

Identity and Scales of Regionalism In Canada and Quebec: A Historical Approach

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the process of identity construction and the institutionalization of Canada's regions. The historiography, insofar as it produces both a scientific and identity-based discourse, may serve to support this analysis of three of Canada's regions: the West, the Maritimes, and Quebec. The analysis presents differing interpretations of the type, the importance, and the strategic choice of the regional approach in the context of nation building. Furthermore, the institutionalization of regions is an ongoing process that changes over time, especially in the case of western Canada, due to the involvement of certain protagonists. Finally, the case of Quebec differs from the rest of the country in that the regional studies produced by both historians and sociologists have opted for the intra-provincial scale rather than the inter-provincial one. Thus, all these factors contribute to bringing to light the importance of geographical scales in the production of regional identities in Canada.

Key Words: Geographical scales, Canadian studies, cultural regions, regional historiography, identity.

Regional studies have a long tradition dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The French School of Geography founded by Paul Vidal de la Blache (1908) had based its research on the monograph method in order to identify natural regions formed by the landscape and in which specific ways of life were produced. This scientific approach was suitable for the relatively stable and very rural French society of that period but the subsequent upheavals of industrialized societies and the growing involvement of the state in regional development and terri-

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torial planning and management have rendered the study of regions much more complex. After a period of disenchantment among some quantitative geographers of the 1970s, in the 1980s, the regional approach once again became a central concern for the new regional geography that incorporated other disciplines, most notably economics, sociology, and history.

In her analysis of the studies produced by the new regional geography, Anne Gilbert has identified three main angles (1988: 209-213). The first tends to stress the importance of the means of production and sees the region as a local response to capitalist processes. The second approach depicts the region as a focus of identification. Here, *culture*, considered a body of meanings attached to a specific space, is the prime object of regional studies. The third angle examines the region as a medium for social interaction. The influence of structuration theory developed in the social sciences by Anthony Giddens (1984) and Pierre Bourdieu (1980) is rather apparent in these studies. For supporters of structuration theory, social and spatial relations are interdependent. In a similar vein, the French geographer Claude Raffestin (1982) developed a theory of territoriality, defined as a spatial network of relationships.

The task of distinguishing between regional scales in Canada must necessarily integrate both the cultural approach of representations of identity and the approach of social actors who interact in territorialized networks. These two perspectives are in many ways similar to the concept of geographical scales as analyzed in this article. These are not simple cartographic or methodological scales as chosen by the researcher. In this article, a geographical scale is a social product, the result of the interaction of different actors in a given space over a specified historical period (Smith, 1992). That is why a periodic remodeling of regional identity scales is necessary according to the different historical periods under study.

The Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi (1986) has undoubtedly identified with the greatest precision the complexity of regional analysis through his institutionalization of regions approach. This process moves through four stages: 1) The assumption of territorial shape; 2) the formation of symbolic shape; 3) the formation of institutional shape; and 4) the establishment as an entity in the regional system and social consciousness of society. A few years later, Paasi reiterated his theory and insisted upon the essential role played by the historical approach in order to understand the process behind the institutionalization of regions. Many specialists in regional studies appear to have ignored this necessary historical step in their analyses. As phenomena registered in time, regions may be seen as spatial units that emerge and are transformed; they may also disappear due to other institutionalized divisions. Moreover, the region cannot be simply reduced to a given administrative unit or "to one regional level without taking into account wider sociospatial connections"

(Paasi, 1991: 243). The size of institutionalized regions may also vary considerably; from a village and surrounding area to a county, to a province. According to Paasi, regional identity cannot be reduced to the regional consciousness of the people living there. "Instead, it is more useful to link it to the institutionalization process, which includes the production and reproduction of regional consciousness in the inhabitants (and other people outside the region) and material and symbolic features of the region as parts of the ongoing process of social reproduction" (Paasi, 1991: 244).

The institutionalization of regional spaces appears, then, as a process in constant evolution over time involving different social actors. In my analysis, I identify five main groups of actors that contribute to the modeling and remodeling of regional representations of the population: 1) the government at the national, provincial, regional or local levels; 2) regional actors of civil society who intervene as leaders of associations, organizations, or regional movements; 3) national and regional media; 4) writers and artists; and finally, 5) academics (geographers, historians, sociologists, economists, and other regional specialists). It is important to point out that the production of the last two groups of regional actors, that is the creators and academics, helps to significantly reinforce or modify the identity of regional populations. The role of writers and historians appears especially significant in this sense as we shall see in the analysis to follow.

Canada is a useful case study for the variation of spatial scales of regional identities due to its vast expanse and the dispersion of its population. These regional identities are products of history and are not therefore the simple equivalents of territorial boundaries arising from the administrative division of a given territory. Several economic, social, and cultural factors contribute to the structuring of Canada's regions. The following analysis will examine the specific role played by cultural and academic actors in the construction of Canadian regional discourse, more particularly historiographical production. Indeed, historical analyses and the resultant discourse on regions tend to reinforce regional identities. Furthermore, such a discourse may have a political impact to the extent that regional coherence may compete or even conflict with national unity. Debates among Canadian historians appear to reveal such tension. It is equally apparent that the regional approach as practiced in Quebec differs considerably from that which is found in the other Canadian provinces.

THE GROWTH OF REGIONAL STUDIES IN CANADA

In his important report on the state of Canadian studies published in 1975, Professor Thomas H. B. Symons devoted a section to the state of regional studies within

Canadian studies programs in the country's universities. Rejecting the opinion of some who considered regional studies to have limited or even narrow significance and to be lacking in scientific rigor, the report asserted the importance and necessity of such studies for the general understanding of the history of Canada. "We must work from a solid knowledge base, rooted in the reality of local and regional circumstances in order to give substance to theories elaborated upon national situations and events," he wrote (Symons, 1975: 109).

It is probably no coincidence that regional studies began to develop all over the country beginning in the 1970s as a field of research within Canadian studies which were booming at that time. Historians from the Maritimes, the West, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec became involved in the development of regional historiography. Parallel to the numerous works published on different aspects of regionalism, several academic journals with a regional approach were founded: *Acadiensis* (1971+), *BC Studies* (1967+), *Prairie Forum* (1976+), in addition to other older journals such as *Saskatchewan History*, *Alberta History*, *Manitoba History*, *Ontario History*, etc. Quebec was also the scene of such growth in regional history journals, in addition to its own national journals in French like *La Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française*, *Recherches Sociographiques*, *La Revue de géographie du Québec*, etc.

RELATIONS BETWEEN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

After reading studies devoted to regional historiography in English Canada, it becomes clear that the subject has provoked often lively debate between upholders of a national history and those of regional history, the first group being mostly Ontarians from Toronto and the second, historians from the Maritimes and the West. The expression "limited identities," coined by Ramsey Cook and taken up again in an article by J.M.S. Careless (1969), has served as a landmark for the debate by enhancing the regional approach in Canadian history. However, both these historians reconsidered their position later on, deeming that the importance gained by regional historiography since the 1970s ran the risk of jeopardizing Canadian unity by overemphasizing differences.

The debate between national and regional historians gained momentum in the 1990s as P.A. Buckner has shown in an article in *Acadiensis* in 2000. In the debate, the national historians accused the regional historians and social historians of contributing to the destruction of the Canadian state by enhancing provincial demands or by outrageously specializing the general field of Canadian historiography as women's history, labor history, urban history, and aboriginal history (Bliss, 1991;

Granatstein, 1998). Some have called for the pendulum to swing back by arguing for the need to understand and interpret the whole, in other words "the national experience" rather than regional or sector-based fragments (Owran, 1997).

Maritime regional historians, for their part, have sought to demonstrate the perpetuation of regional disparities since confederation while demanding recognition of the regions' contribution to building Canada. A similar state of affairs is observable among historians in the West. In an article devoted to the historiography of the Prairie Provinces, R. Douglas Francis identified four major themes of concern to historians of the region: regional identity, regional protest, social reform, and imagery (Francis, 1992: 20-21).

This debate among historians appears, therefore, to be essentially political; two ideas clash: the idea of a federal Canada searching for "reasons in common" to explain national cohesion and nation building and the idea of a regional Canada that sees diversity as a reflection of reality and that is not incompatible with the unity of the country.

THE REGION: PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION

Whether considered as a reality that cannot be ignored or as a threat, the region is often a vague concept, employed by many authors yet left undefined. Which region are we talking about?

Historian Gerald Friesen of the University of Manitoba has suggested three types of regions: the *formal region*, the *functional region*, and the *imagined region*. The *formal region* has a geo-morphological character. Thus, "the Prairies look like a separate, distinct and homogeneous place." This approach, utilized by visitors and geographers at the beginning of the twentieth century, has since fallen into disrepute although the influence of the environment in the history of communities is undeniable. The second type of region is the *functional region*. In this view, the region is seen in its relation to other regions. Thus, we speak of outlying regions (or hinterlands) because there are central or metropolitan regions. Also, the *functional region* implies a relationship. That is to say that "these places [have been] shaped as much by the coherent whole of which they form a part as by internal consistency or evident boundaries" (Friesen, 1996: 166-168). Taken one step further, Friesen's analysis of the *functional region* shows that a clearly identifiable regional space is the result of historical processes made up of economic activities, political boundaries, administrative divisions, or even protest movements. The third type of region is the *imagined region*. According to Friesen, "a place must be imagined before it can exist." Here,

artists, writers, and intellectuals come to the fore to create or project an image of the region that will bestow coherence upon an inhabited space. Here, we may speak in terms of a representation of such a space as a mental construct. It is from this perspective that Eli Mandel claimed that "there is a distinctive regional prairie literature that creates a mythicized prairie world" (Mandel, 1973: 169). This third type of region is fundamental in accounting for regional identity in general and regionalist movements in particular. Because the region here implies a voluntary adherence in the same way that the French philosopher Ernest Renan or the Quebec sociologist Fernand Dumont considered the nation. According to Dumont, regions, like nations, "are before us in the guise of collective representations" (Renan, 1882; Dumont, 1979: 19).

The three types of regions identified by Friesen correspond to the definitions of the region that researchers in Quebec have established. Furthermore, it is evident that there is interaction between the *formal region*, the *functional region* and the *imagined region* and that the historian must consider this fact in explaining phenomena related to regional identity and socio-political protest movements. It must be pointed out, however, that many historians, geographers, and economists cut out space arbitrarily according to their object of inquiry and that these spaces do not necessarily correspond to identity spaces. Here, space is rather considered as a background, instead of as an active component of the analysis for the functional or imagined regions.

CANADIAN HISTORIANS' REGIONAL SCALES

While studies in regional history have grown in number since the 1970s, we have yet to reflect upon the regional scales developed and used by historians. It is appropriate to recall a few geographical facts in order to place the debate between "national" historians and "regional" historians in its proper context. Canada, with its 9,976,139 square kilometers, is more than twice the size of Europe of the 25 (4 134 300 km²). We could fit Poland (312 677 km²) twice in Saskatchewan (651 900 km²) and France (547 026 km²) three times within Quebec (1 540 680 km²). Quebec covers, by the way, an area 78 percent of that of Mexico. New Brunswick (73 436 km²), considered a small province, could contain Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg (73 930 km²) (*Canadian Encyclopedia*, 1985). While population density is not the same in Canada and Europe, the Canadian population is nonetheless so spread out over such a vast territory that the regional mosaic is a geographic fact before becoming a reality in historical, economic, or socio-political terms.

IDENTITY AND SCALES OF REGIONALISM
ESSAYS

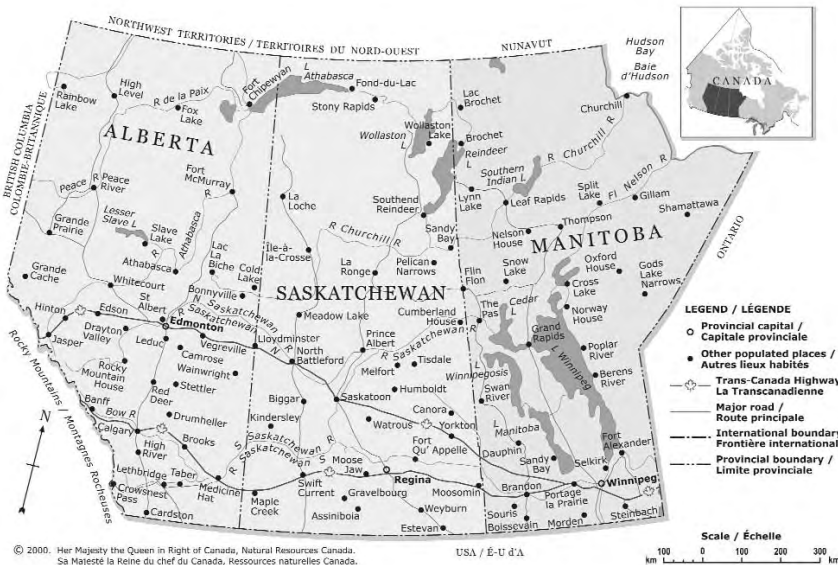
While studying regional historiography in Canada, one realized that, depending on the case at hand, these studies referred at times to very different regional scales. In the Maritimes, for example, several historians lament the fact that studies are generally limited to one of the three provinces –New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island– while the general history of the Maritime region has yet to be written. Moreover, this desire for a unified approach to the Maritime region has led P. D. Clarke to point out that the historians who developed Maritime studies are hesitant to include Acadian historiography because its culturalist approach (the imagined region) does not fit into their *functional region* approach (Clarke, 2000: 87-89). At any rate, this division in Maritime regional historiography is a reflection of provincial reality because the three provinces were created as separate entities by Great Britain for political reasons in late eighteenth century. The notion of elaborating a history of the Atlantic Provinces that includes Newfoundland and Labrador appears even more utopian given Labrador’s northern rather than maritime character (Hiller, 2000).

MAP OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES



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MAP OF THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES



In the Prairie Provinces, a reading of cultural history shows quite a different development. According to Gerald Friesen, the various communication networks set up in the 1920s and 1930s help explain “the force of prairie-wide regional consciousness” that became apparent in the period. This regional consciousness on the Prairies appears to have been replaced in the second half of the twentieth century by a distinct provincial consciousness for Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta because of new communication networks and new provincial institutions of more recent creation (Freisen, 1996: 178-179).

These two examples taken from the regional history of the Maritimes and the Prairies show that on the subject of regions in Canada, historians—as well as journalists, economists and politicians for that matter—usually refer to a group of provinces. We may therefore call this a Canadian macro-regional or *trans-provincial* approach. With respect to history done within the limits of a province, English Canadian historians would rather refer to that type of research as *local* history rather than regional history.

There is a third level of regional history which appears less well developed in English Canada: regional history done within the limits of a province and that I would term *intra-provincial* regional history. Of course, regions may be found within each Canadian province, but more studies should be undertaken before maintaining that some of them constitute identifiable spaces in terms of identity. It

would appear that, for English Canadian historians, intra-provincial history seems equivalent to local history. In an article entitled "Local History in Canada," Paul Voisey shows what little regard professional historians have for local history produced by history amateurs. He also points out that the New Social History inspired by the monographs of the American Social Scientists or the French school *Annales* was slow to be taken up in local studies in English Canada contrary to the situation in Quebec. Such hesitation led English Canadian historians who adopted the approach to identify with urban history rather than local history (Voisey, 1985 and 1989).

From the foregoing, we may distinguish four levels of regional history in Canada: 1) trans-provincial regional history; 2) provincial history; 3) intra-provincial regional history; 4) local or micro-regional history. It would be a mistake to group together the last two categories because of the size of some regions within provinces. Is it local history when we study northern Ontario, the Saguenay in Quebec, or southern Saskatchewan, since these territories are as large as certain small European countries?

In addition to these four levels of regional history, a fifth level seems to have emerged in recent years linked to the necessity of a comprehensive interpretation of contemporary metropolis: the city-region. An example of this new approach is the project of a history of the Montreal metropolitan region undertaken recently by the National Institute for Scientific Research (Collin, Dagenais and Poitras, 2003). This approach might contribute to reconcile local, regional, and urban history.

THE REGIONS WITHIN QUEBEC

Seen from the outside, Quebec constitutes an economic region of Canada, sometimes associated with Ontario and called "Central Canada." This name often has a pejorative connotation in the Maritimes and the West. The Québécois, for their part, do not consider themselves as forming a simple cultural region of Canada. Quebec historians who produce works that cover the entire territory of Quebec maintain they are writing national history rather than provincial or regional history. This is undoubtedly why the debate in English Canada between national historians and regional historians had little effect among Quebec historians; the latter developed other kinds of approaches mainly related to Canadian duality. Before commenting on the way Québécois historians do regional history, it is important to recall a few of the major landmarks in the development of the regions within Quebec.

The east-west axis of the Saint Lawrence crosses the vast territory of Quebec. To the South, the main tributaries are the Richelieu, Saint-François, and Chaudière Rivers, to the North, the Ottawa, Saint-Maurice, and Saguenay Rivers. Geography

has thus facilitated the emergence of diversified formal regions. At the end of the French regime, in 1760, the inhabited territory corresponded to the seigniorial zone of the Saint Lawrence Valley, from Kamouraska to the west of the island of Montreal, including Quebec and Trois-Rivières (that is to say a 400-kilometer-long strip of colonized land) with outgrowth along the Chaudière River (the Beauce region) and the Richelieu River (the Richelieu Valley region).

Beginning in 1830, demographic pressure caused by a high birth rate among French Canadians forced the opening up of new regions of settlement: first the Eastern Townships were opened to settlement for French families, then the Saguenay and Lac Saint-Jean region in the 1850s. The parish priest Antoine Labelle also made colonization initiatives in the Laurentians north of Montreal during the 1870s and 1880s. The plateaus surrounding the Saint Lawrence Valley were progressively settled during the last half of the nineteenth century, from the Gaspé Peninsula in the east to Témiscamingue in the west. At the beginning of the twentieth century and during the Great Depression of the 1930s, colonization reached the Abitibi region further north as well as the inland areas of the Lower Saint Lawrence and the Gaspé Peninsula. The North and Northern Quebec, already occupied for centuries by Amerindians or Inuit communities, were occupied by white settlers during the second half of the twentieth century due to develop mining, forestry, and hydro-electrical plants (Harvey, 1996). History and geography have thus contributed to the creation of distinct economic and cultural regions within Quebec. Historians have even noticed the growth of regionalist awareness in certain parts of Quebec like Mauricie and Eastern Townships beginning in the 1930s, although these culturally inspired movements led by a small elite can not be compared to the more forceful regionalist movements in western Canada (Verrette, 1993; Harvey, 2001).

New factors have recently come to accentuate regional assertiveness within Quebec. Through the creation of ten administrative regions in 1966, the government of Quebec instigated a process of administrative decentralization which over the years turned into a movement of regional assertiveness in opposition to the bureaucratic centralization coming from Quebec City. Furthermore, new international immigration in Montreal in the 1970s created a cultural divide between the multicultural metropolis and the other more homogeneous regions of Quebec. Finally, one must add the demographic divide between demographic and economic growth regions such as the outlying areas of Montreal and Quebec City and the remote regions that show a migratory deficit. All these factors help explain the regions' central place within recent political debate in Quebec. Seen from outside, Quebec may appear to have a relatively homogeneous society, but that is an illusion. And this observation was as valid in the past as it is in the present.

It is interesting to note that there is a historical relationship between the colonization of outlying regions of Quebec and the colonization of the western Canadian provinces. Indeed, in reaction to the emigration of French Canadians to the textile factories of New England between 1850 and 1930, the Catholic clergy and elite groups of the period called for their repatriation to Canada although they were divided with regard to the best solution for the problem. The French-speaking bishops in the West wanted the French Canadians in New England and in the overpopulated rural regions of Quebec to emigrate to the new settlement areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta, while the clergy in Quebec called for settling the outlying regions of Quebec in order to avoid a thinning of the ranks and assimilation (Painchaud, 1986).

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL STUDIES IN QUEBEC

The long tradition of regional studies in Quebec goes back to the end of the nineteenth century. The regional pamphlets by journalist Arthur Buies and other colonization promoters predate later academic studies. Between 1930 and 1960, the French geographer Raoul Blanchard, a follower of Vidal de la Blache, produced a series of monographs on the regions of Quebec (*Cahiers de Géographie*, 1986). Other geographers and a few economists then published several studies on the regions of Quebec, among them Esdras Minville who did economic inventories of the counties of Quebec. Sociologists and anthropologists also became interested in regional studies beginning in the 1950s and 1960s (Harvey, 1994). Professional historians, however, were slow to take up the challenge of regional history because it was considered the field of research for amateurs.

In Quebec as in English Canada, the renewal of regional historiography began in the 1970s. However, the scientific and political context of this renewed interest for regional studies was different. The establishment in 1969 of the Université du Québec network, with its constituent universities in Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi, Rimouski, Hull, and Rouyn, permitted the creation of new programs in history and geography. The historians of these universities as well as those in Montreal, Quebec City and Sherbrooke began to systematically study their respective regions. Several scientific and social trends influenced this new regional history among which we find the Laval University School of Sociology, the French school of the *Annales*, the economic theories of Third World underdevelopment and French cultural geography of the 1980s. More empirical works attempted instead to piece together the poorly understood historical framework of the different regions of Quebec. Regional history evolved within an interdisciplinary context with geographers, sociologists,

and economists concerned about contemporary problems of underdevelopment in Quebec's outlying regions. Thus, the historiography produced in Quebec appears to have emphasized economic and social problems rather than political or identity ones. Furthermore, the cultural historiography of Quebec's regions is relatively recent, even though the question of regional identity is found in the background of many earlier studies (Harvey, 2002).

The observed differences between regional historiography in Quebec and English Canada, described by Gaffield (1991: 64) as "the two Canadian traditional research solitudes," are also found in sociological literature on regional studies. According to Chris Southcott, "Franco-Québécois sociologists studying regional disparities tended to perceive their unit of analysis as intra-provincial territories," while Anglo-Canadian sociologists focused rather on inter-provincial inequalities. Furthermore, the dominant discourse in Anglo-Canadian sociology in the 1970s and 1980s saw regional inequalities somewhat fatalistically as "a normal structural process of capitalism rather than the result of an institutional malfunction." Québécois sociologists, on the other hand, were influenced by Alain Touraine's constructivist approach on the role of actors and social movements and developed an approach based on the possibilities for socio-economic change for regions in difficulty (Southcott, 1994: 345-346; Lafontaine, 1989).

THE INTRA QUEBEC REGIONAL HISTORY PROJECT

Several major projects in regional history have been undertaken in Quebec over the past 30 years. Subjects such as the evolution of regional populations, relations between agriculture and forestry, and trading practices in the Saint Lawrence Valley, to name but these few, have been studied by major research teams (Harvey, 1993).

I would like to briefly show you one of these projects in which I have been involved from the outset: the Intra Quebec Regional History Project, sponsored by the National Institute of Scientific Research and associated with the University of Quebec. This ambitious project which began in 1980 seeks to produce a historical synthesis of each of Quebec's 24 cultural regions. This breakdown of the regions was established by considering the contemporary administrative divisions of the provincial State of Quebec, as well as older realities of a geographical and cultural nature. And that explains the term *historical region* to describe certain areas that are a result of a combination of the *formal region*, the *functional region* and the *imagined region* of which we spoke earlier.

Like general histories of Canada or the provinces, these syntheses cover themes linked to the birth and evolution of each region from the origins up to today: the

geographic environment, the Amerindian presence, colonization and settlement, economic development, growth of teaching and health care institutions, the evolution of cultural and artistic activities. Each project, which takes an average of three years to complete, is led by a team of professional historians and research assistants based at the university in the region under study. All available studies of the region are considered but numerous chapters require new research in the archives or public documents. The synthesis is produced according to rigorous historical methodology but is written in language accessible to a wide public.

From their beginning 24 years ago, these synthesis projects have mobilized considerable human and financial resources. Of the 24 syntheses, 17 have been published and the other seven projects will be completed by 2010. The cost has reached nearly 10 million Canadian dollars, 78 percent of which was raised by the regional fundraising campaigns. The publication of these studies was a commercial success; several regional histories of 2 000 copies or more have seen a second edition (Perron, 2004).

The Intra Quebec Regional History Project has produced some positive side effects in terms of the dissemination of knowledge. These regional histories have been studied in schools and universities in Quebec history courses; tourism associations and socio-economic organizations and journalists have found useful information in them. Also, three sub-projects were developed: a collection of brief histories taken from the published works for the general public, a series of video documentaries on the history of Quebec's regions, available as video cassettes for schools and, more recently, a website, *Encyclobec* that provides access to various historical facts taken from the regional histories.¹

On the whole, these regional history syntheses have contributed to a deeper understanding of the general history of Quebec. Far from being a homogeneous society, Quebec is thus viewed through all its regional differences. Future general syntheses of the history of Quebec will have to take these differences into consideration. Furthermore, this finer understanding of the regions will permit the development of comparisons between regions. It will also be easier to analyze the growing impact of globalization at the local or micro-regional levels.

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To come back to our initial question, we may ask whether the split between national and regional history is still pertinent. Because regional history is not produced in a

¹ <<http://www.ulaval.ca/pul/teleseries.html>>, and <www.encyclobec.ca>.

vacuum but within a more general framework: Quebec, the other provinces, Canada, even North America, it is capable of enriching the understanding of our common past. Indeed, works of regional history are beginning to be incorporated into new pan-Canadian syntheses (Conrad & Finkel, 2003; Francis *et al.*, 2000; Cardin *et al.*, 1996).

Canadian history is a complex combination of histories at different levels—national, trans-provincial, provincial, intra-provincial, urban and local. To me, it seems necessary to recognize the importance of all these levels in order to account for the diversity of social relations and not just the political process involved in the construction of the Canadian state. In this sense, intra-provincial regional history as practiced in Quebec could be developed elsewhere in the country and contribute to a better understanding of the past.

In the present-day context of accelerating globalization, nation-states appear powerless to solve certain environmental, economic, or cultural problems that transcend their borders. The citizens of these countries are worried about the impact of these changes on their day-to-day lives. Paradoxically, this tendency provokes an opposite reaction, a kind of counterbalance effect that encourages the development of the local or regional level, viewed as closer to the people and therefore easier to control. More than ever, individuals feel the need to connect to their area and to develop a sense of place. Moreover, the development of new communication and information technologies and the widening of economic and cultural exchanges have helped to open up many rural and urban regions and put an end to their isolation. In many areas of Canada and other countries, notably in Europe, we have seen the development of direct international relations between various cities or regions while before, these relations were the sole preserve of national capitals or metropolitan centers. The numerous national or international festivals organized by small or middle-sized cities are an example of this phenomenon linked to globalization. These initiatives help reinforce regional identity and the region's capacity for innovation. The increased prestige of a region brings in its wake a need for history in order to understand better the foundations of its identity.

As far as Canada is concerned, the regional approach remains essential for the interpretation of the country's economic, political, and cultural past, as well as its future. At the North American level, an analysis that compares the process of regional institutionalization on different scales and according to different historical, political, and administrative modes appears necessary in the context of the increasing integration brought about by the NAFTA treaty. Following the example set by the regions of Europe, it is possible that certain regions of Canada, the United States and Mexico develop together direct economic or cultural relations without necessarily involving nation-states.

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INTRA QUEBEC REGIONAL HISTORY PROJECT *

Region	Date of publication	Funding Total in Can dollars	% of regional funding
Eastern Quebec			
<i>Gaspé</i>	1981 & 1999	80 000	25 %
<i>Saguenay</i>	1989	343 345	71 %
<i>Côte-du-Sud</i>	1993	419 283	76 %
<i>North Shore</i>	1993	507 000	78 %
<i>Levis-Lotbinière</i>	1996	497 654	79 %
<i>Charlevoix</i>	2000	285 333	87 %
<i>Quebec City</i>	2007	584 333	85 %
<i>Beauce-Etchemins-Amiante</i>	2003	440 000	100 %
Central Quebec			
<i>Eastern Townships</i>	1998	402 000	47 %
<i>Mauricie</i>	2004	375 333	90 %
<i>[St Maurice Valley]</i>			
<i>Bois-Francs</i>	(in progress)	447 000	100 %
Western Quebec			
<i>Laurentians</i>	1989	276 950	24 %
<i>Outaouais</i>	1994	346 255	71 %
<i>[Ottawa Valley]</i>			
<i>Abitibi-Temiscamingue</i>	1995	388 000	72 %
<i>Piémont-des Appalaches</i>	1999	320 333	89 %
<i>Upper St. Lawrence</i>	2000	320 333	89 %
<i>Richelieu-Yamaska-South Shore</i>	2001	320 333	89 %
<i>Montreal</i>	(in progress)	1 500 000	66 %
<i>Lanaudière</i>	(in progress)	466 000	100 %
<i>Laval</i>	(in progress)	460 000	100 %
Northern Quebec			
<i>James Bay</i>	(starting)	350 000	100 %
<i>Nunavik</i>	(starting)	350 000	100 %

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