

Québec's Approach to Regional Development: An historical analysis

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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?

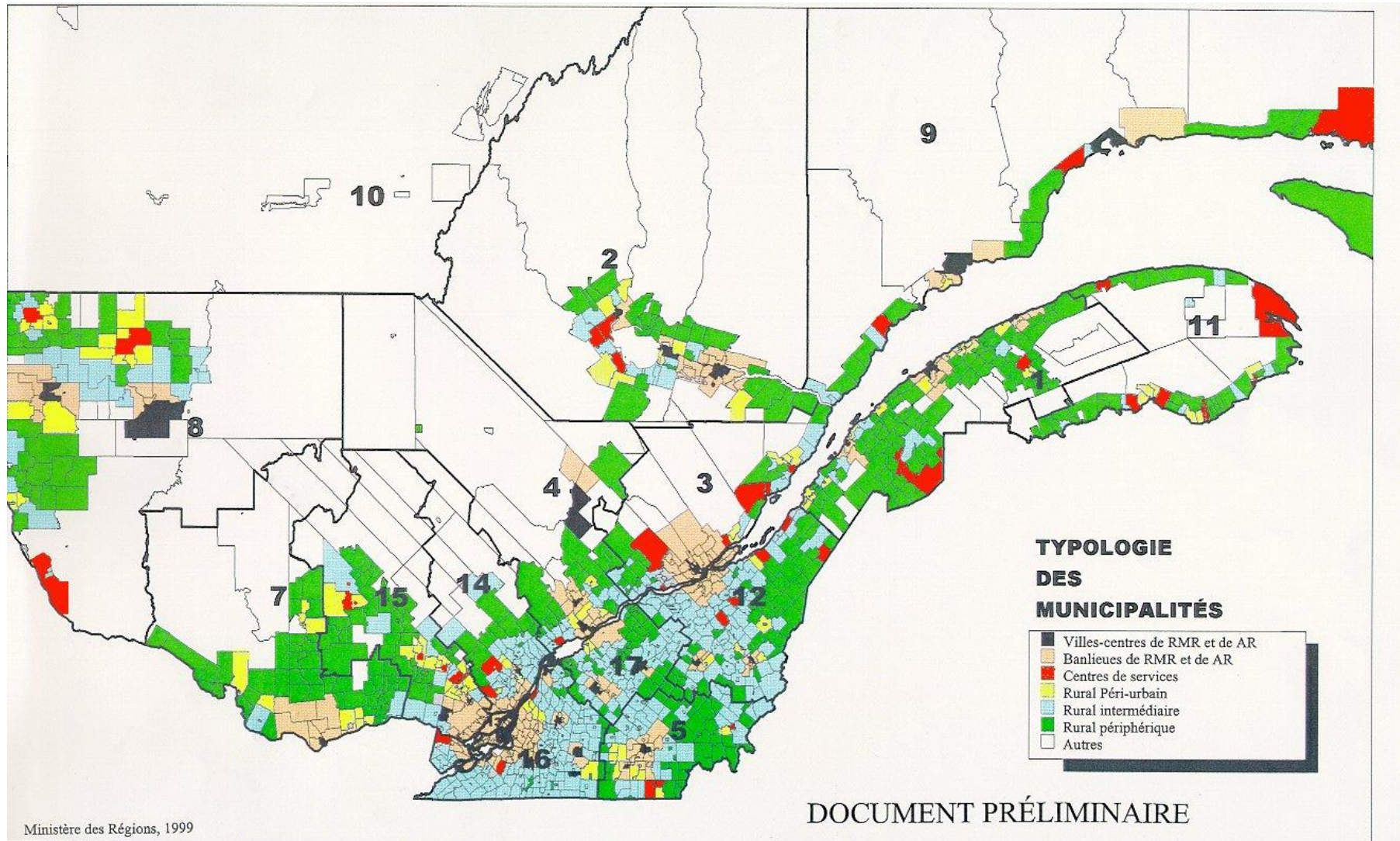
First Rural Policy 2001-2007

- ▶ 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

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

A Legacy of Capacity



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.

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)

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



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Key Innovations of Policies

- ▶ Rural Pacts
- ▶ Rural Development Officers
- ▶ Adaptation to specific territorial conditions
 - Additional support for devitalized communities
 - Requirements for government (17 departments and agencies)
- ▶ Rural Laboratories (10 themes)
- ▶ Task Forces (10 themes)
- ▶ Measures focused on specialty products
- ▶ Indicators to monitor vitality
 - Rural information kit

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

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

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

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

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