding	http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/Grants-Funding.cfm
2	Land Use framework presentation	https://landuse.alberta.ca/Documents/LUF_Draft_Land-use_Framework_Multi-Stakeholder_Working_Groups_Review_Report-2008-11.pdf
3	TOR LARP	http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/documents/45582/45582E.pdf
4	Release of the South Sask Reg Advisory Council Advice	http://www.landman.ca/pdf/2011/AB%20Release%20of%20the%20South%20Sask%20Reg%20Advisory%20Council%20Advice.pdf
5	Appendix H in SSRP	https://landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/SSRP%20Final%20Document_2014-07.pdf
6	Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2011-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/Documents/LARP_Draft_Lower_Athabasca_Regional_Plan-2011-08.pdf
7	Draft Lower Athabasca Regional Plan – web	http://environment.alberta.ca/03422.html
8	Proposed Lower Athabasca Integrated Regional Plan Regulations - 2011-03	https://landuse.alberta.ca/Documents/LARP_Phase_3_Draft_Lower_Athabasca_Integrated_Regional_Plan-Strategic_Plan_and_Implementation_Plan-P3-2011-03.pdf
9	Advisory council	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
10	Highlights of LARP	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
11	Public participation	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPPanning/Pages/default.aspx
12	LARP's plan out come	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPPanning/Pages/default.aspx
13	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 01-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
14	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 02-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
15	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 03-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
16	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 04-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
17	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 05-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx

GD#	Name	Links
18	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 06-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
19	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 07-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
20	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 08-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
21	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 09-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
22	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 10-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
23	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 11-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
24	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 12-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
25	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 13-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
26	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 01-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
27	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 02-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
28	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 03-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
29	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 04-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
30	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 05-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
31	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 06-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
32	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 07-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
33	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 08-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx

GD#	Name	Links
34	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 09-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
35	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 10-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
36	LARP RAC Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 11-P2-2010-03	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
37	Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Members - 2009-06	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
38	Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council Team Charter - 2009-04	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
39	Lower Athabasca Regional Plan 2012-2022 Approved 2012-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/Lower%20Athabasca%20Regional%20Plan%202012-2022%20Approved%202012-08.pdf
40	Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPRRequestReview/Pages/default.aspx
41	South Saskatchewan Region Status: Planning and Consultations Underway	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/Pages/default.aspx
42	Making and Amending Regional Plans	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/Governance/MakingAmendingRegionalPlans/Pages/default.aspx
43	Regional plans administration	https://landuse.alberta.ca/Governance/Administration/Pages/default.aspx
44	Phase 1 South Saskatchewan Regional Workbook Results Summary - 2010-07	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
45	Phase 1 Summary of the 2009 Consultation Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2010-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/Documents/LARP_Phase_1_Summary_of_the_2009_Consultation-P1-2010-08.pdf
46	Phase 2 Public Consultation Summary Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2010-12	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx
47	Phase 2 Stakeholder Consultation Summary Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2010-12	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx
48	Phase 3 Public Consultation Summary Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2011-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx
49	Phase 3 Stakeholder Consultation Summary Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2011-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx
50	Phase 3 Workbook Summary Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2011-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx
51	Response to Aboriginal Consultation on the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan - 2013-06	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/LARPConsultation/Pages/default.aspx

GD#	Name	Links
52	South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Roles and Responsibilities - 2010-11(1)	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/Response%20to%20Aboriginal%20Consultation%20on%20the%20Lower%20Athabasca%20Regional%20Plan%20-%20202013-06.pdf
53	South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Public Consultation field	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/SSRP%20Draft%20SSRP%202014-2024_2013-10-10.pdf
54	SSRP Draft SSRP 2014-2024_2013-10-10	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPPlanning/Pages/default.aspx
55	SSRP Phase 2 Working Towards the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Workbook-P2-2011-04	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPPlanning/Pages/default.aspx
56	SSRP Phase 3 Discussion Guide Draft SSRP Workbook 2013_2013-10-10(1)	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPPlanning/Pages/default.aspx
57	SSRP Public Information and Input Sessions Summary of Public Input - 2010-07	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPPlanning/Pages/default.aspx
58	SSRP Public Information and Input Sessions Summary of Stakeholder Input - 2010-07	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPPlanning/Pages/default.aspx
59	SSRP RAC Candidate Conservation Management Areas on Public Lands Map 2011-04	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/SSRP%20RAC%20Candidate%20Conservation%20Management%20Areas%20on%20Public%20Lands%20Map%202011-04.pdf
60	SSRP RAC Land-use Classification Map 2011-04	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/SSRP%20RAC%20Candidate%20Conservation%20Management%20Area%207%20Map%202011-04.pdf
61	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 01-P2-2009-06-11	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
62	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 02-P2-2009-07-16	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
63	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 03-P2-2009-09-01	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
64	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 04-P2-2009-10-07	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
65	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 05-P2-2009-11-24	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
66	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 06-P2-2010-01-06	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx

GD#	Name	Links
67	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 07-P2-2010-02-10	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
68	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 08-P2-2010-03-31	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
69	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 09-P2-2010-05-13	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
70	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 10-P2-2010-06-22	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
71	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 11-P2-2010-09-08	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
72	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 12-P2-2010-10-27	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
73	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Agenda for Meeting 13-P2-2010-11-30	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
74	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 01-P2-2009-06-11	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
75	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 02-P2-2009-07-16	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
76	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 03-P2-2009-09-01	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
77	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 04-P2-2009-10-07	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
78	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 05-P2-2009-11-24	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
79	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 06-P2-2010-01-06	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
80	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 07-P2-2010-02-10	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
81	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 08-P2-2010-03-31	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx

GD#	Name	Links
82	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 09-P2-2010-05-13	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
83	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 10-P2-2010-06-22	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
84	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 11-P2-2010-09-08(1)	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
85	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 12-P2-2010-10-27	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
86	SSRP RAC South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council Meeting Notes for Meeting 13-P2-2010-11-30	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/SSRPRAC/Pages/default.aspx
87	SSRP-Groundwater	https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/SSRP%20RAC%20Groundwater%20Resource%20Map%202011-04.pdf
88	Terms of Reference for Developing the South Saskatchewan Region - 2009-11	https://landuse.alberta.ca/Documents/SSRP_Terms_of_Reference_for_Developing_the_South_Saskatchewan_Region_Report-P1-2009-11.pdf
89	Water monitoring result SSR and LAR	http://environment.alberta.ca/04244.html
90	ALSA	http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/acts/a26p8.pdf
91	Water act	http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/w03.pdf
92	LUF	https://landuse.alberta.ca/Pages/default.aspx
93	WFL	http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/

Appendix D Public Documents List

PWD #	Author	Date	links
1	NA	2011	http://www.abmi.ca/FileDownloadServlet?filename=00063_ABI_Public_Report_South_Sask_August_23_2011.pdf&dir=REPORTS_UPLOAD .
2	Roth and Howie	2011	http://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/land-use-planning-and-natural-resource-r-87330/
3	NA	2012	http://albertawilderness.ca/
4	NA	2013	http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-draft-conservation-plan-aims-to-mix-industry-nature-1.1990840
5	NA	2013	http://www.afga.org/
6	NA	2013	http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/alberta-rolls-out-conservation-plan-to-deal-with-souths-rapid-growth/article14818555/
7	Unger, J	2013	http://environmentallawcentre.wordpress.com/2013/09/11/alberta-s-new-wetland-policy-baby-steps-in-an-adult-world/
8	OBAD, J	2011	http://www.water-matters.org/story/429
9	Morgan, J	2013	http://cpaws-southernalberta.org/campaigns/the-south-saskatchewan-regional-plan-ssrp
10	Giesbrecht, T	2013	http://www.cjocfm.com/news-and-info/news/lethbridge-news/castle-area-included-in-draft-south-saskatchewan-regional-plan/
11	Frank, A	2011	http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/chiefs-tell-alberta-government-fix-lower-athabasca-regional-plan-1523321.htm
12	NA	2010	http://cpaws.org/news/clear-cut-logging-approval-in-albertas-castle-special-place-undermines-regi
13	NA	2011	https://www.calgary.ca/CA/cmo/Documents/coc_response_to_the_ssrp_dec_2011.pdf?noredirect=1 .
14	Fouber, T	2013	http://www.rmoutlook.com/article/20131017/RMO0801/310179987/conservationists-critical-of-south-saskatchewan-lup
15	Lee, P. G.	2011	http://www.globalforestwatch.ca/files/publications/20110922A_Conservation-type_areas_Lower_Athabasca_Regional_Plan.pdf .
16	NA	2012	http://cpaws-southernalberta.org/upload/CPAWS_input_SSRP_RAC_recommendations_FINAL.pdf .
17	NA	2010	http://www.salts-landtrust.org/docs/D_100120_rac_submission.pdf .
18	NA	2013	http://crowsnestconservation.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-plan
19	Davis, C	2013	http://www.pinchercreekvoice.com/2013/10/draft-of-south-sakatchewan-regional.html
20	Labbe, S	2013	http://www.prairiepost.com/news/alberta/item/5012-gov-t-releases-draft-south-sask-regional-plan.html
21	Bowman, L	2013	http://environmentallawcentre.wordpress.com/2011/04/04/grass-sky-gone/
22	Bascombe, D	2013	http://www.highriversonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21339&Itemid=344

PWD #	Author	Date	links
23	NA	2013	http://www.novusenv.com/ft_project/integrated-climate-water-and-land-usecover-model-development-for-ssrp/
24	NA	2012	http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/files/energy/files/12-0608-Oil-Sands-Land-Use-and-Reclamation-eng.pdf
25	NA	2012	http://lin.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/B1.pdf
26	NA	2013	http://liberalopposition.com/2013/10/
27	Blakeman, L	2013	http://liberalopposition.com/2013/10/15/
28	Barretto, et.al	2013	http://www.osler.com/NewsResources/Details.aspx?id=5323
29	Driedzic, A	2013	http://environmentallawcentre.wordpress.com/tag/may-long-weekend/
30	NA	2009	http://orrsc.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Municipal%20Perspectives%20Position%20Paper%20on%20the%20SSRP%20Final%20November%202009.pdf
31	NA	2011	http://www.albertasurfacerights.com/articles/?id=1109
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