

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



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

A Profile of MRC Rimouski-Neigette

Revised and Finalized January 2015
CRD Report 13

Prepared by:
Sarah-Patricia Breen
Resource and Environmental Management
Simon Fraser University

Table of Contents

Document Reference	1
Introduction and Location	1
Brief History of Region	1
Physiographic Description	2
Demographic Profile	3
Employment Characteristics	4
Local Government.....	6
Transportation and Communication Networks	7
Summary	7
References	8

Document Reference

Breen, 2015. A Profile of MRC Rimouski-Neigette. Working Paper CRD-13. Memorial University of Newfoundland, Corner Brook.

Introduction and Location

The regional county municipality (i.e., Municipalities Regionale de Comte - MRC) of Rimouski-Neigette is located on the southern peninsula of the St. Lawrence River within the Bas-Saint-Laurent (BAS) administrative and economic region in the province of Québec (Gouvernement du Québec, 2014; MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The MRC region is ~300 km east of Québec City, and is bordered by the river to the north, the province of New Brunswick to the south, the MCR La Mitis to the east, and the MRC of the Basques to the west (see Figure 1) (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The MRC Rimouski-Neigette is comprised of one unorganized territory and nine municipalities (see Figure 1).

While the MCR Rimouski-Neigette serves as the primary unit of analysis for the *Canadian Regional Development* project, this regional scale both interacts and conflicts with various nested and interrelated scales, such as the surrounding Bas-Saint-Laurent region or the urban agglomeration of Rimouski.

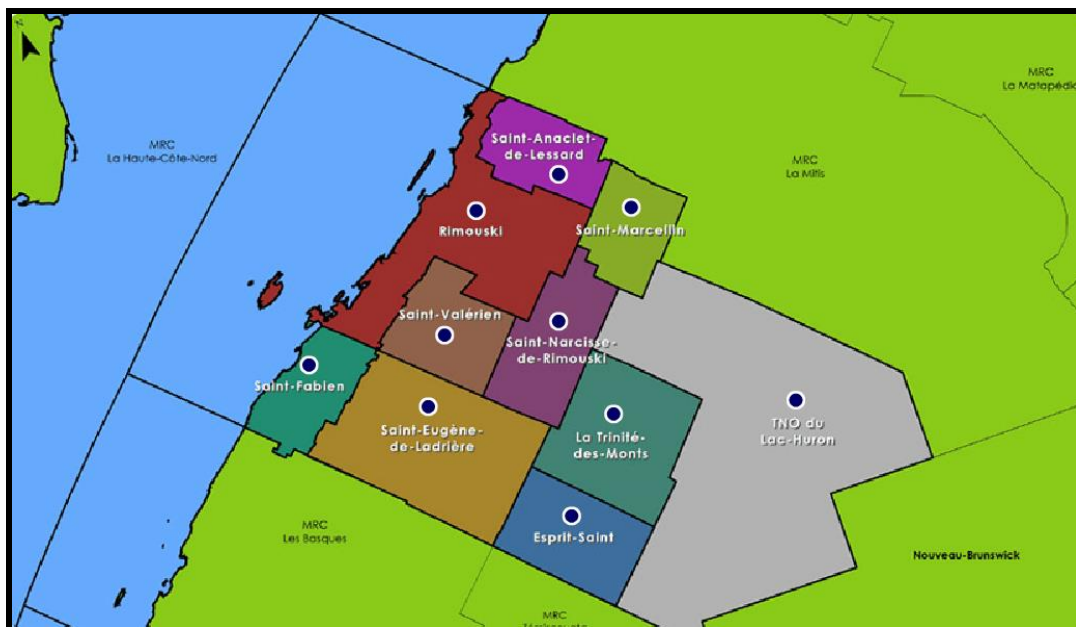


Figure 1: MRC de Rimouski-Neigette (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015b)

Brief History of Region

The official MRC Rimouski-Neigette region was established in 1982, following the 1979 formation of the MRCs through the adoption of the Act Respecting Land Use, Planning and Development (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a; MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent, n.d.). However, the history of the region goes further into the past than the establishment of the MRC.

Several groups of First Nations cycled through the region prior to European contact (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2008). While descriptions of the region date to explorers like Cartier and Champlain, there were no permanent European settlements in the region until 1694 (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2008). Noteworthy population growth occurred in the 1800s, increasing

from ~400 in 1829 to ~11,000 in 1881, as the economy grew alongside increased trade, industry, and access via the Intercolonial Railway (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2008).

The region has a rich history, which it shares with other parts of rural Québec. 'Rural' is an important part of the character and culture of Québec and the provincial government places additional emphasis on rural sustainability as a result (OECD, 2010). In terms of rurality, the rural-urban split is less in Québec relative to the rest of the country due to of a denser network of small to medium sized cities (OECD, 2010).

Physiographic Description

The region is ~2,700 km², or ~0.2% of Québec's total land mass (Statistics Canada, 2012). The MRC is described as being part of the lowlands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the high Appalachian land, home to islands, tidal flats, and terraces (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The region is predominantly part of the Atlantic Maritime ecozone (Natural Resources Canada, 2014). The glacial history of the region resulted in good soil quality, although only 12% of the region is used for agricultural purposes (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The other 82% of the MRC is forested, and includes parks and recreation areas such as the Bic National Park, Wildlife Reserve Rimouski, and ZEC Bas-Saint-Laurent (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The MRC describes itself as having a harsh climate and moderate potential for resource exploitation (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a).

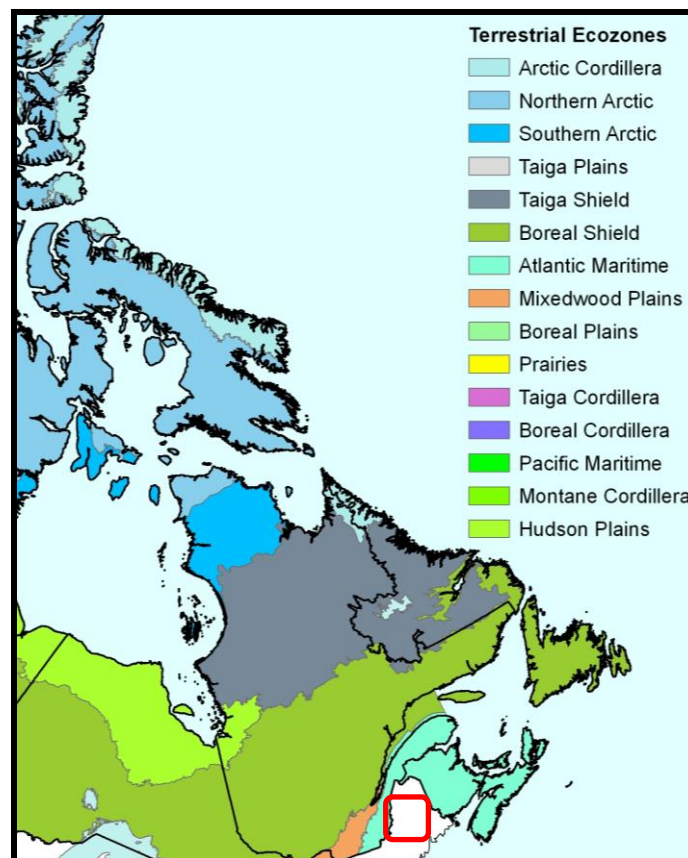


Figure 2: Ecozones of Canada (Natural Resources Canada, 2014)

Demographic Profile

The 2011 census found a regional population of ~55,000, roughly 27% of the Bas-St-Laurent region and 0.7% of Québec's total population, but with a higher population density (~20 people/km²) than that of the province (~6 people/km²) (Institut de la Statistique du Québec, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2012). Regionally, the population has seen a 3.6% positive change from the 2006 census, which found ~53,000 people in the region (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a; Statistics Canada, 2012). Overall, both in the region and the province, the population trend has generally been upwards (see Figure 3), although the MRC considers the population to be stable (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Within the region the majority of the population (82%) lives on the coast (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The town of Rimouski is the major population centre within the MRC, classified by Statistics Canada as a 'Census Agglomeration' for having a high degree of integration between adjacent municipalities (Statistics Canada, 2007).

Of those living in the region, the median age (46.2) is slightly higher than the provincial average (41.9) (Statistics Canada, 2012). The majority of the population is French speaking (~98%) and are Canadian citizens (~99%) (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a; Statistics Canada, 2012). There is a small (<1%) population of aboriginal people in the region, a population which has increased since 2001 (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a).

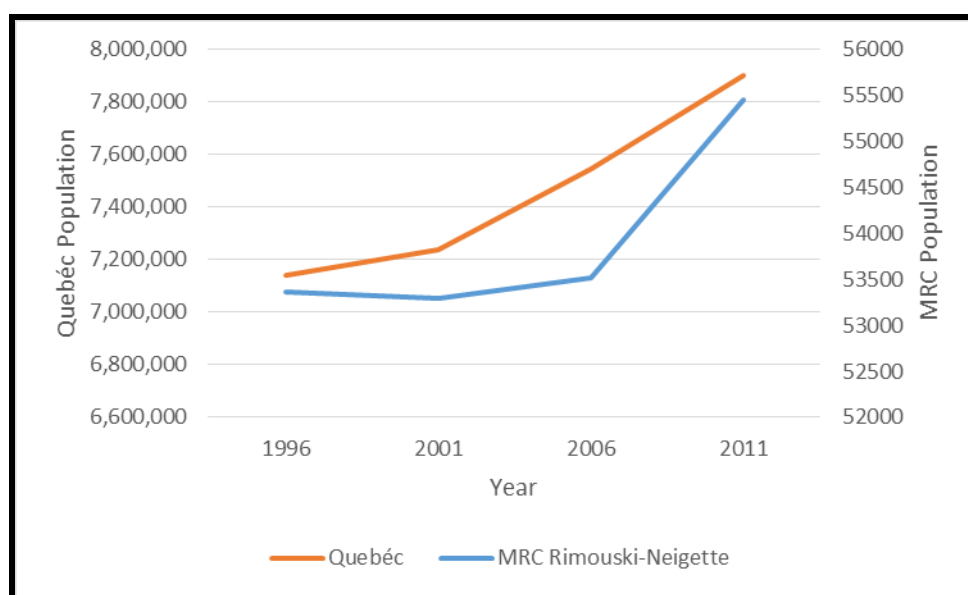


Figure 3: Population Comparison (Institut de la Statistique du Québec, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2011)

The regional population is not overly mobile, with over 80% of the region classified as 1-year non-movers (see Figure 4).

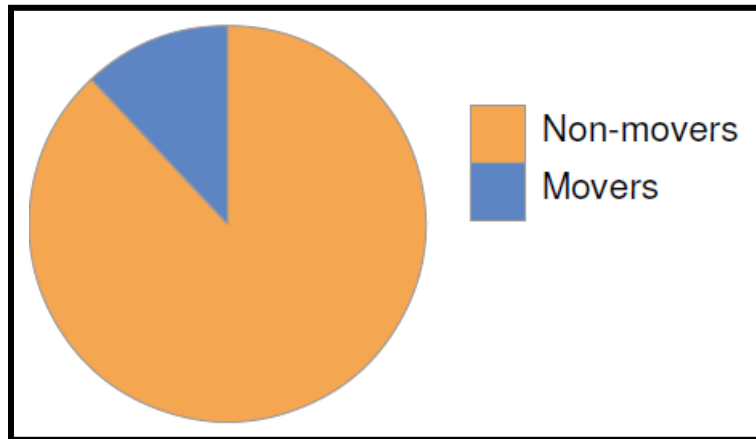


Figure 4: Population by mobility 1 year ago (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a)

Employment Characteristics

While Québec's rural areas are noted as contributing greatly to the provincial economy, natural resource dependent communities are still considered to be vulnerable (e.g., reactive to global financial crises), similar to other rural areas across Canada (OECD, 2010).

The 2006 unemployment rate in the region was 8%, higher than the overall provincial average of 7% and the overall national average of 6% (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Unemployment rates for men (~11%) were particularly high, both when compared with women in the region (~5%), as well as the provincial and federal men's unemployment rate (6%) (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

In terms of employment, the majority (~85%) of the region is employed in the tertiary sector, including services such as health care, retail, and education (see Figure 5) (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Secondary sector employment (e.g., manufacturing, construction, and utilities) is estimated at ~10% and primary sector employment (e.g., agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing, mining) is estimated at ~5% (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Differences in gender were also found in type of employment (see Figure 6).

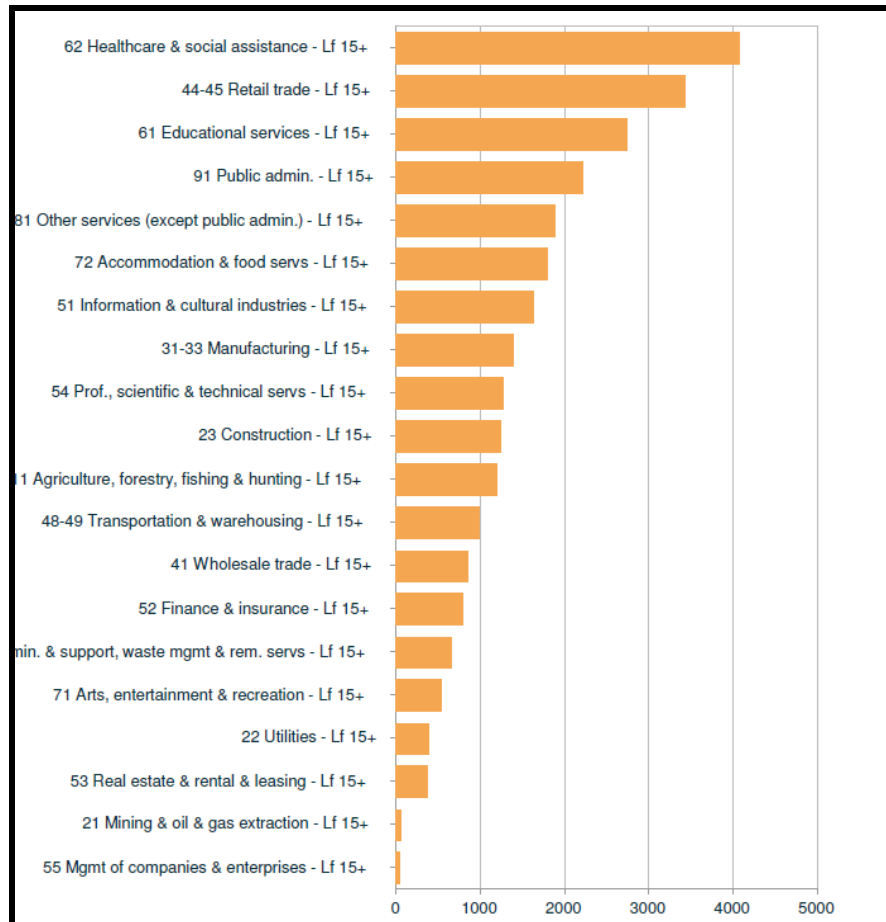


Figure 5: Regional Employment by Industry (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a)

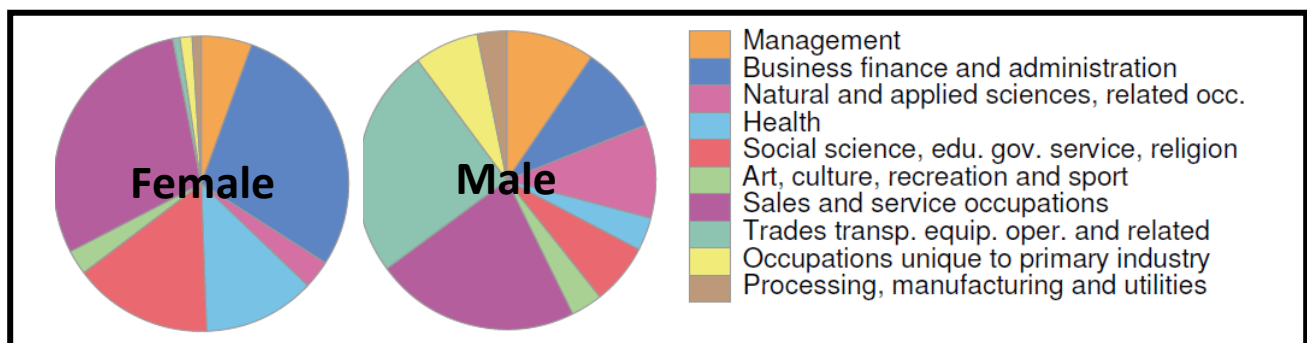


Figure 6: Regional Employment by Gender (Rural Secretariat Community Information Database, n.d.-a)

As noted above, the town of Rimouski is the largest municipality and acts as an economic and social hub for the region, home to a large health centre, industrial and technology parks, as well as research and development (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The other municipalities vary in terms of economic focus, including industrial zones, agriculture, forestry, tourism, maple syrup, and entrepreneurship (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a).

Local Government

The MRC Rimouski-Neigette is one of 86 regional county municipalities in the province of Québec, each of which is comprised of a number of municipalities and led by a council of mayors (OECD, 2010). These MRCs are under the jurisdiction of the Municipal Code of Québec, the Municipal Powers Act, and the Act Respecting Land Use, Planning and Development (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a; MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent, n.d.). The MRCs do not cover the entirety of Québec, with those outside the MRC system being a) First Nations reserves, and b) cities and urban agglomerations (OECD, 2010). The MRCs are focused at the regional scale, with primary responsibilities generally including: spatial planning (i.e., 5 year cycle land use planning); waste, fire, and civil protection planning; management of watercourses; evaluation of local municipalities; and local economic development (OECD, 2010).

Within MRC Rimouski-Neigette these responsibilities have diversified to include management of inter-municipal public lands; regional inspection services; coordination of policy implementation; and arts, culture, and heritage (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The MRC is also noted as acting as a gateway for regional projects (e.g., collaboration among municipalities and community partners) (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Of the nine municipalities within the region Rimouski serves as the key economic and social hub (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Services and responsibilities have gradually increased to include: reception, accounting, human resources, asset management, financial and administrative management of the MRC, implementation of procedures related to sale for non-payment of municipal and school taxes, planning, geomatics, property assessment and so on (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). The MRC also has committees for agriculture, culture and heritage, water, waste management, and local development (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a).

Regional Actors

There are a number of agencies which represent various interests at a regional level, including economic development, tourism, and investment. For example, the MRC designated the local development centre Rimouski-Neigette to deliver services of local development across the region (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). There are a number of overlapping 'regions' and jurisdictions within the MRC as well, and all actors do not cover the entirety of the territory. A sample of regional actors include:

- The provincial administrative region of Bas-Saint-Laurent
 - Includes: agriculture, fisheries, food, education and social life, emigration and immigration, employment and work, environment, personal finance, housing, justice, natural resources, health and social services, tourism-leisure and culture, transport, family life (Gouvernement du Québec, 2015)
- La Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité (SADC) de la Neigette (La Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité de la Neigette, 2015)
 - Offers guidance for business administrative and financial management, consulting services for business and entrepreneurs, cost analysis and project financing, and other services

- CLD Rimouski-Neigette (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a)
 - Delivers local services, promotes local development and entrepreneurial support
- The Université du Québec à Rimouski (Université du Québec à Rimouski, 2015)
 - Regional development focused research including rural development, sustainable development, and economic and demographic changes of regional communities

Transportation and Communication Networks

In terms of ground transportation the MRC region is served by highways 20 and 132 and routes 232 and 234. Within the MRC there is an on demand taxibus service available for residents by reservation (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). Additionally, the MRC offers transportation for disabled persons in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation Québec, the serviced municipalities, and Pacte Rural (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a). There is a local airport in Rimouski, as well as several air strips within the region. The closest airport with scheduled flights is in Mont-Joli and for international flights one must go to Québec City.

In 2006 a fiber optic project was established to provide high speed internet access within the region, completed and operational since 2008 (MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, 2015a).

Summary

The MRC Rimouski-Neigette is a diverse rural region. Within the *Canadian Regional Development* project it offers a unique opportunity to study a (relatively) longstanding rural regional institution.

References

- Gouvernement du Québec. (2014). Rimouski-Neigette. Retrieved January 07, 2015, from http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=1&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.ca&sl=fr&u=http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/ToposWeb/fiche.aspx?no_seq=141044&usg=ALkJrhiyoo0ftsXP8Y6pxjUSwDZqEndng
- Gouvernement du Québec. (2015). Services Québec - Bas-Saint-Laurent. Retrieved January 14, 2015, from <http://www.bas-saint-laurent.gouv.qc.ca/>
- Institut de la Statistique du Québec. (2013). *Le bilan démographique du Québec*. Québec.
- La Société d'aide au développement de la collectivité de la Neigette. (2015). Mission. Retrieved January 14, 2101, from http://www.sadcneigette.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=155&Itemid=470
- MRC de Rimouski-Neigette. (2008). *La diversité culturelle, une richesse à partager!*. Retrieved from http://www.mrcrimouskineigette.qc.ca/service/culture/immigration/politique_accueil.pdf
- MRC de Rimouski-Neigette. (2015a). MRC de Rimouski-Neigette. Retrieved January 07, 2015, from <http://www.mrcrimouskineigette.qc.ca/>
- MRC de Rimouski-Neigette. (2015b). Municipalities. Retrieved January 07, 2015, from <http://www.mrcrimouskineigette.qc.ca/municipalite/municipalite/index.php>
- MRC du Haut-Saint-Laurent. (n.d.). Land Management Plan. Retrieved January 11, 2015, from <http://www.mrchsl.com/en/node/31>
- Natural Resources Canada. (2014). Ecozones. Retrieved January 11, 2015, from <http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/canada/classification/13179>
- OECD. (2010). *OECD Rural Policy Reviews Québec, Canada*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved from www.oecd.org/publishing/corrigenda
- Rural Secretariat Community Information Database. (n.d.-a). Area Profile MRC Rimouski-Neigette. Retrieved January 09, 2015, from <http://map.cid-bdc.ca/#v=map1;l=en>
- Rural Secretariat Community Information Database. (n.d.-b). Area Profile Québec.
- Statistics Canada. (2007). *2006 Census Dictionary* (No. 92-566-XWE). Ottawa. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/reference/dictionary/index.cfm>
- Statistics Canada. (2011). Population, urban and rural, by province and territory (Québec). Retrieved January 13, 2015, from <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo62f-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2012). *Rimouski-Neigette, Québec (Code 2410) and Québec (Code 24) (table) 2011 Census* (No. 98-316-XWE). Ottawa. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=2410&Geo2=PR&Code2=24&Data=Count&SearchText=Rimouski-Neigette&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>
- Université du Québec à Rimouski. (2015). The University. Retrieved January 15, 2015, from <http://www.uqar.ca/english/>

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



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

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

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

Kelly Vodden (Environmental Policy Institute, Grenfell Campus and Department of Geography, Memorial University) is leading the project, together with co-investigators David Douglas (School of Environment Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph), Sean Markey (Geography, Simon Fraser University), and Bill Reimer (Sociology and Anthropology, Concordia University). In addition, graduate students at all four universities are engaged on the project.

Further information on the project can be obtained at <http://cdnreqdev.ruralresilience.ca>. The project has been financially supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Leslie Harris Centre for Regional Policy and Development.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

