
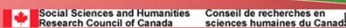


**Québec's Approach to Regional Development:
An historical analysis**

Bruno Jean and Bill Reimer
Bruno_Jean@uqar.ca
Bill.Reimer@concordia.ca
<http://rplc-capr.ca>
<http://billreimer.ca>
 Feb 23, 2015

- Québec's Approach to Regional Development: An historical analysis
- This webinar provides an overview of Québec's approach to regional development from before confederation to the current period. We will focus on the establishment of the National Rural Policy in 2001 and its evolution since that period of time. Topics covered will include the institutional and cultural roots of the Rural Policy, its key features, its impacts and legacy, its transitions to current conditions, and its prospects for the future. The discussion will consider various explanations for the success of the policy and the implications it has for regional policy, development, and programs in general.

Feb 23; 11-12:30 CST

Webinar Questions

- What are the conditions that contributed to the implementation and survival of Québec's rural policy?
- What have been its major impacts?
- What are its prospects for the future?
- What can we learn for rural and regional policy in other locations?



2/24/2015

2

- During the 1990s an interest in regional-focused policies emerged as a response to failures of previous approaches to development.
 - It occurred in a context of increasing global competition, budget cuts, government withdrawal and eroding capacity, and widespread environmental degradation.
 - The interest was particularly salient in OECD countries.
 - OECD. *The New Rural Paradigm*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006. <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264023918-en>.
 - Regional Development Committee launched a series of studies from various countries (Rural Policy Reviews; Territorial Reviews).
 - Canada: OECD. *OECD Territorial Reviews: Canada 2002*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2002. <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264176300-en>.
 - Québec: OECD. *OECD Rural Policy Reviews: Québec, Canada 2010*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010. <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264082151-en>.
- Québec was particularly interesting since it was one of the few territories where a rural policy had been implemented – as opposed to sectoral or economic policies.
- It remains particularly interesting to us since it is also the only province that has done so – and it has been formally and continuously in law since 2001.
 - It is unusual for such innovative approaches to survive – and this one has survived over 5 elections and 3 changes in political parties.
- Questions to consider today
 - What are the conditions that contributed to the implementation and survival of Québec's rural policy?
 - What have been its major impacts?
 - What are its prospects for the future?
 - What can we learn for rural and regional policy in other locations?

First Rural Policy 2001-2007

- ▶ Sustainable development and prosperity of rural communities
- ▶ Improve the quality of life and attractiveness
- ▶ Support citizens engagement and contribute to the capacity of the rural world



3

•First Rural Policy: 2001-2007 Objectives

- Stimulate and support the sustainable development and prosperity of rural communities
- Contribute to the quality of life in rural communities and make them more attractive
- Support citizens' engagement in the development of their communities and contribute to the capacity of rural world

Why did it occur?

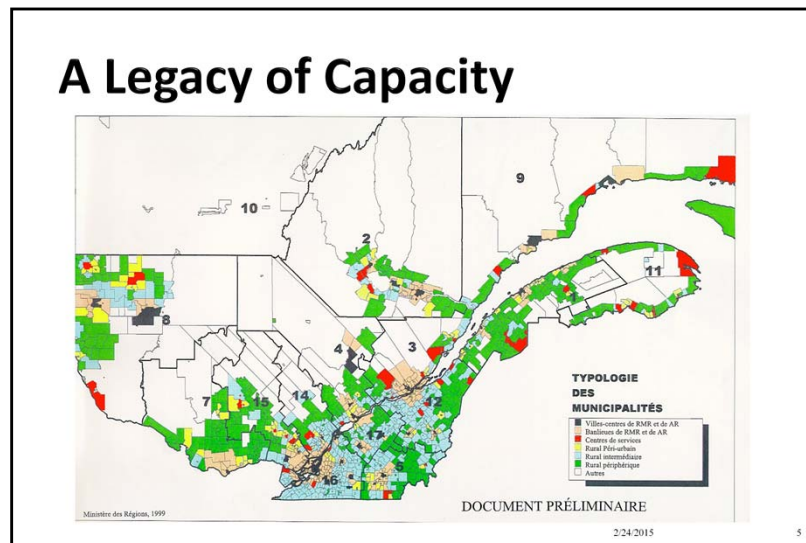
- ▶ New economy
- ▶ Failures in previous attempts
- ▶ Two Québécois in one (Trudel et al. 1989)
- ▶ Romanticization of rural areas
- ▶ Social-democrat approaches
- ▶ Social and political regional infrastructure



2/24/2015

4

- First Rural Policy 2001-2007: Why did it occur?
- Québec was facing the usual challenges of the new economy: global competition, increased mobility, corporate dominance, government fiscal limitations.
 - Significant population decline
 - Losses of public services
 - 400 rural municipalities show symptoms of deconstructing
 - Regional disparities: interregional and intraregional
- In spite of the Québec governments' attempts to improve economic development over more 40 years
- Came to with these with a legacy of some region-specific elements that conditioned the nature of the response they chose.
 - Historical legacy of rural-urban divide (Deux Québec dans un): social and economic conditions [Trudel, Rémy, Yvon Leclerc, and Québec Conseil des affaires sociales Comité sur le développement. *Deux Québec dans un: Rapport sur le développement social et démographique*. Boucherville, Qué., Canada: G. Morin, 1989.]
 - Ideological inclination to romanticize rural regions – secularization of the Catholic church's initiatives to try and stem the tide of urbanization and settle rural regions.
 - Social-democratic tendency with the traditions and infrastructure to support it (caisse-populaire; parish governance; third sector structures, experience, and initiatives such as the Circles des fermiers and Solidarité rurale). A history of public mobilization – including within rural regions.
 - Most important: a social and political infrastructure that made regional governance relatively easy to implement and maintain.



- First Rural Policy 2001-2007
- Implemented within a well-established political and social structure in Québec.
 - 86 regional counties (17 administrative regions)
 - Counties were a legacy from the Catholic church structures (parishes in rural areas)
 - Québécois had a long history of meeting, making decisions, and negotiating within and among these boundaries.
 - They were religious, social, and personal identity characteristics that remained after the Quiet Revolution of the 50s and 60s.
 - Health, education, and social life were organized with respect to them
 - There was an enormous amount of physical and social infrastructure that corresponded with these boundaries: churches, convents, seminaries, municipal halls, caisse populaire.
 - The government took over many of the functions related to them – along with much of the physical infrastructure.
 - Most municipalities were congruent with these boundaries.
 - Was relatively easy because of the social homogeneity of Québec.
- Most important: It was relatively easy for the government to assign responsibilities to these social entities since the capacity was well developed and their recognition was taken for granted.

First Policy Outcomes

- ▶ Large-scale mobilization
- ▶ Territory-based development perspective
- ▶ Elaboration and adoption of development and innovation tools
- ▶ A contact based agreement : the **rural pact**
 - More than 4,800 projects
 - Over 5,705 jobs
 - \$86.4 million from the pacts have generated \$504 million
 - Average cost was \$123,016 with average contribution from the pact was about 15% of the cost
- ▶ Non-profit organizations carry out most projects, followed closely by the municipalities, the MRCs and municipal organizations.



6

•First Policy Outcomes

- Large-scale mobilization: over 30,000 individuals, including 7,000 volunteers, participating in 155 committees and 136 MRC sector-based working groups and 462 local committees
- Implementation of change and an empowerment process
- Definition of a territory-based development perspective
- Elaboration and adoption of development and innovation tools
- Emergence of a new rural economy
- A contact based agreement : the rural pact (rural agreement)
 - Designed to:
 - Consolidate and develop the economy and employment in rural communities;
 - Bolster residents' commitment to community development;
 - Ensure and enhance the availability of community services.
 - Above all, the rural pact has helped strengthen the management of rural development and contributed to getting projects started.
 - Projects funded under the rural pact have broadened the acquisition of knowledge and skills in communities. Moreover, they offer unique avenues for development and original solutions to rural problems.
- More than 4,800 projects are underway or have been completed.
- Over 5,705 jobs have been created.
- Some \$86.4 million from the pacts has generated investments of nearly \$504 million.
- The average cost of a project was roughly \$123,016 and the average contribution per project from the pact was approximately \$18,500, the equivalent of 15% of the cost.
- Six priority sectors
 1. Maintain and improve the provision of services;
 2. Develop new products and new businesses;
 3. Hold on to youth and families and get them to return to the community;
 4. Support individual and collective entrepreneurship;
 5. Develop human capital;
 6. Ensure a network of promoters and local stakeholders.
- Non-profit organizations (NPOs) carry out most projects, followed closely by the municipalities, the MRCs and municipal organizations.

OECD Review of the First Rural Policy

Suggested improvements

- ▶ Adaptation to regional conditions
- ▶ Support for devitalized communities
- ▶ Carry-over of expertise, experience, and knowledge to sustain current programs
- ▶ Use of rural pact budgets as a source for funding projects
- ▶ Promotion of the policy to citizens (beyond government officials)



7

Less successful facets that must be improved

- The adaptation of government policies and programs to regional conditions
- Support by MAMR (minister responsible for Municipalities and Regions) and the government in the regions for rural communities, especially devitalized communities
- The transfer of expertise, experience and knowledge from the first policy to sustain community development initiatives
- The use of rural pact budgets essentially as a source of funding for projects instead of an opportunity to foster innovation and guide rural development (common or territorial approaches were often overlooked)
- Promotion of the policy did not reach all clienteles, was often confined to mayors and hardly affected municipal councillors, the staff of organizations and rural residents in general (the outcome of the rural pacts was not always presented to local residents)

Second Rural Policy 2007-2014

- ▶ Strengthen the role played by municipal representatives and consolidate the RCM's role
- ▶ Ensure that each territory has the means to act
- ▶ Encourage a territorial development dynamic
- ▶ Pursue multifaceted development
- ▶ Foster rural-urban cooperation
- ▶ Promote the rural way of life
- ▶ Offer concrete gov't support



8

- The review of the first policy was very favourable, although there were several aspects that were flagged as needing development. These are reflected in the changes made for the Second Rural Policy 2007-2014
 - Strengthen the role played by municipal elected representatives and consolidate the RCM's role in rural development measures
 - Ensure that each territory has the means to act
 - Budget of \$280 million
 - Rural pacts established between MRCs and the government
 - Development officers and regional offices
 - Encourage a development dynamic centred on the territory
 - Special programs for devitalized communities – become an asset for the MRC
 - Pursue more multifaceted development
 - Foster cooperation and complementarity between rural and urban areas
 - Promote the rural way of life
 - Offer concrete support from the government in respect of the approaches, strategies and projects of rural communities



- **The Rural Pacts**

- Continuity: contract with the MRC, increased overall budget

- Changes:

- Budgets: from \$86 million over five years to \$213 million over seven years;

- Divided among the 91 MRC : basic amount and \$59 million more while considering the weight of devitalized municipalities (2006 census)

- Duration: April 2007 to March 2014;

- Community-centred nature of projects: exclusion of private projects and basic municipal infrastructures

- **Rural Development Officers**

- Indexed \$25-million budget over seven years for a total of 136 officers (32 new officers in 2007).

- New officers will be assigned according to the number of municipalities and the number of devitalized municipalities.

- The officers are included in the rural pact.

- Obligation: joint funding (\$25,000), the same accountability as under the rural pact, compulsory hiring of officers.

- **Adaptation**

- Consideration of the specific characteristics of rural areas (low population density, dispersal and small size of communities);

- Adaptation of public services and territorial fairness.

- A interministerial rural committee (17 departments) work on that at the regional and national level

- **Modulation Clause**

- Requires that characteristics of rural areas be considered when developing policies and programs;

- Gives the *Comité des partenaires de la ruralité* (Committee of Rural Partners) the possibility to issue recommendations concerning adaptation.

- **Rural Laboratories**

- Provide funding for 25 broad rural development experiments in, until now, relatively unexplored promising sectors with the obligation to transfer information;

- Total budget of \$15.5 million over seven years;

- Maximum grant of \$100,000 per project per year for five or six years;

- Call for projects :

- 2007: Intention in October 19, Project in December 2007 (10)

- 2008 :Intention in march 1th, Project in May 2008 (10)

- 2009 : Intention in January 5, Project in February 2009 (5)

- National selection committees and regional follow-up

- Themes

- Health in rural areas

- Accommodation, settling and integration of newcomers

- Innovative specialty and local agriculture

- The school at the heart of the community

- New forestry

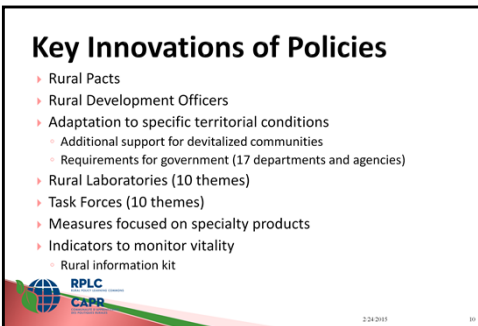
- Culture and heritage at the heart of rural development

- Rural areas as stakeholders in the energy sector

- Local economies

- New information and communications technologies (ICTs)

- New forms of local services



- **Task Forces**
 - Several promising fields for rural development in respect of which there are no responses, indicators and solutions now available to rural communities.
 - Mandate
 - To study, probe and explore promising solutions and transfer them to rural areas by assembling human resources and knowledge of each theme.
 - Can undertake studies or research or adopt other means in order to develop.
 - Budget
 - *Fonds d'initiative pour l'avenir rural* with an \$8.6-million budget over seven years will support already announced and future task forces and the initiatives submitted to the Minister.
 - Themes
 - Energy production in rural areas
 - Multi-functionality in rural areas
 - A support platform
 - Marketing of specialty products through Québec emporiums
 - Connection to telecommunications networks
 - International meetings and exchanges on rurality
 - The maintenance and viability of rural schools
 - Housing, a tool for local development
 - The impact of climate change on rurality
 - The rural-urban complementarity
- **Measures concerning specialty products**
 - Objectives: Generate new activities and occupy the territory
 - A measure to financially support the creation of original, specialty products in rural areas in the agri-food, no timber forest products, culture and heritage, and arts and crafts sectors;
 - Products stemming from the producers' know-how and ability to innovate;
 - A \$12-million budget over seven years (a maximum grant of \$25,000 per project);
 - Objectives: 32 projects per region over seven years, i.e. a minimum of 480 projects for rural Québec overall.
- **Vitality Monitoring Indicator**
 - Objective: make available to the RCMs and local communities a flexible, simple tool to evaluate their level of vitality to enable them to:
 - The Grands prix de la ruralité
 - Objective: emphasize the commitment and success of individuals, communities and initiatives in respect of rural development, especially in the implementation of the rural pacts.
 - Technical and Financial Support and the provision of means and expertise
 - Enhancement of the rural information kit: measures, programs, technical support agencies, expertise available, reference centre, useful contacts, learning from the first policy
<http://www.regions.mamr.gouv.qc.ca/ruralite/coffret/>
 - Communications kit on the policy for MRC and municipalities (elected representatives, volunteers, individuals).
 - 54 measures and commitments involving 17 government departments and agencies
 - 24 include budget commitments
 - Some of the measures and commitments involve task forces and laboratories
 - 21 commitments continue on from the first *National Policy on Rurality*

Third Rural Policy 2014-2024

- ▶ Build on the progress of previous policies
- ▶ Greater decentralization;
- ▶ Promote intersectoral, multifunctional, development, rural-urban collaboration
- ▶ Maintain the flexibility and local autonomy
- ▶ Encourage citizen participation
- ▶ Advocate an inclusive and equitable approach



"Pactes Plus"

•By the time the second policy was completed and evaluated it was clear that these policies were winning propositions. The third policy (2014-2024) recognized this by a longer term commitment more resources and expanded support through the rural agents. Elements of the third policy include:

- Focus on greater decentralization;
- Promotion of a greater intersectoral approach, multifunctionality and development initiatives that are complementarity between rural and urban areas;
- Maintenance of the flexibility of implementation and enforcement of local autonomy so they are able to implement the policy;
- Encouragement of greater citizen participation;
- Advocacy of an inclusive and equitable approach territorially.
- In order to achieve those goals, the New Rural Policy consolidates the network of rural agents and "rural laboratories" take a new and more flexible form with "Pactes Plus."

What Have We Learned?

- ▶ Regional focus
- ▶ Multisectoral approach
- ▶ Social Capital focus
- ▶ Consistent and long-term framework for collaboration
- ▶ Value of delegated and distributed authority
- ▶ Value of additional resources for devitalized communities
- ▶ Value of flexibility for local conditions



2/24/2015

12

- What have we learned from the Québec initiatives and experiences (OECD Review plus other observations – e.g. Vodden research)?
- Value of a regional approach – with the right ingredients (worked with existing social infrastructure rather than tried to build a new one (e.g. NL, ON – Vodden Research)
- Value of a multisectoral approach
 - Note that the MRCs were originally formed for health, education, and labour objectives – economic development was added later.
- Value of a focus on social capital – building the capacity for local people, municipalities, groups to take initiative.
- Value of a consistent framework for regional governance
 - The rural policy has been in place since 2001 – through multiple government changes
 - Took time for municipalities to trust agreements
 - A necessary ingredient for compromise: will they follow through on any deals made – especially over the long term.
 - Without it – the best strategy is zero-sum.
- Value of delegated and distributed authority and responsibility – with adequate resourcing
 - Resourcing in the form of finances, personnel (Development Officers), focused programs and objectives.
- Value of additional resources for devitalized communities
 - By linking those resources to community conditions it turns devitalized communities into assets and opportunities for the MRCs.
- Value of flexibility for local conditions
 - MRCs have ability to respond to local assets and opportunities.

The future of Québec's rural policy

- ▶ Significant change in government policy (Liberals)
 - Closure of "Rural Pacts" and "Rural Laboratories" programs
 - Establishment of "Transitional Financial Pacts"
- ▶ Closure of Solidarité Rurale du Québec
- ▶ Reduced support for Rural Development Agents
- ▶ Jeopardizes the Québec Rural University program
- ▶ The end of Québec's rural policy?



...but: a strong MRC framework remains

2/24/2015

13

•The new Québec government: a huge change in rural policy

- The government has reorganized its relationship with the MRCs
 - Eliminates the Rural Pacts and the Rural Laboratory programs – using « Transitional financial pacts »
 - Cuts an \$800,000 award to Solidarité rurale du Québec (SRQ) – a major rural lobbying third sector organization that has been instrumental in promoting rural issues. This has effectively shut them down.
 - Drastically reduced support for Rural Development Agents.
 - A one-year moratorium on the current program, but after that it will be up to individual MRCs to come up with alternative plans with a 45% reduction in their budgets.
- Collateral damage
 - The Québec Rural University program is also in jeopardy since its planned meeting in Charlevoix region (2015) requires the support of several local development centres (CLDs) in the region that are being reorganized as a result of the new policy.
- In sum: this looks like the end of the 14-year rural policy initiative that has been internationally recognized as one of the few success stories in rural and regional developments.
- At this point it looks like Québec is falling prey to
 - Neo-liberal ideology and budget phetoric
 - Increasing focus on urban issues
 - Weakening of the rural lobby
- The one bright light: The MRC regional infrastructure remains strong – in terms of its resources and capacity. This creates the possibility for them to establish rural policies that are appropriate and effective for their local conditions.

Implications for other locations

- ▶ Multi-sectoral; multi-departmental
- ▶ Respect and utilize historical legacies
- ▶ Allocate rights and responsibilities – with access to resources
- ▶ Long-term framework
- ▶ Continuing need for knowledge mobilization and action



2/24/2015

14


- How does Québec's experience inform initiatives and conditions in other locations?
- These insights emerge from comparative analysis:
 - OECD: international comparisons
 - Canadian Regional Development Project (Vodden et al.): Provincial comparisons
- Effective regional development policy:
 - Requires a multi-sectoral approach: rural and regional issues are inherently complex
 - Requires an approach that takes advantage of historical legacies
 - In Québec: Institutional, demographic, and cultural legacies of the Church and its secularization, existing networks, informal systems of governance, flexibility to respond to regions and communities in trouble.
 - In Ontario: Different traditions of social mobilization (North, south, east)
 - In NL: Regional isolation with different modes of governance and self-reliance
 - In BC: Regional initiatives and their formalization in trusts and bands.
 - Requires allocation of regional rights and responsibilities – with adequate control over resources to support them (not necessarily top down)
 - Benefits from a consistent, long-term approach
 - Allows regions to learn how to work among themselves and with others
 - Provides a stable context in which compromise can take place
 - Tolerates inevitable failures so the people can learn from them
 - Continuing requirement for research, knowledge mobilization, and political action
- Other reflections from your experiences?

Québec's Approach to Regional Development: An historical analysis

Bruno Jean and Bill Reimer

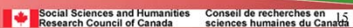
- RPLC-CAPR.CA
- CRDT.CA
- CRRF.CA
- CDNREGDEV.RURALRESILIENCE.CA
- ICRPS.ORG
- OECD.ORG
- SSHRC.CA
- BILLREIMER.CA

Luc Bisson
Matthew Brett



RPLC
RURAL POLICY LEARNING COMMONS

CAPR
COMMUNAUTÉ D'APPRENTISSAGE
DES POLITIQUES RURALES



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

- Acknowledge:
 - RPLC (<http://rplc-capr.ca>)
 - Centre de recherche sur le développement territorial (<http://crdt.ca>)
 - CRRF (<http://crrf.ca>)
 - Canadian Regional Development Project (<http://cdnregdev.ruralresilience.ca/>)
 - ICRPS (<http://icrps.org>)
 - OECD (<http://oecd.org>)
 - SSHRC (<http://sshrc.ca>)
- Colleagues
 - Luc Bisson
 - Matthew Brett