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Decrypting the Processes of Policy Evolution: Comparing Québec and Ontario's Evolution of
Risk Management Policies

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy

by

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Abstract

Through policies or programs, states can influence industries to align with their vision of what a sector should become. However, this vision is subject to influence from actors of the industries which emphasize the importance of the relationship between the state and interest groups. In this dissertation, we observe the evolution of 9 Canadian agriculture risk management programs implemented by two provincial governments between 1990 and 2020 to understand how such programs coped with the new trends in agriculture. Through a review of parliamentary discussions and official documents, we evaluate the factors that justified program evolution based on the combination of the punctuated equilibrium and the social construction of target population theories. Our results show that risk management programs tend to align with the vision of agriculture carried out by the main interest groups. By doing so, new visions have a harder time to gain support and see programs being adapted to their reality. The long-lasting vision can then build on its accumulated political resources to direct support to similar farmers. Moreover, since these farmers are perceived as beneficial contributors to the society, they find governments generally favorable to their requests. This could then explain why risk management policies have seen their budgets greatly increased over the timeframe we covered as well as the multiplication of programs. On the other hand, the new visions in agriculture had a harder time to receive risk management programs adapted to their reality. Since most risk management policy discussions are realized through negotiations between the state and a dominant farming group, this group should ensure to include these new visions inside its discourse to maintain its legitimacy. Were the new visions to obtain enough attention by the state through other means, it could destabilize the polity and reduce the influence of farmers on agricultural policy.

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Epigraph

“Most agro-food regimes have a dominant (conventional) practice, as well as a few alternatives. Some of such alternatives remain in niches, others have managed to anchor themselves in the dominant regime, [...] These alternatives propose responses to problems associated with the dominant regimes [...] For farmers and actors of the agro-food chains, the challenge is to cultivate this diversity as a seemingly redundant but crucial store of opportunities.” (Schiere et al., 2012, pp 356–357)

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Chapter 1 – General Introduction

By intervening in agriculture, states attempt to influence food chain actors, including farmers, to develop a sector that will fit the decision-makers' vision (Devlin, 2004). This implies that the government in place mobilizes the state resources to achieve its objective (Anderson, 2015; Howlett & Lejano, 2013; Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Weible, 2013). For instance, governments can subsidize specific commodities to increase their level of production, or they can adopt regulations that impose conditions to be filled in order to produce and market some products. Whether the policy adopted actually brings the intended outcome will vary depending on many factors, including the acceptance of the policy by the target population (Kelman, 2005).

However, seeing policies as the mere reproduction of the state's vision only encompasses one side of the relationship between the state and the population (Devlin, 2004). As Arnold (1990) reminds us, policies are proposed and supported by elected officials to ensure their reelection. Hence, elected officials must stay in contact with their electorate to adequately represent them and gain their trust. Oppositely, the electorate also has an interest to influence elected officials to receive policies that represent their vision (Kelman, 2005). In order to do so, part of the electorate that is interested in the issue can create lobbying groups to shape state intervention. But lobbyist actions are also affected by the policies that can limit or facilitate their access to resources – monetary but also politically (Baumgartner et al., 2009a).

In agriculture, lobbying groups are generally organized following the preferences of producers related to state intervention (Cordellier, 1990; Lagrave & Hubscher, 1993).¹ If homogenous, as often represented (Bruneau, 2013), producers may prefer to create a single

¹ Lagrave & Hubscher (1993) however mention that it is not always the case. For instance, they present the creation of new French farmers' associations leaning to the left side of politics, as the result of a strategic decision rather than of an ideological difference between these associations.

organization to represent them. However, as van der Ploeg (1994; 2008) mentions, the evolution of agriculture since the beginning of the 1990s has brought heterogeneity in agriculture with different perspectives clashing over the relation of farmers with their environment (e.g., market, government, technology) (van der Ploeg et al., 2009). As the relation changes for farmers at different paces, it may limit their representation through a single group. Instead, van der Ploeg argues that three ideal-types of farming styles (Peasant, Entrepreneurs and Agri-food firms) cohabit in many countries as he observes three specific arrangements of relationships between the farm and its environment. We can then expect that farmers would seek political representation aligning with their relationship with the environment.² However, the multiplication of groups is not always possible regarding the regulations, and different visions of agriculture may have to be represented by the same interest groups. In these cases, the opposition between visions of agriculture is internalized in the lobby group (Clerc, 1990; Delorme, 1996; Hervieu, 1990).

This dissertation aims to deepen the understanding of the way different visions of agriculture can be echoed in the policies implemented by a government. It also focuses on the impacts of the organization of interest groups (i.e., institutional arrangement) surrounding agricultural policies on policy adoption. This objective then pushes further the concept of the representation of a vision of agriculture by assessing how the vision can influence state intervention. If van der Ploeg (2008) provides some insights on policy measures that could support a specific farming style such as agritourism subsidies for Peasants, support to investment's policies for Entrepreneurs and international trade for Agri-food firms, he also

² This was observed, for instance, in France since the 1980s (Coulomb, 1990; Samak, 2013) or in Canada since the 1960s (Wiebe, 2019)

points on the lack of adoption of these policy measures by the state (van der Ploeg, 2016). As such, there is a need to understand the process by which states weight the policy demands from different groups.³ In this sense, we distinguish ourselves from the existing literature by mobilizing formal public policy theories to study the way states adjusted their policies to actions from farming groups. We thus align with Bosso's (1987) idea of taking a long-term perspective to understand the variables that influence the policies adopted by states.

In this dissertation, we conduct a comparative analysis of the evolution of nine agricultural risk management policies in Québec and Ontario. The policies covered are those in force between 1990 and 2020 in both provinces. We chose the agricultural sectors in Québec and Ontario since they are subject to similar growing and endowment conditions, which offers a good control for production variables that could otherwise bias qualitative analysis (Winson, 1985). Moreover, the shared power of agriculture between the federal government and provincial governments creates a baseline of federal programs enforced across the country, while allowing provinces the possibilities to add programs by themselves. In the case of Ontario and Québec, both provinces decided during the period covered in this dissertation to adopt their own additional programs. This was not necessarily the case in every other Canadian province.

Both provinces we studied also regulate the organization of farmers' interests, allowing us to consider this as a variable of policy evolution. In such, we integrate the wider body of comparative lobbying⁴ from which Kanol (2015a) calls to multiply the number of case studies in

³ We also believe that Anseeuw et al.'s (2001) concerns about their own results should be followed as they "invite to be cautious regarding any policy measure based on the idea that farming households dynamics can be understood through a unique farm model" (Anseeuw et al., 2001, p.16).

⁴ Kanol (2015a) defines comparative lobbying as the research of the interest groups' relationship between two regions or more when the relationship varies.

different jurisdictions. For him, the 1970s debate on corporatism and pluralism was only the beginning of comparative lobbying and nuances must now be developed. In particular, our research answers his call regarding the need to better understand the institutional features that affect the development of lobbying and the lack of research on strategies from lobbying groups and their factors of success. We expect that our study will help to identify and assess the factors leading to policy changes by interest groups.

In this first chapter, we start by identifying the different roles played by governments regarding agriculture since the second half of the twentieth century. We also introduce our research questions. This allows us to place our research on an historic timeline to take account of the general context of state intervention prior to 1990 and the changes that were operated since that time. For instance, many authors including Josling (2002), Muller (2014) and van der Ploeg (2008) mentioned how developed countries' involvement in agriculture following World War II focused on supporting farming incomes. However, the mechanisms implemented at that time started to be questioned in the 1980s and the 1990s, fostered by the multiplication of international treaties that included agriculture, the recognition of negative consequences of agriculture on the environment and the society, and the rise of new considerations by consumers.

The Actions of the State in Agriculture

The actions of the state in agriculture have been the target of a wide array of literature, especially from agricultural economists and international trade specialists since Galbraith and Black (1938) theorized the need for state intervention due to the specific characteristics of agriculture. These authors were looking for an explanation to justify why the number of producers and the level of production in the US were maintained in the 1930s when the market

conditions became unfavorable to the development of agriculture (*Ibid.*).⁵ Under the term of ‘Farm Problem’, authors of this generation⁶ argued for an exceptionalism of agriculture due to many factors such as the inelastic nature of supply and demand, the perishability of the products, market power asymmetries that favor buyers (oligopoly), the sensitivity of agricultural products to climatic conditions, pests and diseases, asset specificity, as well as innovations that constantly increase yields (Brodeur & Clerson, 2015). In the United States, this vision of the farm problem led to the implementation of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, known as the first Farm Bill. In Canada, Gouin (2004) suggests that similar arguments were used to justify the state involvement in commercialization of agricultural products (e.g., supply management, marketing boards). In Australia and New Zealand, Cockfield & Botterill (2012) mention a similar pattern until the 1970s to justify the support to producers to maintain a higher level of income than the one offered by the market while keeping consumers’ prices at a low level.

This exceptionalism of agriculture is also present in the literature of policy paradigms led by Coleman et al. (1996), Josling (2002) and Skogstad (2008a; 2008b). The concept of policy paradigm was introduced by Hall (1993) after Thomas Kuhn’s influential book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962 who presented the pattern of science’s evolution. He explained that each science follows a dominant ideological framework — the paradigm — until a scientific revolution questions the existing paradigm and proposes a new one. For Hall (1993) and

⁵ It should be noted that more recent authors are challenging the interpretation of the producer’s rationale to maintain their level of production, arguing that the research of a future as a family farm was important enough to provide non-market incentives for farmers to maintain their production (Francoeur, 2018).

⁶ See for instance Cochrane (1958), Schultz (1945), D. Gale Johnson (1947), G. L. Johnson (1958) and Hathaway (1966).

similarly for Jobert and Muller (1987)⁷, this concept can be applied to public policies. Policies adopted are influenced by the policy paradigm that establishes the dominant ideological framework in a specific area.⁸

Coleman et al. (1996) argued that the recognition of agriculture's exceptionalism by the states led to a state-assistance paradigm where agriculture was considered in need of an economic support to make sure it is adequately produced. This paradigm was considered dominant in most developed countries following the Second World War as can be seen in the agricultural policies of Canada, the United States, Europe and Japan as well as in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade of 1947 (Skogstad, 2008b). In all these cases, policies were implemented to increase the income of producers through support of prices, marketing boards, export subsidies, import quotas and tariffs, protection against the market forces, and incentives to increase the efficiency of producers (Coleman et al., 1996; Skogstad, 2008a; 2008b).

However, agriculture changed in the following decades as well as the general acceptance of public support of specific sectors. In particular, neoliberal thinking took a more prominent place in the discussions on agricultural support, arguing that resource allocations should determine producers' activities for agriculture as well as for other sectors (Coleman et al., 1996; Devlin, 2004). For instance, the Uruguay Round of negotiations of the World Trade Organization transferred these neoliberal ideas about agriculture in formal international agreements that led countries to adjust their policies (Josling, 2002; Skogstad, 2008b). Hence, a paradigm of market

⁷ Though Hall, nor most of the authors cited, does not recognize the work of Jobert and Muller, there are some strong similarity with the use of Hall's term of "paradigm" and Jobert and Muller's term of 'référentiel'. We then follow Gaboury-Bonhomme's consideration of both terms as substitutable.

⁸ It can also be seen as the guidelines of the state intervention present in the society and applied to a specific policy area (Jobert & Muller, 1987; Revéret et al., 1981).

liberalism emerged⁹ where it was assumed that noncompetitive farmers would end their activities. In this idea, the role of the government was limited to leveling the play field to foster competition, while still providing short-term relief programs and decoupled support¹⁰ (Coleman et al., 1996; 2004). This paradigm also considered that the sector was able to function by itself and assume all the risks (Josling, 2002).

This market liberalism was, however, not fully embraced by all countries. For instance, at about the same period, the European Union developed policies identifying agriculture as a public good that needed to be supported (*Ibid.*). One observation at the time was that agriculture provided environmental services that needed to be compensated accordingly (Coleman et al., 2004). As such, environmental payments and support for small farmers and rural areas were introduced under a paradigm qualified as multifunctionality (*Ibid.*; Coleman et al., 1996; Skogstad, 2008a). It then brought back the need for state support in agriculture from the state assistance paradigm through mechanisms that were deemed more acceptable by proponents of neoliberalism since, according to their views, they do not affect the market (Skogstad, 2008b).

One last paradigm was also developed by Coleman et al. (1996) and Josling (2002) even though it was not truly observed by them at the time: the globalized production paradigm. For them, this paradigm considered agriculture as just one part of the supply chain of food products and not a specific industry. The driver for the evolution of agriculture then becomes the consumers — through the retailers — and each actor of the chain uses private instruments such

⁹ It is interesting to note that, at the same time, agricultural economists refuted the contemporary aspect of the farm problem (see for instance Gardner (1992)) even though some are left unconvinced (Boussard, 2007; Brodeur & Clerson, 2015; Gouin, 2005).

¹⁰ Decoupled programs are programs that support agriculture without linking the level of support to the production of farmers. As opposed to coupled programs, decoupled programs are thus expected to have a lower impact on the decision-making process of farmers.

as contracts to carry consumers' expectations throughout the chain (Josling, 2002). In this idea, the role of the government is limited to the development of safety and quality standards and the enforcement of contractual agreements (Coleman et al., 1996). Moreover, as the markets open around the world, supply chains become increasingly integrated which would limit any actions by national governments (Coleman et al., 2004). As such, in this paradigm, the focus was expected to be on firm-to-firm relationships instead of government-firm relationships. However, this paradigm did not receive as much attention as the others, as the different authors studying paradigm in agriculture did not notice its presence (Gaboury-Bonhomme, 2018; Skogstad, 2008b).

Even though new paradigms emerged in agricultural policies, programs developed under the previous paradigms (e.g., state assistance, market liberalism) have proved to be resilient. For instance, Skogstad (2008a; 2008b; 2012) argues how the decoupled programs that have been implemented in Canada since the 1980s are showing a tendency toward a market-liberalism paradigm, while environmental animal welfare, and food safety support programs are pointing toward a multifunctionality paradigm. Still, looking at the rationale for the changes and the continuous recognition of the exceptionality of agriculture in the policies, Skogstad concluded that the state assistance paradigm remained dominant in the late 2000s (Skogstad, 2012).¹¹ Similarly, Royer et al. (2014) observed a continuity of the state assistance paradigm in Canada regarding the collective marketing regulations.

¹¹ Gaboury-Bonhomme (2018) also concluded that even if other paradigms were present and potentially gained momentum, state assistance remained the dominant one in Québec. Oppositely, Revéret et al. (1981) identified the beginning of a paradigmatic shift as early as the 1970s in Québec, with the construction of a shared idea around ecological agriculture. As for Royer et al. (2014), they showed that the use of marketing boards in Québec — and those conclusions can likely be extended to the rest of Canada where marketing boards are still present — were also in continuation of the state assistance paradigm.

The continuous presence of concurrent paradigms can then result in mixed signals sent to farmers about what and how to develop their enterprise. As such, a form of heterogeneity can appear in farming activities which calls for a consideration of additional concerns in the analysis of agricultural policies. Hence, policy analysis may need to consider that farmers are not a homogenous group and thus may need to break them into smaller, but more homogenous groups (Anseeuw et al., 2001).

Aim and Scope of the Dissertation

In the process of this dissertation, we opted to use van der Ploeg's (2008) typology of farming styles in our assessment of risk management programs to reflect the heterogeneity of the discourses presenting agriculture. His typology allows us to regroup policy elements behind ideological perspectives that would be carried by the policy actors. Van der Ploeg identifies three ideal-types that are dominant in the several countries he surveyed: Peasant agriculture, Entrepreneurial agriculture and Agri-food firms.¹² Though the farming styles were developed to classify farmers, we depart from their initial usage by relying on them to classify discourses. Broadly speaking, Peasant agriculture is a vision of agriculture that would be composed of family-owned farming activity that produces goods for self-consumption and the market through labor-intensive and skill-intensive techniques with the attempt to generate more benefits than only the production of food through farming activities. Entrepreneurial agriculture is represented through a specialized production of commodities through family-owned farms that produce for the market with a goal of maximizing profits. Finally, the term Agri-food firms refer to a vision

¹² In order to reduce the bias inherent in van der Ploeg's typology, we modified some of the terms to evacuate negative connotations to it.

of agriculture dominated by few big firms involved in many steps of the production, process, marketing and distribution of agricultural products in a way that grant them market — and political — power (*Ibid.*). We consider that these visions of agriculture cohabit and attempt to influence the state to receive support aligning with their needs. Next chapter goes into further detail about each of these ideal-types.

This dissertation then focuses on the capacities of the different visions of agriculture to convince the state to adopt policies in line with their requests and expectations (see Chapter 2). To do this, we study risk management policies, an agricultural policy area that has historically been identified with the state assistance paradigm (Skogstad, 2008b).¹³ Through these policies, states offer income protection for farmers so they can stay in activity and continue their investments over the years. They hence usually represent payments distributed when prices or yields are under a predetermined threshold.

The programs we studied come from Québec and Ontario, two Canadian provinces with similar production endowments but different organization of interest groups, which sets the stage for assessing the role of this variable on agricultural policies. We focus specifically on risk management policies in Québec and Ontario between 1990 and 2020. Some of the policies were already present before the 1990s, in which case we restricted our coverage for these policies between 1990 and 2020. The choice of 1990 was made following van der Ploeg's (2008) identification of the three general tendencies of agricultural evolution that appeared in the 1990s and have shaped agricultural policies around the world: industrialization, return of peasants that we will call repeasantization, and deactivation. It also follows Benoit (2015), Gaboury-

¹³ See Chapter 8 for a comment on the impacts of focusing on programs aligned with a specific vision of agriculture.

Bonhomme (2018) and Skogstad's (2008b) work that considered the 1990s as the beginning of a change of paradigm and the rise of environmental concerns.¹⁴ By covering the same period and assessing the presence of van der Ploeg's tendencies in each province (see Chapter 4), we should be able to analyze the evolution of the risk management policies and understand how each vision of agriculture is represented in them.

Our period as well as our methods allow us to focus on incremental changes to these policies since many of such programs were already present beforehand and new programs did not fundamentally redefine the vision of agricultural support by the state. Our research then aims at understanding how the different visions of agriculture can generate policy change in a context of already existing state intervention and well-established interest group. In particular, we use agricultural policies to highlight the way interest groups can influence the process of agenda setting and policy formation. It is our attempt to decompose policy influences that led to a policy change, depending on the organization of interest groups.

The Regions Studied

Ontario and Québec are the two most populous provinces and two of the top four agricultural provinces in Canada¹⁵ (Statistics Canada, 2017a; 2022e). Both provinces are situated in the center of the country and are separated by the Ottawa River as well as meridian landmarks. They also share many soil and climatic characteristics with a wide part of their land being unsuitable for agriculture. As such, agriculture is concentrated in the south of both provinces.

¹⁴ Oppositely, Delvin (2004) and Muller (2014) considered that such change could be dated back to 1981.

¹⁵ In terms of cash receipts over the period of 2010 to 2018.

They also face harsh winters that bring cold temperatures that inhibit most outdoor agricultural activities.

Choosing two Canadian provinces allows us to control for the specific situation of Canadian federalism in agriculture. In Canada, agriculture is a shared jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments with the leadership for subsidies and regulations coming from the provincial governments (Bourget-Rousseau, 2019). To ensure its priorities are followed across the country, the federal government funds provincial programs and adopt federal programs that are administered by provincial entities through an Agricultural Policy Framework since 2002. Prior to that, piecemeal programs were discussed by the federal and provincial government when a crisis was present. Provinces can implement additional programs provided they finance them. As such, the federal intervention creates a baseline of support to agriculture where costs are shared, while the actions of the provincial governments are not limited by it. In practice, over the period we considered, both provinces added additional programs to the federal baseline. Since provincial governments partially fund this baseline, federal decisions impact the capacities of provinces to act by themselves.

Choosing two neighboring Canadian provinces also allows us to control, to some extent, the factor endowment and production capabilities, which can be an important factor explaining the trajectories of state intervention in agriculture. In the past, the agriculture of both provinces used to be quite different, with Ontario having higher productivity indicators and a greater focus toward exports (Wampach, 1988). Since the 1980s, Québec further developed its agriculture and reduced the difference between the two provinces (*Ibid.*; Caldwell, 1988). Chapter 4 presents the main agricultural characteristics of both provinces over time to assess the similarities and

differences between provinces. It also presents indicators highlighting van der Ploeg's tendencies in both provinces under the limit of availability of the data.¹⁶

Research Design

In this dissertation, we considered the presence of risk management programs and changes made to these programs every year between 1990 and 2020 for each province. To acknowledge for the coexistence of more than one risk management program at the same time, we identified programs that existed over the period.¹⁷ As programs appears, changes, or disappears, we are interested in identifying the factors that brought these evolutions to provide a better understanding of the effects of the organizations of interest groups, the carried vision of agriculture, and the path that brought policy change. Our research design is then built around two research questions assessing these influences through the risk management programs offered to Québec and Ontario farmers.

Our first research question addresses the organization of the producers' interest group representation and the links these groups have with the state. This is further referred to as institutional arrangements. In Ontario, producers are represented by a trio of organization (National Farmers Union – Ontario, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Christian Farmers

¹⁶ The IPES-Food (2016) is particularly vocal on the fact that existing indicators are quite limited to demonstrate the presence of any form of ecological agriculture. Especially, since agroecology movement does not prescribe a single form of agriculture but a mindset to apply on a farm and in institutions, it leads to a variety of models that are difficult to measure.

¹⁷ We knowingly avoid focusing our discussion on specific production sectors since risk management programs involve different sectors at the same time. Sectors ask for specific adjustments related to their reality, but program guidelines are decided at a higher level than commodities. For instance, subsidies and institutions related to crop insurances in the American Farm Bill are decided for all crops at the same time, while modalities of each plan are then further defined by commodity. As some sectors could move in specific directions, by focusing on some sectors, we might miss some more general tendencies happening in agriculture.

Federation of Ontario) with producers being able to choose which organization they want to contribute to, while not being able to opt out from all organization except under very specific circumstances (Agricorp, n.d.). As such, the three organizations — as well as their commodity counterparts — are officially recognized by the government in the discussions about agricultural policies. The theory then predicts for such an institutional arrangement, that each group can carry the claims and perspectives of its members either in accordance or in opposition to the other organizations (*Ibid.*; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Cawson, 1986; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012; Williamson, 1989). For the state, the different perspectives must be considered with an eye on the government's preferences and the likeliness of an electoral support to be provided (Williamson, 1989).

In Québec, the Farm Producers Act adopted in 1972 (2004) only allows for the recognition of a single organization of producers: the Union des Producteurs Agricoles (UPA) and its affiliated chapters. Even if other groups appeared in opposition to UPA or to represent farmers that argue they are not well represented by UPA (e.g., Union Paysanne, Conseil des entrepreneurs agricoles), these other groups do not benefit from similar resources (e.g., mandatory registration fees) and power (e.g., access to government, participation in policy consultations). The institutional arrangement in place in Québec's agriculture can then be qualified as a corporatist one (Benoit, 2010; 2015; Skogstad, 2008b). In such institutional arrangement, interest groups are organized under a monopoly which creates a situation where the state agrees to share part of its policymaking power with the corporatist group (Cawson, 1986; Schmitter, 1974). In this case, the debates around claims and perspectives to be brought to the state are done internally. The first section of chapter 3 develops on the theoretical consequences resulting from the different institutional arrangements observed in Ontario and Québec.

Yet, Montpetit and Coleman (1999) remind us that what is true for an institutional arrangement at sectoral policymaking can be different in narrower policy areas. For instance, they argue that Ontario was closer to a corporatist institutional arrangement and Québec was closer to a pluralist institutional arrangement in the negotiation of agro-environmental policies in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, other researchers studied the evolution of Québec's agriculture without qualifying it as a corporatist institutional arrangement while recognizing the specific place of UPA in Québec (see for instance Morisset (2010a; 2010b; 2018; Couture & Morisset, 2010; Morisset & Couture, 2010) and Gaboury-Bonhomme, 2018). However, Benoit (2015) counters Montpetit and Coleman observation in her dissertation, as she compares France and Québec agro-environmental policy evolution and concludes that Québec polity is closer to pluralism. Recognizing the potential variation of institutional arrangement across policy areas and across time, our first research question reads as:

- Q1: How are the different institutional arrangements of agricultural policies in Québec and Ontario affecting the evolution of risk management policies?

It is also possible that interest groups modify their demands based on the policy environment. The size and the composition of the polity are likely to vary depending on which policy is discussed since they have different consequences for agriculture, regional development and the environment for instance. Similarly, some policies are receiving more interest by the public than others, especially if they are adopted or discussed during a period of crisis highly covered by the media (Downs, 1972). In the end, we expect that interest groups are aware of the policy environment and that they will modify their strategies based on their own political power, their social construction as perceived by the population, the number of actors involved in the

policy discussions, and the public's interest around the policy discussed. These paths can be represented by the assessment of policy changes through the punctuated equilibrium theory and the social construction of the target population theory developed respectively by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) and Schneider and Ingram (1993). In the case of punctuated equilibrium theory, important changes should be expected when new actors are included in the discussion, a new institution becomes in charge of the issue, or a crisis capturing general population's attention is present (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). As for the social construction of target population theory, it predicts that important policy changes should be observed when policies are not aligned with the social construction and the political power of the population targeted by the policy (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Both theories and their implication for policy evolution are further developed in Chapter 3.

By combining the two theories to dissect the paths that were taken by interest groups and the state to justify the policy changes, we highlight the strategies and leverages that have been successfully used by tenants of the different discourses presenting agriculture to obtain policies in line with their expectations. Since we rely on van der Ploeg's (2008) typology of farming style to organize the assessment of the discourses expressed, our second research question can be phrased as:

- Q2: Following van der Ploeg's typology of agriculture, how did each vision of agriculture manage to obtain risk management policies in line with associated demands?

In order to answer our research questions, we identified nine risk management policies that changed during the period 1990 to 2020 in Québec and Ontario. By concentrating on a single policy area — risk management policies — we are able to deepen our understanding of the

policy changes and how they can be interwoven. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to compare these tendencies between policies and for each farming style. Chapter 5 presents our approach in more detail.

Finally, the information that is used to document the programs we studied is the result of a qualitative document analysis. The document analysis was useful to identify all policy and program modifications as well as the policy demands from different groups involved in these evolutions. Based on our understanding of the goal and the scope of these changes, we then classified each change as directed toward a specific vision of agriculture. With all this information, it was possible to build the evolutionary path of the policy we retained as they are presented in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

Through this introductory chapter, we put the basis of our dissertation by linking state intervention in agriculture with the heterogeneity observed in agriculture. We then presented our research design that aims at understanding why risk management policy changes were adopted to support the specific visions of agriculture. In the following chapters, we further develop on the processes that were used by farming actors in order to obtain these modifications.

In Chapter 2, we discuss the visions of agriculture through the lenses of agricultural typologies as defined by van der Ploeg and the diversity that exists between them. In Chapter 3, we develop the three public policy theories we use to understand the avenues that can be followed by interest groups. They consist of corporatism, punctuated equilibrium theory and the social construction of the target population. In Chapter 4, we present what agriculture looks like in each of the two regions we considered in this study. In Chapter 5, we dig further in our

approach, methods and data used to answer the research questions. In Chapter 6, we focus on each of the programs we covered to present the broader picture of their evolution during the 1990–2020 period. In Chapter 7, we regroup the information obtained for each variable with the attempt to generate causal inference. This is the occasion to compare the changes observed and decompose the effect of our explanatory variables and hence answer our research questions. In the last chapter, we reflect on the limitations of our research process and the potential for further development in research.

We expect that our dissertation helps to deepen the understanding of the processes of policy change by following qualitatively the influences of the different actors at a micro-level. We then follow Jones and Baumgartner's (2012) request for more qualitative research focusing on the behaviors of decision-makers in regard of the issues they consider. Moreover, our research focuses on policy stability and incremental changes, which is the least studied pattern of policy evolution (*Ibid.*; Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Baumgartner, 2013).

In addition, our consideration for non-pluralism institutional arrangement through formal public policy theories is a rare occurrence in the public policy literature.¹⁸ Our research can then foster the knowledge about the inhibitor or facilitator capacities of a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement to bring policy change. This also echoes Devlin (2004) suggestion of deepening the processes of policy formation aiming to develop a specific industrial sector.

Finally, our research also contributes to the farming style theory by developing on the successful strategies taken by the proponent of the different visions of agriculture to yield

¹⁸ In the existing literature, we found a single reference (Kim, 2015) that included a corporatist factor in its assessment of policy evolution through formal public policy theories.

specific policies. We thus expect that this dissertation contributes to deepening the knowledge surrounding existing theories.

Chapter 2 – Typologies of Agriculture

To make sure we can differentiate for the heterogeneity of the vision of agriculture, we need to identify how agriculture can be constructed differently by the society. As such, we need a categorization of agriculture into groups that are homogenous in their characteristics or their demands. Many researchers have already attempted to qualify existing differences between farmers to look at specific responses either to policies, environmental changes, or new farm practices. However, we have not been able to find categorizations of the discourses surrounding agriculture. We then rely on the heterogeneity of the characteristics of agriculture as a basis for these discourses.

In this chapter, we justify the use of typologies, where they come from and what their utility is. Then, following van der Ploeg's (2008) logic, we develop on the types of agriculture that appeared around the world before presenting in detail what his representation of agriculture — farming styles — entails. In this dissertation, we link the characteristics of each of van der Ploeg's farming style with their demands to the state and how these demands transposed in actual policies. We do not attempt to associate each farmer with a farming style, nor did we try to measure how important is each farming style. Instead, we only focus on how often – and how strongly – the themes associated with each farming style are present in the official discourses. In particular, our thesis considers that the organization and actions of interest groups, the population's awareness of an issue, the political power of farmers, and the social construction of farming affect the way states carry the demands received from farming actors. We thus mobilize the farming style ideal-types as the potential direction of the visions of agriculture.

Types of Typologies

The concept of agriculture can generate many visions of what a farm looks like between the different regions of the world but also for individuals with different backgrounds. This also reflects in the form and size of farming activities, potentially shaping the response to state intervention, market conditions, and expert recommendations (McElwee, 2008). As a simplification tool, typologies of agriculture can then help to understand the different reactions observed to a similar phenomenon between different farms (Nyambo et al., 2019; Valbuena et al., 2008; Walder et al., 2012). In other words, typologies allow us to differentiate farmers' actions based on specific criteria, while reducing the complexity of the multiplicity of individual responses (Walder et al., 2012). This is especially helpful for decision-makers and extension specialists looking for a subset of beneficiaries that would be more prone to realize the expected outcome or to adopt a specific technology (Anseeuw et al., 2001; Schwarz et al., 2009).¹⁹

The application of typologies in agriculture first appeared during the 1940–1950s in Europe to highlight intra-regional differences between farmers, in order to explain why some farmers were considered as 'laggard' in their development (van der Ploeg et al., 2009). The next generation of typologies, in the 1970s toward the beginning of the 1990s, focused more on the size of the farm and the scheme of production, as the specialization of farms and technologies were spreading (*Ibid.*). However, these typologies hid the patterns that could exist inside a sector or even between sectors since they were not built to conduct inter- or intra-sectoral comparisons (van der Ploeg, 1994). Finally, the recognition of the multifunctionality characteristics of agriculture in the 1990s brought new typologies to be developed on a larger number of

¹⁹ This echoes the conclusion of Saravia Matus et al. (2013) who found that typologies are mostly developed in research projects, in support of policy design, to define the beneficiaries of programs, and to document the relation between agriculture and its environment.

characteristics in order to predict the actions of the producers and to recognize that production activities were only one part of the farming activities (van der Ploeg et al., 2009).

In general, conditions of success for a typology are that it must have an internal homogeneity of each type, an external heterogeneity between each type, and exhaustivity in representation (Anseeuw et al., 2001; Walder et al. 2012). In order to achieve that, the typology used must be based on the variables that affect the focus on the research (Daloglu et al., 2014; Nyambo et al., 2019; Valbuena et al., 2008). In practice Saravia Matus et al. (2013) found that research focuses tend to be considered as variables in most of the 187 typologies they reviewed from 73 countries. However, they also noted that Canadian and American researchers instead tended to start with the availability of data to construct typologies, rather than relying on the variables that affect the focus of their research (*Ibid.*). Then, in these regions, typologies tended to include farm size, sales, gross revenues, sources of income and age as a basis of classification, no matter the focus of the research. Oppositely, they (*Ibid.*) observed that the criteria can become quite specific in other regions as they follow the research interest and can require the researcher to generate some information unavailable in the official data. For instance, Walder et al. (2012) documented typologies using the main drivers of individual decisions, the results of actions observed on the farm, the type of management, the attitude toward the environment and how farmers considered their responsibility toward it, and the goals and values of farmers. Schwarz et al. (2009) considered the general traits of farmers, their common worldview and management practices, their attitude, their knowledge, and their concerns. Valbuena et al. (2008) focused on the view of farmers on expansion of their farm, the presence of diversification, of multi-sources of income, of conservation practices, of policy participation as well as socioeconomic variables.

Other similar examples would include Anseeuw et al. (2001), Chiffoleau (2017), Daloglu et al. (2014), McElwee (2008), and van der Ploeg et al. (2009).

Of course, in most cases, the multiplication of variables creates a situation where the differences between two styles are not only observed in a single variable, but rather observed on a whole set of variables. Otherwise, it would become useless to have styles that distinguish between over 50 variables considered at the same time. This, however, complexifies the external heterogeneity between each type and the exhaustivity in representation. As such, as argued by Vanclay et al. (1998; 2006) in an early critique of the farming style typology that we intend to use in this dissertation, each type should be viewed as ideal-type and not an exact representation of the entire diversity in agriculture. Every farmer could then display parts of each farming style and the researcher would not have to fit every farmer in a specific style.

Nevertheless, if the determination of a typology is possible, it also means that different types of farmers are coexisting in the same space and are competing to use resources from the same pool. This coexistence can then create a form of opposition between the different types either inside a village, a region or inside the institutions of agriculture (van der Ploeg, 2018).²⁰ The opposition in the visions represented by the types of agriculture in their struggle to receive policies adapted to their requests is at the core of our second research question as stated in the previous chapter. Galliano et al. (2017) identified how this coexistence is visible in a multitude of aspects surrounding farming activities such as policies, the definition of professional identities, technical and functional aspects of agriculture, market channels, and consumers' expectations. This would be the case even if state intervention tends to prohibit heterogeneity in

²⁰ Anseeuw et al. (2001) go even further by arguing for a recognition of heterogeneity inside each farming households since the activities, values and goals of each household members are different.

agriculture by the imposition of mandatory actions and regulatory schemes (Muller, 2014; van der Ploeg, 2008). Instead, state intervention fixes the definition of what a farmer can be and what a farmer should do (Mundler & Ouellet, 2017). This in turn can restrain the capacity of other styles of agriculture to sprout (Reganold et al., 2011), or even to collect information regarding such an heterogeneity of agriculture.

Farming Styles

In this dissertation, we retained the farming styles' typology from van der Ploeg (2008) as the basis to categorize the discourse from policy actors. In this, we follow Saravia Matus et al.'s (2013) conclusion on adapting our typology to the need of our study. In particular, this typology introduces elements of differentiation related to the professional identity of farmers and not only their farming activities. Since we focus on the way farmers organized their interest representation, the variation toward professional identity is crucial. Certainly, farmers regroup based on their production characteristics as can be observed with commodity groups. However, as mentioned by Clerc (1990), the discourse of farmers' group is centered on the differences between farmers and the rest of the society, a way to preserve their exceptionality. Then, even if differences are present between farmers, they still consider that they have more in common with other farmers than they have with other groups of the society. Hence, if the evolution of agriculture increases the differences between groups of farmers to a point where their professional identity does not align anymore, it can explain the heterogeneity in their relationship with the state and the way their interests are organized. Van der Ploeg's (1994; 2008) typology provides a tool to distinguish between visions of agriculture and, thus, professional identities.

Moreover, this typology links the evolution of agriculture over the time with the current discourses surrounding agricultures throughout the world. For van der Ploeg (2008), the state intervention following World War II pushed forward an Entrepreneurial agriculture as the dominant model of agriculture.²¹ Through their modernization policies, states pushed for the adoption of new techniques and technologies while guaranteeing market conditions²² that would support independent and specialized farmers (*Ibid.*; Caldwell, 1988; Devlin, 2004). Oppositely, it sent the message to the farmers that were refusing to adopt these techniques and technologies that they were hindering the modernization of agriculture and that their knowledge and skills have become obsolete (Caldwell, 1988; Francoeur, 2018).

But as we presented in the previous chapter through the paradigms of state intervention in agriculture, state intervention has evolved over the past decades. Van der Ploeg (2008) identified three tendencies of agricultural evolution since the 1990s. First, a movement toward the industrialization of agriculture has broken the concept of food production into a series of independent processes where each actor is playing a small — but well defined — role in the production chain of food products (*Ibid.*). Through an increased reliance on science as a driver of what — and how — is produced and offered to the consumer, farmers that participate in the industrialization process have to modify their practices to integrate the production chain. It then pushes toward the creation of big networks of enterprises that can be overseen by Agri-food firms.

²¹ If van der Ploeg's research is mostly focused on South America and Europe's agriculture, at least two authors obtained similar results when applying van der Ploeg's typology to Québec (see Boulianne (2011) and Francoeur (2018)).

²² For instance, states adopted interest subsidies, premiums on insurance plans, tax reductions, and price controls.

The second tendency is a response of some producers against these Agri-food firms that they accuse of controlling agriculture and the access to markets. Through a process of rehabilitating peasant ideas (i.e., repeasantization), new or experienced producers are adopting a vision of agriculture that increases their autonomy in regard to the other actors of the chain and institutions as they produce their own inputs for the farm (*Ibid.*). This can be observed from a quantitative perspective with additional individuals that are joining agriculture,²³ but also from a qualitative perspective through an increased value-added by units of production or the addition of non-agricultural activities to the farm that can be further valued by consumers (e.g., development of new products, an upsurge of processing realized at the farm, use of new market circuits) (*Ibid.*).

Finally, the third tendency observed by van der Ploeg (*Ibid.*) is the deactivation of agriculture or the fact that some producers are quitting agriculture. It can also take the form of states adopting policies that limit the potential to develop or maintain agriculture and agricultural initiatives (*Ibid.*). Some examples of these policies include urbanization of agricultural lands and environmental restrictions.

Then, the combination of these three tendencies with the historical domination of Entrepreneurial agriculture led van der Ploeg (1994) to differentiate three ideal-types of agriculture based on the relation of farmers with the market, governmental intervention, and use of technology by producers (van der Ploeg et al., 2009). From the relation between the three components, patterns of farming can emerge with each pattern having its own norms and practices (Vanclay et al., 2006; van der Ploeg, 1994). It is then expected that the norms and

²³ Francoeur (2018) highlights how a net reduction of the number of producers might be hiding the fact that new producers are joining agriculture.

practices will transpose in the professional identity of the producers, their objectives, the scope of the market targeted and the integration of the farm into the society (Boulianne, 2011; Colombani-Lachapelle, 2010). The patterns then create three multidimensional ideal-types of agriculture that overlaps on each other (Vanclay et al., 2006; van der Ploeg, 2008). As such, there is no need to fit each producer in a specific type of agriculture,²⁴ but each producer displays a certain level of each type of agriculture (Vanclay et al., 1998; 2006). Also, since the farming styles act as ideal-types, they are expected to be perceived as a repertoire or a direction of actions where producers can find ideas on farms that represent, for them, their model of development (van der Ploeg et al., 2009).²⁵ Oppositely, it also means that producers are influencing, by their action, the conception of each farming style (Vanclay et al., 2006; van der Ploeg, 1994).

Before presenting in detail the three farming styles, it is important to note that they were conceived by van der Ploeg (2016; 2018) in an attempt to rationalize and justify the presence and the future of peasants. At the core of the theoretical development, van der Ploeg (2008) explains that, for him, the only solution to overcome what he perceives as an agrarian and environmental crisis is through repeasantization. This echoes a critical standpoint adopted by many food system scholars that are arguing how the traditional way of doing agriculture based on economic maximization is not sustainable in the long run and are pushing for the development of

²⁴ Vanclay et al. (2006) argue that it would actually be impossible to proceed this way since a farm is likely to have multiple owners or to, at least, mobilize a whole household and each member of the household have different values and responds to different norms.

²⁵ This, however, represents a point of discord between tenants of farming styles. If, on one side, van der Ploeg (1994; 2008; van der Ploeg et al., 2009) argues that farming styles are an emic conception that farmers can identify and self-identify in some of them, Vanclay et al. (1998; 2006) instead argue how repeatedly they observed that producers were unable to identify all the existing styles and tended to refuse to assign themselves with a dominant style. They, however, all agree that farming styles theory is generally well received by farmers and other actors involved around them.

ecological and socially responsive models of agriculture, though not all of them advocate for repeasantization as the sole viable solution (see for instance Andrée et al. (2019), Darnhofer et al. (2012), IPES-Food (2016), Koch (2018), MacRae et al. (2012), Mikulak (2013) and Szasz (2007)). For Goodman (2003) as well as for Trenouth et al. (2016), this is especially the case in the Canadian and American literatures on alternative Agri-food networks that are mostly centered toward the capacity of activists to transform the food chain. Without subscribing to van der Ploeg's level of critique in our dissertation, we acknowledge, by using van der Ploeg's typology, the difference in treatments between the farming styles operated by many agricultural economists and rural sociologists across the years. We, however, attempted to limit the bias of this typology toward Peasants by adjusting the vocabulary surrounding each style and clearly identifying, at the end of this chapter, characteristics that can be associated with each type. We also reject a prescribing view of the development of agriculture that would apply across the world, instead considering that the context faced by farmers, their own preferences and the preferences of the state should influence the development of agriculture.

Peasant Agriculture

For van der Ploeg (1994; 2008), Peasant agriculture emerged as an opposition against the multiplication of big firms that could influence the markets. For him, parts of the agricultural population disagree with the industrialization process of food production that separates the place of production from the place of consumption. Instead, these producers believe in an agriculture that is closer to the natural processes of production. They hence attempt to conduct their activities in an ecologically sustainable framework, rather than being driven by economic considerations (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011). This agriculture then promotes a non-market-driven

agricultural development that valorizes and generates high levels of multifunctionality (*Ibid.*; Francoeur, 2018; van der Ploeg, 2018). An important characteristic of Peasants is that they are farming households that own all the production factors involved in their agriculture, including labor, land and capital (van der Ploeg, 2008). As such, they attempt to avoid using external inputs in order to improve their autonomy in regard to the markets and technologies that are the apanage of the other farming styles (*Ibid.*; van der Ploeg, 1994; 2018). Instead, they view the production process as a combined effort of nature and human interaction where improvement of the relation can only be achieved through the development of knowledge and skills from the farm owners (van der Ploeg, 2008; 2018). They often rely on both crop and animal productions (mixed farms) that are highly diversified in order to generate the most possible interactions.

Since Peasant farms own their production factors instead of purchasing them, Peasant farms will mostly rely on family labor.²⁶ They can mobilize all their resources until family labor is saturated to create an endogenous growth for the farm (Boulianne, 2011; van der Ploeg, 1994; 2008). The output produced hence has a high degree of added value based on the work intensity of their production since they limit to a minimum their external costs. Moreover, if they find a market that agrees to pay more for their products that display higher multifunctionality, they can benefit from new market opportunities for niche products (Francoeur, 2018; van der Ploeg, 1994; 2008; 2018). Van der Ploeg (2008) still predicts that technologies and machines can be used on these farms, but only if they can lower the costs and improve the relationship between nature and the household. But in order to implement new technologies or machines, Peasants will tend to avoid using banking credit since they prefer to own all their production factors. Instead, they

²⁶ Even though it was not developed by van der Ploeg, it is possible to extend the explanation for the use of family labor to include volunteers such as ‘woofing’, a practice where individuals volunteer on — mostly organic — farms in exchange for a place to live and food.

may favor alternative financing methods such as investing family's savings or having a complementary job so outside of the farm's income can be invested (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011; van der Ploeg, 1994; 2008; 2018). It can then often create part-time farms.

But even if many of the aspects of Peasant agriculture are focused on the relationship between the household and the nature of what could appear as an individualistic process, networks of Peasants are regularly developed to share the skills and knowledge (van der Ploeg, 2018). For Francoeur (2018), cooperation between farmers provides the rationale behind the usually relatively small size of Peasant farms. For her, Peasants are aware that resources are limited and by expanding their production, they would likely be taking away resources from their neighbors with whom they collaborate in these networks (*Ibid.*).

Finally, as part of the farming styles, it is crucial to understand that the process of repeasantization brings new Peasants who are choosing to farm this way not based on a necessity of feeding their family, but to embrace the values behind the peasantry and adopt the Peasant's lifestyle (Boulianne, 2011; van der Ploeg, 2016). In this sense, the new Peasants are different than the previous conceptions of peasantry assumed to mostly focus on self-consumption and farm reproduction. Instead, the new peasants market products that can be identified with peasant-like terms with the attempt to generate higher price sales. This attempt to use the market as the tool to reward their multifunctionality can be supplemented by policies that are fostering non-production aspects of agriculture.

Entrepreneurial Agriculture

Entrepreneurial agriculture is the resultant of the modernization programs implemented by the states after World War II following the state-assistance paradigm (Boulianne, 2011; van

der Ploeg, 2008). Amongst the programs supporting Entrepreneurial agriculture figure those that are providing long-term stable prices, positive margins allowing for investment, state support in periods of crisis, facilitated access to capital and labor, and extension services (van der Ploeg, 2008). By providing these types of measures, the states pushed for producers to transform agriculture as an economic sector that could contribute to the economy as an equal to other sectors.

Entrepreneurial agriculture is then a specialized process of production where farmers are directing all their production toward the market (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011; van der Ploeg, 2018). Due to the level of specialization of their farms, Entrepreneurs rely on external inputs such as hired labor, chemical fertilizers, banking credit and technologies to maintain and develop their production (*Ibid.*). They find themselves dependent on the different providers of these inputs, providers that are often controlled by Agri-food firms (van der Ploeg, 2008). This can be particularly limiting for farmers when they find themselves stuck with a specific technology that they acquired on the market and that is following a direction that is different than the one favored by them (van der Ploeg, 2018).

Since lenders are financing the investments made by farmers, it places an expectation of profitability for each investment realized. Failing to generate enough profitability would mean for the farm to end its operations, since it would not be able to continue to pay for the inputs needed to produce (*Ibid.*). It also means that profit must be generated by the multiplication of outputs produced rather than by increasing the share of profit from each existing unit of production.

Finally, the mix between the level of competition on the market and the presence of a favorable state intervention creates a contradictory system of collaboration amongst farmers. On

one side, the competition has developed a feeling of individualism and isolation of the farmers (*Ibid.*; Droz et al., 2014). On the other side, van der Ploeg (2008) mentions how farmers' unions tend to be controlled by Entrepreneurial agriculture. Entrepreneurial farmers may then favor collective solutions if they bring an assessable monetary gain for their farm or solutions to their individual problems. They hence find that collective actions can be profitable for them either to lobby the state or to protect them from actions by Agri-food firms.

Agri-Food Firms

Agri-food firms are presented by van der Ploeg (*Ibid.*) as big companies that extend their network around all aspects surrounding agriculture to redefine what is considered a food product. He thus identified these firms as often publicly traded companies and cooperatives managed by investors or countries that own a wide number of big farms around the world as well as processing facilities, input supplying companies and research and development centers (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011; Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015). These actors might also be involved in different industries, making their agriculture division either expandable if a sufficient price is offered for them or that can be relocated if climate or market conditions are more profitable elsewhere. By their long reach, they also gain a facilitated access to the state since they represent important economic actors for a country (van der Ploeg, 2008). Thus, even if they are in small numbers, they can still gain political influence.

As big companies, Agri-food firms use hired labor and farm contractors to conduct all their activities (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011; Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015). Moreover, they tend to include in their network of enterprises the production of inputs, thus increasing their need for labor as well as for investments (Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015). The production process is also the

result of the combination of many technologies and techniques that allow them to redefine the interactions between food chain actors and the material aspects of food production (van der Ploeg, 2008). They then tend to favor international trade liberalization as it facilitates the movement of their products (either inputs or outputs) but also eases the delocalization process if needed (*Ibid.*). As such, Francoeur (2018) identifies this farming style with the market-liberalism paradigm.

In terms of decision-making, the corporate level of Agri-food firms is organizing all the activities to make sure that profits are obtained at the corporate level (*Ibid.*; Boulianne, 2011; Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015). Over-exploitation of resources might be necessary and unsustainable facilities might be maintained if they allow to generate profits at some other points in the chain (van der Ploeg, 2008). For farmers and workers that participate in these empire-like firms, they often find a very low level of autonomy, low-income situations, and a lack of solutions to improve their situation through skill or knowledge development (*Ibid.*).

Conclusion

As mentioned previously, farming styles are ideal-types and farmers tend to display some aspects of each style (see Table 1 for a summary of the main characteristics of each farming style). In practice, styles are thus interconnected with each other as presented in Figure 1. In particular, van der Ploeg (2008) identified that the movements toward short and decentralized circuits that started with the repeasantization are expanding toward the other two styles and creating gray areas. Oppositely, the presence of Agri-food firms can constrain Entrepreneurial agriculture to follow the market conditions imposed by the firms (*Ibid.*). As such, if one was to

specifically attribute one producer or one group of producers to a style, it would have to come with degrees and nuances rather than a mutually exclusive process (Vanclay et al., 2006).

Table 1. *Summary of the three farming styles (Boulianne, 2011; Francoeur, 2018; Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015; van der Ploeg, 1994; 2008; 2016; 2018)*

	Peasant agriculture	Entrepreneurial agriculture	Agri-food firms
Owners of the resources	Household	Household, banks	Shareholders
Source of labor	Owned	Partly owned, partly hired	Hired
Model of production	Diversification	Specialization	Active in all steps of the chain
Direction of outputs	Self-consumption, reproduction of the farm, market	Market	Export market
Source of income	Out-of-farm activities, market	Market	Corporate margin realized on all its activities
Funding resources	Savings, out of farm activities, labor investments	Banking system	Public or private trading, partnerships, mortgages
Level of multifunctionality	High	Low	Ancillary
Type of networks	Alternative networks of support and knowledge	Farm unions, strong individualism	Owens food production chains
Relationship with the state	Ignored by the state	Supported by the state	Favored by the state
Associated paradigm	Multifunctionality	State assistance	Market-liberalism

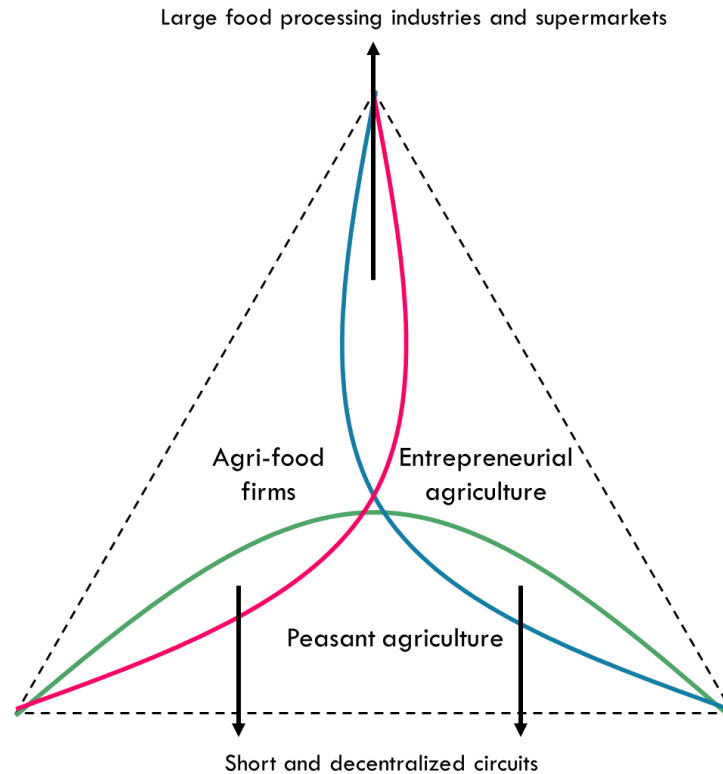


Figure 1. Interconnection of the farming styles (adapted from van der Ploeg, 2008, p.5)

In this dissertation, the farming styles are used as a representation of different visions of agriculture, rather than a reflection of what happens in the fields. We then do not attempt to measure the actual number of farmers or the economic contributions of each ideal-type. Since ideal-types represent the extremes of situations, most farms would likely fall in between each ideal-type.²⁷ Similarly, we did not attempt to categorize specific actors as purporting a specific vision of agriculture; we analyzed each of their intervention without considering a previous

²⁷ We still acknowledge the work of Boulianne (2011), Colombani-Lachapelle (2010) and Francoeur (2018) who documented the presence of the farming styles in Québec. To the best of our knowledge, there has not been similar studies conducted on Ontario agriculture. As presented in Chapter 4, similarities between the two provinces suggest that conclusions from these authors could be, at least partially, extended to Ontario.

ideological inclination to allow for the assessment of an evolution in the discourses.²⁸ Instead, we use the farming styles as points of reference in our analysis of policy evolution to see if policies lean toward the visions represented by each ideal-type. These visions may or may not emerge from the reality observed in the Ontario or Québec farms. For instance, they could also result from the construction of an ideal of agriculture pursued by elected officials or interest groups. They may also be influenced by specific media attention that would focus on some aspects of agriculture while neglecting the broader picture. Other paths of influence can also be followed, as presented in the next chapter.

²⁸ For readers interested in comparing the interest groups involved in Québec agriculture (e.g., number of employees, political preferences), we suggest the work of Gaboury-Bonhomme (2018). To the best of our knowledge, no similar exercise was conducted in Ontario.

Chapter 3 – The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory and the Social Construction of Target Population in Different Institutional Frameworks

The evolution of policies has been the subject of many inquiries by public policy specialists and has led to suggest different theories to explain it (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). For instance, the multiple streams framework traces back policy changes to a window of opportunity that is taken by a successful policy entrepreneur presenting the right policy to the right people at the right time (Zahariadis, 2014). Similarly, the policy innovation and diffusion theory looks at how new policies can arise in a new region as a consequence of the political, geographical, economic, etc., environment (Gray, 1973; Walker, 1969). However, policy change is not the norm in policy evolution, and continuity or stability being more frequent can question these theories built on policy change.

We owe to Lindblom (1959) such theorization, as he was the first to note that policies are not constantly redesigned but are instead generally repeated over time. He applied Herbert Simon's idea of bounded rationality in the policymaking process in order to challenge the notion that policymakers were using a rational and complete process of decision-making, a dominant idea at the time. Previously, it was expected that each proposition for change that was raised by the population was fully assessed by government and state officials to determine which policy would bring the — unequivocal — best outcome (*Ibid.*). Instead, Lindblom (*Ibid.*) argued that decision-makers do not have the resources and the time to assess every possibility and thus instead use the most accessible information to render decisions on which policy to adopt. As a result, they often learn from existing policies to identify solutions that hence appear as a continuity of what was already present. When policy did change, it was only an incremental modification of an earlier policy.

This form of stability or continuity in policies was later reinforced by tenants of pluralism ideas and those associated with the elite powers led by Robert Dahl's (1961) appreciation of New Haven's polity. For pluralists, individuals voluntarily regroup in interest groups based on shared identities or preferences which allow them to form units of collective representation of private interests to the government (Schmitter, 1974; Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989; Capdevielle, 2001). Thus, a number of different groups are actively trying to pressure the government, creating a constant struggle that pushes policies in line with the forces of the different actors (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989; Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). This creates a situation where the state is facing a wide array of groups, whom each try to present its own perspective while redeeming what other groups are proposing (Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005).

Pluralism was, however, criticized for its difficulty to acknowledge specific power relationships inside the polity, so alternative theories were proposed to explain why some policies were adopted and why others were not. Unsurprisingly, most of these alternative theories also justified why policy stability appears to be the norm. For instance, elite theory considers that some actors have the power to restrict the capacity of other actors to express — consciously or not — their perspective (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Gaventa, 1980). These elites can then implement institutions and rule these institutions that, once they are agreed upon by the general population, can create entry barriers to diverging points of view. In this way, they manage to shape the decisions according to their needs, which are expected to be relatively stable over time (Anderson, 2015). Another example of criticisms from pluralism is Marxism that attributes power to the ownership of the means of production. Then, for Marxists, the owners of the capital acquired more power so they can shape the state's actions to answer their priorities

(Cawson, 1986). It then creates a system that, more often than not, works to the benefits of the owners of the capital and maintain their access to resources to organize and get elected (*Ibid.*). As the system gets reinforced, policies are only questioned if they do not please owners of the capital or if proletarians mobilize enough to destabilize the owners of the capital.²⁹

One last example that is often forgotten in public policy analysis is corporatism and its different variants. Corporatism stipulates that even if pluralism is the usual institutional arrangement, it is possible that some groups gain a specific access to the state if they can provide the support of their members to governmental policies (*Ibid.*; Schmitter, 1974; Williamson, 1989). These groups, called corporatist groups, then become an ally to the state by advocating and sometimes imposing to their members the demands from the state. Still, they can only do so if the state offers to the group and its members some conditions limiting the rise of divergent voices (Benoit, 2015). As a result, new ideas have to be channeled through the corporatist group in order to be heard by the state which reduces the potential for important policy change that would not benefit the majority of the corporatist group's decision-makers.

However, all those models of policy stability started to be questioned as policy analysis blossomed following the development of the state in the second half of the twentieth century when researchers started to notice rapid and important changes in some policies. Amongst them, Baumgartner and Jones — building from patterns observed in biology, geography and economics³⁰ — proposed the punctuated equilibrium theory that recognizes how the policy

²⁹ As opposed to other theories of the time, by introducing this possibility for important change, Marxism can appear as a precursor of theories acknowledging multiple paths of policy evolution.

³⁰ In biology, Eldredge and Gould (1972 cited by Goertz, 2003) suggested a new vision of Darwin's theory of evolution while looking at fossils' evolution. In geography, earthquakes are built through the accumulation of the pressure of tectonic plate one against each other until a certain point of disequilibrium is reached — leading to an earthquake — before returning to a

stability is sometimes disturbed by important changes (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991; 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). For them, as long as the equilibrium between the different actors around a policy is maintained and the other actors refuse to get engaged, only incremental changes are observed. But once the equilibrium is broken, bursts of change arise, and policy can rapidly evolve (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012).

Since they developed this theory, it has become one of the leading theories in public policy analysis (Kuhlmann & van der Heijden, 2018). Another concurrent theory that can suggest a similar pattern of evolution has been proposed around the same time by Schneider and Ingram (1993; 1997). For them, the type and design of the policies adopted follow the political power of the population targeted by the policy as well as the social construction of this population. And each policy adopted contributes to shaping the political power and the social construction of the target population since they modify the relationship between this population and its environment (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Following Lindblom's (1959) idea, policies are thus adopted in line with previous policies which should bring stability as long as the political power and the social construction are not affected by other factors.³¹ If such influence were to happen, the type and design of policies would align with the new levels of political power and the new social construction (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

In this chapter, we review the main theories we mobilized in this dissertation that are corporatism, punctuated equilibrium theory and the social construction of the target population.

period of accumulation of pressure (Flink, 2017). In economics, Mandelbrot (1963 and 1997 cited by Jones & Baumgartner, 2012) observed power function's evolution of commodity prices instead of the expected incremental evolution based on the fluctuation of information on the market.

³¹ It is also possible that one type and design of policy accumulate to a point where it creates a perception of the target population receiving more — or not enough — of these policies so the population asks for a more balanced approach (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

First, we present the differences between a pluralistic and a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement as well as the continuum that exists between these two ideal-types. Second, we depict the other two public policy theories. This allows us to identify four potential paths of policy evolution with three highlighting factors that would perturb policy stability (the fourth one being policy stability). Finally, we come back to these different theories to link them in a framework that accompany us in the rest of the dissertation.

Institutional Arrangements

Pluralists were the firsts to theorize that people sharing similar interests would join in their efforts to create interest groups and that multiple interest groups should exist if individuals have different interests. For pluralists, each of these groups would contact the decision-makers to let them know their policy expectations. It would simply be the difference in political and material resources held by each group that would determine which group would succeed in the policies received by the state (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989). Pluralists perceived the state as a passive actor receiving and classifying the demands from interest groups and not as an actor with specific preferences (*Ibid.*).

Many authors disagree with the pluralist premises. For some of them such as Marxists and elite theorists, the whole pluralistic idea was to be thrown away since it did not represent the intrinsic divergence of power between some individuals.³² For other theorists such as Schmitter (1974) and later Cawson (1986), pluralism was only one ideal-type of a continuum of possible institutional arrangements. In their ideas, many different institutional arrangements of representation of interests can coexist (e.g., monism, syndicalism, authoritarianism, private

³² The wealthier find themselves able to shape institutions to their advantage and thus perpetuate their position (Gaventa, 1980).

interests), and empirical evidence showed the existing variety (Schmitter, 1974). In particular, on a continuum varying according to the level of concentration of interest groups, corporatism would appear as the opposite ideal-type to pluralism (Cawson, 1986).³³ Then, on one side, interest groups could evolve in a competitive market for interest representations with each group trying to include most individuals while also trying to convince the state that they are the one with the best capacities to support them later on (Schmitter, 1974). On the other side, it is instead a monopolistic market for interest representations that is in place which creates a situation where the state agrees to share part of its policymaking power with the corporatist group. Of course, in between, a wide variety of institutional arrangements could exist depending on the number of actors involved and hence their specific relation with the state.

If this continuum of institutional arrangement is of particular interest for us, it is because it follows from different political science studies that addressed the institutional arrangement of Québec and Ontario's agriculture. Skogstad (1990) was the first to categorize these agricultures over the continuum. For her (*Ibid.*; Skogstad, 2008b), Ontario's agriculture could be seen as a pluralistic institutional arrangement since different actors were recognized by the state. Also, she observed how each association appears as individually weak and how they lacked a strong hierarchical organization that could federate agriculture. Oppositely, Québec's *Farm Producers Act* (2004) adopted in 1972 guarantees that a single organization representing agriculture could exist and that levies were mandatory for all producers whether they wanted to participate or not in that single organization (i.e., Union des Producteurs Agricoles or UPA). As Skogstad (1990)

³³ This simple continuum is criticized by pluralists that only consider corporatism as a form of pluralism, but also by corporatist authors such as Cohen and Pavoncello (1987) that argue how the number of actors is an insufficient characteristic to distinguish between two institutional arrangements.

and Benoit (2010; 2015) mention, UPA and its chapters are then officially recognized as the sole interest groups representing agriculture which provide them with a specific relationship with the state. Hence, UPA could be qualified as a meso-corporatist group³⁴ as intended by Cawson (1986) (Benoit, 2010; 2015).

Pluralism

Pluralism is often the institutional arrangement considered by default when policies are studied, in a similar way that perfect competition can be used as an ideal in economics. Though, pluralism entails some strong assumptions of the role of interest groups and the state. A common definition of pluralism is taken from Schmitter (1974):

Pluralism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into an **unspecified number of multiple, voluntary, competitive, non hierarchically ordered and self-determined** (as to type or scope of interest) **categories** which are **not specially licensed, recognized, subsidized, created or otherwise controlled in leadership selection or interest articulation by the state** and which do **not exercise a monopoly of representational activity within their respective categories**. (p. 96, emphasis added.)

This definition emphasizes how individuals can willingly regroup in different groups based on shared identities or preferences (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989; Capdevielle, 2001). Moreover, each individual can join as many groups as they want to make sure that all of their opinions are considered and presented to the state (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989). A wide array of groups is then created to represent that diversity.

Then, each interest group will have as many members as individuals that share its opinion. By their mobilization, interest groups become the representatives of the civil society in

³⁴ See the section on corporatism for an explanation of the difference between the different levels of corporatism.

the discussions with the state and other public actors (Schmitter, 1974). The state can consult or collaborate with the groups in order to push policies that will be supportive to the reelection of the government (Cawson, 1986). However, since there are many groups that have been created, the state faces all these groups that are trying to express themselves and share their preferences with it while redeeming what other groups are proposing (Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005). The state then must choose amongst the different perspectives presented, following the potential support for reelection of the government and the intensity of the actions realized by each interest groups. As such, for pluralists, the role of institutions is toned down as bureaucrats are considered a neutral actor that applies government's ideas and not as an actor that have actual preferences (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989).

Between elections, in order to ease its decision-making process, the government listens to the interest groups and their proposals (Kelman, 2005). Its only role is then to be the referee to sort which groups should be listened to and which ones are too marginal to be worth it (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989). For many authors, the sorting will be made based on the resources available to each group. Actually, the state can consider that resources used by a group is a proxy of the strength of the group as well as its involvement regarding the issue (*Ibid.*). By using their resources, groups can then obtain some power to the detriment of the others (Cawson, 1986). Hence, the success of each group will depend on the level of power, which itself depends on the resources owned and guarantees an easier access to the state (*Ibid.*; Williamson, 1989).

Over the time, it is possible that a form of equilibrium arises between the groups as the most resourceful groups acquire power from the others until all the groups maximized their resources (Baumgartner et al., 2009a). Using economics vocabulary, pluralism can be conceptualized as a free market where individual actors can acquire power by spending their

resources in an area where power is itself limited. Any actor can join as long as they want to grasp part of the power and agree to spend more resources than others for the same unit of power. When a certain equilibrium is reached, the maximal level of utility is reached, and conditions should remain stable until any change happened on the level of resources.

Corporatism

In contrast to pluralism, corporatism considers that a small number of interest groups can obtain a specific status regarding the state, which provides them with stronger power over their members but also constrain them in their actions (Williamson, 1989).³⁵ Again, Schmitter's (1974) definition is useful to grasp the main differences between pluralism and corporatism:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a **limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state** and granted a **deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories** in exchange for observing **certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports**. (pp.93-94, emphasis added)

This definition highlights how the diversity in interest groups present in pluralism is totally absent under corporatism. Instead, a single interest group is created and recognized by the state to represent all its members, members that are defined based on their characteristics (e.g., social role, employment) and not their willingness to regroup (*Ibid.*; Hassenteufel, 1990).

³⁵ The definition of corporatism used to be a highly divisive topic. For instance, the usage of the term 'corporatism' in political science extended from fascism to the mere involvement of interest groups in policymaking. Some authors traced back ideas of corporatism to the Roman Catholic Church's belief that God organizes the whole of society, as well as in Hegel's argument where groups are mediating the actions from the deep state (Pekkarinen et al., 1992; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005). Other paths taken by researchers of corporatism saw it as an economic system that could replace capitalism (Cawson, 1986) while avoiding promoting Soviet-like centralized governments (Pekkarinen et al., 1992).

Following Marxist's ideas, individuals are considered to be constrained in the expression of their preferences by the institutions in place and the lack of other interest groups (Cawson, 1986). Thus, as Lijphart and Crepaz (1991 cited by Kanol, 2015b) and Pekkarinen et al. (1992) mentioned, corporatist decision-making process is highly influenced by the environment where the decision is made.

The fact that there exists a single interest group allows to it a privileged access to the state (Cawson, 1986; Hassenteufel, 1990; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Molina & Rhodes, 2002; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Williamson, 1989). In exchange for its unique status, the corporatist group must deliver the participation and the good behavior of its members regarding the policy and the state (Cawson, 1986). This process is called intermediation as the corporatist group cumulates three specific roles regarding its members: hearing them, representing them, and coercing them (Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Therborn, 1992). This is possible since membership of the group is usually mandatory, facilitated through regulations from the state (e.g., restrictive-access regulations to other groups, specific places granted in consultations) (*Ibid.*; Williamson, 1989). This then offers to the corporatist group a form of independence from its members as its existence does not solely rely on its members' willingness to join but also on the recognition by the state (Cawson, 1986). The corporatist group can then adopt a top-bottom decision-making process where the leadership of the organization directs and controls its members, hence the coercing actions (Williamson, 1989).

Of course, those that feel excluded are likely to organize together in the attempt to influence the group or the policy to represent their preferences. However, the monopolistic characteristic of corporatist institutional arrangement prevents them from creating an efficient-enough opposed group (Williamson, 1989). Facing the lack of external possibilities, they can

organize from the inside to change the actions and the agenda of the corporatist group (Pekkarinen et al., 1992) but they will still remain the minority in the group.³⁶ As a solution, Capdevielle (2001) argues that excluded can regroup if they rely on a different identity than the one defended by the corporatist group. For instance, if some farmers are regrouped under a commodity-specific organization, some members that disagree could regroup under their regional identity or under environmental benefits they provide to oppose their commodity association. By doing so, they would define themselves on a different basis and, thus, not question the existence of the corporatist group.

But the state is likely to protect the identity of the corporatist groups since it also benefits from its existence. Bull (1992) defines the mutual benefits provided by the corporatist institutional arrangement as a political exchange, “a relationship entered into by the state and interest groups in which the state gives up part of its decision-making authority to interest groups in exchange for those groups guaranteeing their members’ adherence to the decisions reached.” (p.263). If the political exchange can work, it is only because the corporatist group is considered as having at least enough power (e.g., capacity to sanction the government, knowledge) to avoid the state from acting unilaterally and as the state agrees to share parts of its power with the group, it obtains compliance from members of the group (Benoit, 2010; Williamson, 1989). It then presupposes that the corporatist group has enough control on its members to deliver its general agreement through disciplinary and control measures that might not be unanimous

³⁶ It should be noted that since corporatist groups do not function under direct democracy, opponents might outnumber the proponents but still represent a minority in regard of the decision-making capacities.

amongst them (Jobert & Mueller, 1987; Williamson, 1989).³⁷ In return, the group may avoid state actions that would be more detrimental to its members and instead benefit from the state recognition. It could even bring favorable regulations to legitimize the group in the eyes of its members that would then have less interest to create a concurrent group (Benoit, 2015; Cawson, 1986; Hassenteufel, 1990; Williamson, 1989; Young, 1990). Still, it also means that the group relinquish some of its autonomy as they align on the state's agenda (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989).

For the state, it also generates benefits such as an increased degree of confidence on the information presented by the interest group since the group can focus its actions on consultation and data gathering instead of only having to focus on recruitment of members and collection of contributions (Benoit, 2010; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Williamson, 1989).³⁸ It also increases the legitimacy of both actors to act in the way they do since the state can alleviate the criticisms from interest groups and the corporatist group can show its influence on the policy (Benoit, 2010; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Williamson, 1989). As a consequence, the general cost of policymaking should decrease due to an eased access to the decision-making process by the corporatist group (Bull, 1992; Jobert & Muller, 1987), and a facilitated implementation — often realized by the corporatist group — for the state (Bull, 1992; Williamson, 1989).

Amongst other peculiar advantages, corporatist arrangements internalize the debate about the policies, alleviating the state to deal with multiple objectives. In particular, marginal groups that can present more radical positions are to be dealt with by the corporatist group, restricting

³⁷ If self-restriction is effective, it should increase the compliance of members without using disciplinary measures (Hassenteufel, 1990)

³⁸ This is often realized in a short notice coming from the government, forcing the corporatist group to use easily accessible information rather than democratic tools (Williamson, 1989).

the scope of demands received by the state (Benoit, 2010; Pohjola, 1992). Moreover, the access to resources by the corporatist group allows them to build a bigger internal bureaucracy that generates enough information to have the group's decision-makers confident enough to avoid democratic exercises in the function of their duties (Capdevielle, 2001; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005). The state then receives fewer contradictory demands and more information that is created by the corporatist group to support it in the decision-making process (Mailand, 2008; McCauley, 2016).

Thus, corporatism is expected to bring more stability in the polity (Schmitter, 1985 cited by Benoit, 2010) but also in policies (Benoit, 2010; Jessop, 2007; Schmitter, 1983 cited by Kanol, 2015b). In consequence, Landesmann and Vartiainen (1992) argue that more investments will be made in a corporatist arrangement as risks associated with change are reduced. In addition, elected officials should have a reduced agenda to manage for the policy arena since many actions are either taken in a self-regulatory way to avoid stricter regulations or is devoted to a specific institution in charge of making the decisions (i.e., through a process not overseen by elected officials) (Jessop, 2007). Finally, the stability should hinder the capacities of those marginalized to get heard (Benoit, 2010). In agriculture, Benoit (*Ibid.*) mentions how it can result in the promotion of a limited type of production model, restraining alternative developments of production. Capdevielle (2001), taking from Baril (n.d. cited by Capdevielle, 2001), illustrated this idea when he said: "Denouncing the privileges of the 'entitled' is generally impossible to dissociate from [denouncing] those of corporatism" (p.79, our translation).

Meso-Corporatism

Though Schmitter's (1974) vision of corporatism was mostly directed toward the negotiation of social policies at the national level between the state, a group representing the owners of the capital, and a group representing the workers, Cawson (1986) showed how corporatism could also appear at lower levels of decision-making. For Cawson (*Ibid.*), Schmitter's assessment of corporatism can be qualified as a macro-corporatism since it dealt at the highest possible level: all policy areas with high-level actors. However, the identification of such characteristics for a country was a divisive enterprise and even the most commonly identified models were eventually relinquished, leading to a perception of the disappearance of corporatism (Pekkarinen et al., 1992).

Cawson (1986) instead recognized the presence of two other forms of corporatism: meso-corporatism and micro-corporatism.³⁹ In meso-corporatism, actors are joining together either at a regional level or at a sectoral level to design and implement policies with the state that would support their region/sector (Cawson, 1986; Heinze & Schmid, 1997; Williamson, 1989). The usual arrangement tends to be the agency or ministry of the state responsible for the region or sector with another group that acts as a representative of the whole sector or region, reducing the opposition between labor and capital in macro-corporatism (Cawson, 1986). Traxler (1991 cited

³⁹ Micro-corporatism is not a concept universally recognized by the research community and is the level of corporatism that had received less attention (Williamson, 1989). In this type of corporatism, individual firms are considered as organizations that build a relation of political exchange with the local government (Cawson, 1986). The state accepts to direct a specific assistance to one firm, in exchange of selective actions or guarantees offered by the firm (*Ibid.*). Hence, it creates a situation of discrimination in favor of a specific firm which can be costly for both the government and the firm. For the government, similar firms (and in some cases other governments) are likely to inquire for the reason justifying a specific support to one of their competitors (*Ibid.*). For the firms, they might also have to justify this support from the government in regard of their private actor's status on the market.

by Heinze & Schmid, 1997) adds two other characteristics for corporatism at a meso-level. First, for him and as implied by Cawson (1986), the focus of the industry must be on the supply rather than on the demand side since producers' groups are the only ones able to deliver their members to the government in the way the state expects them to be delivered. In particular, there seems to have a high occurrence of meso-corporatism in some sectors such as agriculture (Grant, n.d. cited by Young, 1990; also see the examples from Jobert and Muller (1987) and Benoit (2010; 2015)). Second, there should have a place for a policy entrepreneur to adjust the ideas of the meso-corporatist arrangement regarding the global paradigm of the society (Traxler, 1991 cited by Heinze & Schmid, 1997). Jobert and Muller (1987) explained how a sectoral policy cannot receive political and public support without being, at least slightly, aligned with the global paradigm of the society. Hence, the role of the policy entrepreneur becomes finding the right angle to present a reality of the sector that is politically coherent and appealing with the global paradigm (*Ibid.*).

This type of corporatism appears highly dependent on regional, structural, and historic characteristics of the sector since the institutions implemented for a specific sector or region must integrate those characteristics in their structure (Heinze & Schmid, 1997). In particular, Cawson (1986) identified a series of characteristics that shape the institutional arrangement of meso-corporatism: the nature of the product, the presence of multi-industry actors or of foreign ownership, the level of maturity of the sector, the international competitiveness of the sector, the level of concentration, and the involvement of the state. Coleman and Atkinson (1985 cited by Young, 1990) identified a common path that has been followed by sectors toward meso-corporatism. For them, it often starts with the presence of an inherent conflict inside a sector that has usually opposed producers and buyers for a long time about the type of policies that should

be adopted. It thus implied that the sector must be looking for help from the government and the state be inclined to do so (Cawson, 1986). Since the conflict does not appear to fade, the government recognizes both groups and attempts to integrate them inside its structure to act as a mediator of the conflict. The process might take a while and many attempts can be made by the state to find a good solution, creating an intricate set of policies (*Ibid.*). Yet, no lasting compromise appears, the conflict continues, and the state eventually threaten to adopt a different policy perspective alienating both actors. Then, as a defensive movement, conflicting associations can start working together to propose policies that fulfill the leadership's expectations of both groups.

Thus, if a policy area is decided under a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement, it is likely that the process of policymaking is modified since only a limited number of groups may successfully access the state. In addition, if parts of the decision-making processes are internalized by the corporatist group, the usual mechanisms may be reduced or appear homogenous. As such, it is possible that once an agreement is reached inside the corporatist group, it easily receives support by the state, in the limits of its own agenda. Then, what is expected from public policy theories might be different than what was observed in a pluralistic environment.

Explaining Policy Stability Through Public Policy Theories

If the institutional framework can influence the interactions inside the polity, it falls short of proposing a thorough explanation of policy-making. Especially, when Lindblom (1959) highlighted the bounded rationality of policy actors and how decision-makers were only using the easiest available information to make their decisions, he opened the field to the consideration of more constructivist theories.

More precisely, bounded rationality means that decision-makers have a limited time available for analysis and hearing the advocacy of policies. As such, they tend to focus on information that is consistent with the continuation of their action; information that corroborates the accepted image of policies (Mortensen, 2009; Chan & Zhao, 2016). Hence, in general, stability should be expected. Moreover, the limited capacity of information treatment reduces the number of issues the decision-makers can consider which then limits the decision-makers' agenda (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). As a result, individuals and institutions must balance time given to issues already on their agenda and new issues, with the former benefiting from a path dependency's competitive advantage (Pralle, 2006).

Bounded rationality also leads elected officials to be solution-driven (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). In particular, those seeking reelection concentrate their efforts on issues that might help them in their campaign (Arnold, 1990). By doing so, the most salient issues for the public become attractive for every elected official as they attempt to shine in front of their electorate by claiming the issue as theirs (*Ibid.*; Mortensen, 2009). It can then create a sudden interest on a specific issue by many elected officials that are asking for a change.

In both public policy theories we mobilize in this dissertation, bounded rationality and the consequential social constructionism are key factors that can explain the evolutionary paths (Givel, 2010; Schneider & Ingram, 1997). They both create an environment that considers perceptions and understandings as a filter for decision-making. Moreover, they also consider that these perceptions and social constructions are affected by the actions of the polity's members. Recognizing Kingdon's multiple stream framework, they both acknowledge the role that any actor can play as a policy entrepreneur that manages to redefine an issue considered (Mortensen, 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). In particular, interest groups that have a special access to

elected officials are more able to influence the definition of the issue (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). We may then expect corporatist groups to better control the policy image to their benefit.

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory

At the core of the punctuated equilibrium theory is the alternating between long phases of policy stability — or incrementalism — and short, though rare, phases of punctuation (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). If the stability phase is the dominant one in terms of time, it is because policy actors are building institutions and mechanisms that create a friction against change. Then, if policy entrepreneurs want to generate important policy changes, they must overcome the friction through specific pressures (*Ibid.*). Baumgartner and Jones (2009) identified two potential paths to overcome the friction which are the mobilization of bias and the increased level of attention from the public.

Friction

The friction idea, inspired from physics' concept of friction that restrains movement until forces overcome it, represents all the factors and influences that support and rationalize the existing policy (*Ibid.*). It can take different forms such as the mechanisms in place in institutions that are comforting the status quo and preventing the shift of the agenda (Baumgartner et al., 2009a; Mortensen, 2009), or actions by elites introducing barriers against new ideas or new actors (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962; Chan & Zhao, 2016; Flink, 2017; Gaventa, 1980; John & Margetts, 2003). Similarly, the way institutions are shaped can also have an effect on the level of friction by centralizing the decision-making process, requiring multiple approval, involving many players, or including veto players (Baumgartner et al., 2017; Breunig & Koski, 2006; Chan

& Zhao, 2016; Flink, 2017). Then, friction appears as a promoter of stability by nurturing a form of lagging ideas and conceptions that hinder change.

More generally, Baumgartner and Jones (2009) identified three broad categories of factors explaining the presence of friction. First, issues are generally managed by a small community of actors that shares political core values on what the policy should look like and how it should be implemented (*Ibid.*). This community is named ‘policy network’⁴⁰ and is said to own the issue when decision-makers turn to it in order to receive advice on policymaking. For decision-makers, policy networks are the communication channel that transfer expectations from specialized interests to them, reducing their costs of transaction for information gathering. By providing regular information to decision-makers, policy networks help them to continually adjust the policy to fit their expectations and maintain a continuity in intervention (Chan & Zhao, 2016). Policy networks would exist in both pluralist and meso-corporatist institutional arrangement. In the first, the set of actors more invested on a topic and with larger resources define the recurring policy network. In the second, the corporatist group is likely to represent the policy network, thus forming a monopoly of representation. Usually, policy networks are created when enthusiasm about an issue arises, and decision-makers are looking for information to help them make decisions (Downs, 1972). Its composition reflects the enthusiastic actors and has thus quite homogenous perspectives. To maintain the privileged access to decision-makers, members of policy networks shape the subsystem as to limit the participation of outsiders, creating a barrier to new ideas and new actors. Even the mere repetition of encounters with the same actors

⁴⁰ Baumgartner and Jones (2009) are using the term ‘policy monopoly’. To avoid confusion with the monopolistic aspect of corporatism or with the economics’ term, we opted for the term ‘policy network’ as a substitution from Baumgartner and Jones’s ‘policy monopoly’.

about the same topics is expected to bring stability (Matthews, 2001).⁴¹ Since corporatist groups benefit from a stronger support from the state, they are likely to be in a better position to increase entry barriers to the policy network and thus prohibit others to be heard on the topics they own.

Second, policies are attributed to a specific institution that bears the authority over the policy (i.e., the policy venue) (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). Each policy venue has its own preference and methods, shaping the policy image (Sheingate, 2000). Some policy venues have monopolistic power over issues, but some have to share with other venues. It is expected that each policy venue has its own policy network which creates a climate of confidence between the actors. Following the pluralism idea, actors should be different in each policy venue since individuals regroup based on share ideas on a specific topic. However, in a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement, the corporatist group might use its specific access to the state to systematically present itself as the reference in all policy areas addressing concerns of its members.

Third, Baumgartner and Jones (2009) use the term ‘policy image’ to represent the way a policy is understood and discussed by different actors. For them, the dominant policy image is the main factor in the attribution of the policy venue. For instance, they use the example of pesticides that had mostly been presented as a positive tool that enhances agricultural production before the 1960s, followed by a redefinition through their association with health and environmental issues, changing the perception of the public regarding those products (*Ibid.*). As a consequence, pesticide regulations were moved from agricultural development committees to

⁴¹ It creates a repeated prisoner’s dilemma with the same actors’ situation. In such a situation, the optimal strategy for both actors is to collaborate since repeated contacts with the same partners give opportunities for collaboration and decreases incentives to become a free rider (Matthews, 2001).

health and regulations committees, showing how policy image can influence the type of policy implemented and how it is governed (Bosso, 1987). Friction is then created by the same policy image that is continually defended by the policy network in the same policy venue (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). The decision-makers only focus on information that corroborates these ideas and do not question the image and interventions in place (bounded rationality) while other information is set aside, considered as irrelevant or anecdotal. Other mechanisms of agenda denial such as antipatterning⁴² or symbolic placation⁴³ can also be used by interest groups to restrict the emergence of new ideas (Cobb & Ross, 1997). It does not mean that no policy changes are happening, but only that they are happening in the continuity of what already existed without creating a lasting effect of change (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009).⁴⁴ Thus, during a stability phase of evolution, the actual mechanisms of the policy can change as long as the rationale — and so the policy image — is the same.

Still, if friction appears first as a protection against policy change, once the forces opposing it overcome the resistance, a shift in the policy can be observed to adjust to the new level of pressure (Flink, 2017). The equilibrium between actors of the polity is then broken and there is a reshuffling of the policy definition and of the actions taken by the state. This situation can either be the result of accumulation of smaller signals, or the result of an important shift in the social conditions (or other relevant factors) through mobilization of bias or the increased level of the public's attention. In both cases, consequences for policy evolution are expected to

⁴² Antipatterning refers to a situation where the policy network acknowledges the validity of the issue raised by opponents but presents it as an isolated case unworthy of state intervention (Cobb & Ross, 1997).

⁴³ Symbolic placation refers to a situation where the policy network acknowledges the validity of the issue but not the one of the proponents of the problem (Cobb & Ross, 1997).

⁴⁴ Schneider (2006) associates that with a form of path dependency of policies.

be the same: a policy change (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012). And with the presence of bounded rationality that brings decision-makers to focus on the new issue or new image, it fosters the development of the new policy that comes with its own sets of institutions.

Mobilization of Bias

Baumgartner and Jones (2009) noticed in pluralist arrangements that policy networks are rarely left intact for a long period of time. Instead, many policy actors try to raise new ideas about the issue. Hence, to maintain its domination, a policy network must show that the opponents of its ideas are marginal or inexistent. Otherwise, by welcoming newcomers, the policy network increases its coverage of issues; thus, overlapping with other policy communities. These other policy communities can retaliate by considering other committee's issues as theirs (*Ibid.*). Were they doing so, it would open the door for more and more actors to get involved, diluting the influence of the long-standing members of the policy network.⁴⁵ Hence, policy networks have little interest to include new members or new ideas as it may reduce their influence. Oppositely, promoters of change have an interest in adding new actors to dilute the influence of the stability gatekeepers.

Otherwise, it is also possible for promoters of change to bring the issue to a new policy venue that would include new actors that are not part of the usual policy network for this issue (Sheingate, 2000). It might be more difficult to push new issues if they are strongly bounded to specific institutions, if some groups have a strong commitment to some institutions or if some institutions have high barriers (Pralle, 2003). For instance, under a meso-corporatist institutional

⁴⁵ It can create Heclo's (1978 cited by Jordan, 1981) issue network with fragmented decision-making processes and unstable political alignments.

arrangement, it can be hard to avoid the corporatist group as the state had agreed to share parts of its power with the group. However, finding a suitable new venue is a way to enroll many advocates for the issue. Doing so enhances the possibilities for change, especially as it grants the new actors some legitimacy (Chaqués & Palau, 2009). This can enhance a cycle of exponential reinforcement in a virus-like propagation, often creating an overreaction (Goertz, 2003; Richardson, 2000) as selective attention forces policymakers to focus on the new ideas that are sustaining change (positive feedback) (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). Thus, changing the venue or including new actors can bring a mobilization of bias that transforms and weakens the policy network, bringing it to include new ideas.

Increased Level of Attention from the Public

Although mobilization of bias can occur, the pressure can also come from the rise of attention of the public on some issues, which then urges institutions to act and fix the problem (*Ibid.*). For Downs (1972), the public's level of attention to specific issues often follows a five-step cycle. First, issues begin in a pre-problem stage where the conditions that will later be addressed by the government exist but are only known by a restrained group of experts and interest groups. Second, as the news start to spread by the media (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991), some members of the public become aware — usually through a succession of dramatic events — and simple but ineffective ideas are proposed to tackle the issue (Downs, 1972). At this point, pressure on decision-makers by the public can be so important that it overpass the one from interest groups (Mortensen, 2009). Decision-makers then want to show how proactive they are on an issue and create (or reform) institutions to address the problem, thus enforcing a new

policy venue and recognizing a new policy subsystem. An important change in policy is likely to occur at this stage.

Third, since easy solutions are usually ineffective, the public starts to realize that significant progress comes only at high cost which often entails a loss of benefits for the majority (Downs, 1972). It then reduces the interest on the issue through the fourth phase: discouragement. At this point, members of the public either abandon hopes about fixing the issue, refuse to accept the cost of fixing the problem, or get bored by the issue. Finally, the fifth stage is the post-problem stage where new institutions and programs are created by the policy network, away from the public's attention, to fix the problem. Those institutions and programs tend to last in the long run and find themselves able to perpetuate the policy image that had driven the public for actions (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). This then starts a new era of stability with its own path of friction that is expected to last until a new accumulation of contradicting information. Thus, for Baumgartner and Jones (*Ibid.*), a burst of change is possible at the second stage of the policy cycle of attention but after this short period of general concern, the usual evolutionary path comes back.

Social Construction of Target Population

Another potential explanation for the cycle of stable policies punctuated by important changes can come from the social construction of target population theory. Schneider and Ingram (1993; 1997) adapted the idea of policy images through the image of the target population rather than on who should be involved in talking about the policy. They defined the social construction of target population as the “images, stereotypes, and beliefs that confer identities on people and connect them with others as a social group who are possible candidates for receiving beneficial or burdensome policy” (Schneider & Ingram, 1997, p.75). To be effective, a social construction

must target a group that is easily identifiable for the elite and the masses (Nicholson-Crotty & Meier, 2005) as it displays distinct characteristics (Soss, 2005) allowing the transposition of actions from some members of the groups to the whole (Schneider & Ingram, 1993). At the core of their framework is the idea that groups receive policies depending on their attributes (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). However, they also consider that government interventions shape the social construction of the target population through the feed-forward effect (Bruch et al., 2010). For instance, policies can provide resources to disadvantaged groups that would allow them to be more politically active (Soss, 2005; Verba et al. 1995 cited by Bruch et al. 2010). It can also provide groups with political experience to ease their decisions to organize and lobby governments (Bruch et al., 2010). Oppositely, paternalistic programs tend to send messages promoting political apathy of the target population since they are told that governments know the good choices to make for them (*Ibid.*; Soss, 2005).

Figure 2 presents a simplified version of the feed-forward effect and how the general social context of the population, issue context, and policy design interact. Societal context includes all physical, social, psychological, political, and historic aspects of the population and their evolution across the time. Those aspects then determine the way individuals usually frame information relevant to a specific issue, generating issue context. Issue context is the social construction emerging from a policy environment, including beliefs, perceptions, images, and stereotypes. It is constructed by many influences such as elected officials, the media, arts, courts, and interest groups to build a coherent narrative (DiAlto, 2005; Ingram & Schneider, 1995). Issue context then influences policy design by framing the issue inside the accepted paradigm of state actions. Amongst all, it defines which options are political opportunities and which are

political risks for elected officials. Finally, policy design translates⁴⁶ into societal context as policies change the behaviors of the population, thus the general environment, through the feed-forward effect (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). This then brings the level of deservingness of the beneficiaries as the main indicator of the policy received, itself at least partly defined by the systems, its culture and institutions in a form of a vicious circle of social construction of the target population (*Ibid.*).

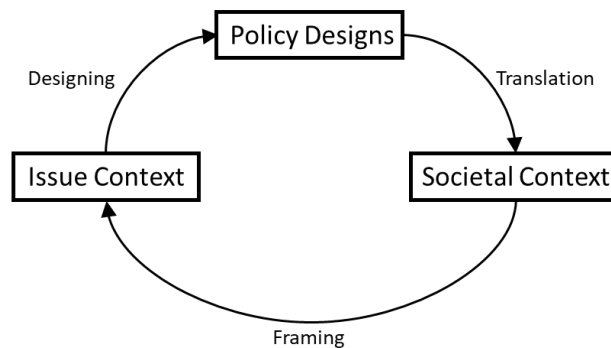


Figure 2. Mutual interactions between policy designs and the society (adapted from Schneider & Ingram, 1997)

In practice, Schneider and Ingram (*Ibid.*; 1993) propose a typology of policy design based on valence of social construction and political power of the target population to determine the generosity and the design of the policy as well as the capacity of the group to fight back unsolicited policy (see Figure 3) (Boushey, 2012).⁴⁷ Each category of the typology should be seen as ideal-types of both axes.

⁴⁶ The translation process is more developed by Soss (2005) who proposes a seven-step model presenting how policy designs can lead to the integration of the social construction by the target population.

⁴⁷ Schneider and Ingram (1997) also added a fifth type of policy based on science and knowledge to represent some policies that did not fit in their model otherwise. However, it has not been considered deeply in the literature and is hereby not included here.

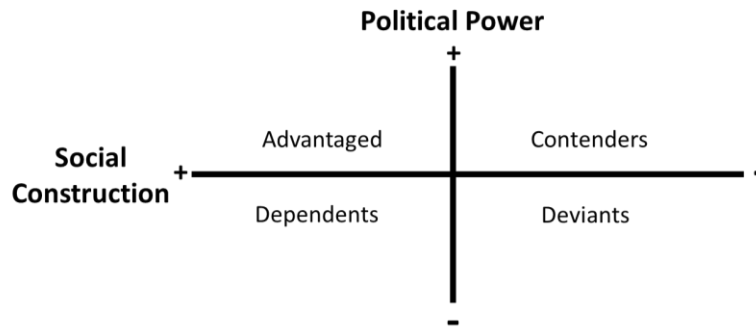


Figure 3. Typology of policy design (adapted from Schneider & Ingram, 1997)

The first group is the ‘advantaged’ that benefits from positive social construction and access to a large number of resources to influence politics (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997). Hence, they appear for the population and the decision-makers as deserving of supportive policies (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). They also appear as prone to vote and express their ideas to the government, playing by the rules to get policies beneficial to them. Their strong political power gives them an easier access to the agenda for beneficial policies that often lead to universalistic (e.g., low barriers of access, agencies reaching out to the potential beneficiaries) and highly funded policies (*Ibid.*; Boushey, 2012). On the other hand, adopting burdens targeting the ‘advantaged’ presents a political risk for elected officials since the ‘advantaged’ have the capacity to retaliate against incumbents or to simply refuse to comply (Schneider & Ingram, 1997; Schneider et al., 2014). Then, only burdens framed as a painful necessity to achieve the greater good are imposed, often underfunded in a way that limits enforcement. Otherwise, justifications regarding the presence of similar burdens for their competitors are often used (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

The second group is the ‘contenders’ that has a negative social construction but access to a large number of resources to influence politics (*Ibid.*; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). They tend to avoid receiving burdens and find a way to instead profit from beneficial policies through a deceptive way (e.g., opaque and confusing mechanisms, long chain of effects). They usually

have experience with the political environment and more often than not they understand that using their political power and their money are the only options that can pay back in the electoral system (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Beneficial policies for ‘contenders’ tend to give important discretionary power to agencies in charge of the implementation and present the benefits as universal even if in practice only the ‘contenders’ would be able to use it. However, since the general population is expecting to see burdens imposed to ‘contenders’, when — rarely — elected officials do so, they tend to be vocal about it presenting themselves as championing the defense of the ‘advantaged’ against the ‘contenders’ even if these policies are insufficiently funded or contain a multitude of exceptions (*Ibid.*).

The third group is the ‘dependents’ that benefits from a positive social construction but has limited political resources (*Ibid.*; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Those are the ones perceived as incapable of taking care of themselves and begging for help from the government in order to fix their incapacity. Consequently, the government presents its actions as if they are doing a favor to the ‘dependents’, putting well-defined eligibility and exclusion rules and giving scarce discretionary power to implementing agencies (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Most of the time, ‘dependents’ do not organize in effective lobby groups and refrain from voting, letting the elites decide for them (*Ibid.*). In those circumstances, providing benefits to ‘dependents’ appears to be of little interest for decision-makers as they might not receive electoral support in exchange. Then, those policies are often taken out of the agenda, given low funding which maintains ‘dependents’ at a lower level than what they deserve (*Ibid.*). Nonetheless, their positive social construction reduces the support for burdens to be adopted since the population does not perceive them as undeserving.

The fourth group is the ‘deviants’ that has a negative social construction and limited political resources (*Ibid.*; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). They are perceived by the society as a danger for the population that must be closely monitored through hard burdens that stigmatize ‘deviants’ to protect the public. It is thus not surprising to see that they seldom receive beneficial policies as they are perceived as the least deserving of all groups (Schneider & Ingram, 1997). Most of the time, courts are the main providers of support for ‘deviants’ as they defend justice and human rights rationales.

Policy Change Through the Feed-forward Effect

For Schneider and Ingram (*Ibid.*), groups constantly receive the same type of policy design, thus reinforcing their social construction. Though, they identified how policies can accumulate small gestures that can change the social construction. For instance, policies that are constantly self-reinforcing might institute doubts about the deservingness of the target population by the masses (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; Ingram & Schneider, 1995). Target population can then be perceived as being greedy (or overburdened) and the population might ask for policies better aligned with the new social construction, punctuating policy evolution (Ingram & Schneider, 2005). Otherwise, external actors can act as promoters of change in the image of the target population in a similar way than the one described by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) for policy entrepreneurs. Other opportunities have also been identified by some authors such as the use of a specific institution by a marginalized group to gather support and avoid veto of traditional actors (Ingram & Ingram, 2005), the capacity of courts to change policy design (DiAlto, 2005), the use of counternarratives’ policies by aggregating groups (Sidney, 2005) or the division of groups into smaller ones (Ingram & Schneider, 2005). Hence, if gestures change

the social construction of the target population, it should reflect in the general type of policies that are adopted and thus lead to a new path dependency of policies adapted to the new social construction of the target population since the type of policies implemented is both the consequences and the cause for the social construction of the target population. This is the case because decision-makers accept to follow the social construction in deciding who receives benefits and burdens as they are looking for political payoffs and want to appear as understanding their constituents (Barrilleaux & Bernick, 2003; Nicholson-Crotty & Meier, 2005; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Policies are then expected to be self-reinforcing of the social construction but may diverge and thus contribute to changing the social construction of the target population.

Conclusion

With the proposition of the punctuated equilibrium theory in 1993, Baumgartner and Jones recouped many elements from different theories and provided a more general framework to assess the pattern of a policy evolution. Using a pluralistic institutional arrangement, they observed that policies generally evolve through an incremental path. This is the result of the bounded rationality individuals are facing when they analyze a policy, as well as the friction that can build around a policy by institutions supporting it. When a policy is set in place, its management and consultative groups are usually built around a restricted number of participants — the policy venue and policy network — that tend to share a similar conception of the policy. This then contributes to the stability of the policy since the actors and positions are consistent in the long run.

However, at some point, pressure can become too strong against the friction and overcome it. When this happens, decision-makers start to focus on new parameters that have emerged from pressure, and the policy is likely to face an important change. New actors and institutions are then recognized as relevant actors for the policy future and a new incrementalistic path is started around the new parameters of the policy. Baumgartner and Jones (2009) identified two paths carrying potential for an important change. The first one is driven by actors that feel marginalized in existing institutions and, to increase their power, mobilize new actors to join discussions and thus widens the policy image. The second path is the result of the public's mobilization that forces decision-makers to act on a specific problem and thus create institutions that would tackle the issue.

However, another evolutionary path could also happen following a change in the social construction of the target population and the type of policies implemented due to this construction through the feed-forward effect. In Schneider and Ingram's (1997) idea, policy changes are adopted to follow the evolution of the social construction and then can accelerate the change as the policy helps to frame the social construction. Alternatively, the policy change can isolate a subgroup of the target population to build them a specific identity different from its previous group. As such, by the actions of policy entrepreneurs or through overemphasis on a single type of policy, it is possible that the population begins to question the relevance of the policies adopted, hence calling for a policy change.

Schneider (2006) is, to the best of our knowledge, ⁴⁸ the only author to have used a combination of both approaches to assess how the change in social construction of the target

⁴⁸ Also see Pierce et al. (2014) for a similar conclusion on publications combining punctuated equilibrium theory with social construction of the target population.

population can constitute a positive feedback. Though she found that, in the case of American imprisonment, change is slowly building, she highlighted that punctuations still happen. For her, the critical juncture of a policy evolution — the change in the pattern of policies in a path-dependent vision of policy evolution — is a result of a slow build-up that could be represented by the pressure mounting against the friction. Once it reaches a certain point, the friction is overcome, and policy burst in change.

Similarly, the combination of policy evolution theories with the pluralism-corporatism continuum has not been the focus of much research. We only found Kim's (2015) dissertation that related a path dependency in the Japanese industrial policy with different institutional arrangements (especially micro-corporatism). For him (*Ibid.*), historical conditions are leading the state to adopt an institutional arrangement that then constrains any further changes due to high transaction costs of adopting a new arrangement. Micro-corporatism can then appear as an hinderer for change since it helps to build a form of friction.

By mobilizing the combination of a theory on interest group participation with two public policy theories, we built a theoretical framework that allows tracking policy change caused by different factors. Moreover, each of these tracks considers incrementalism as the usual evolution, though also covering how policy actors can diverge from it and start supporting broader changes. Our framework then provides us with tools to understand and categorize the actions taken by the different policy actors in support of the policy evolution, even if stability dominates the changes. In particular, it is expected that changes observed are the result of one of the paths identified in this section. As such, evidence from any of these paths could lead us to understand which actions were taken by the different actors (e.g., consultations, lobbying, involvement of other actors) to push forward these changes.

Chapter 4 – Agriculture in the Two Regions Studied

The two regions studied are Canadian provinces from the center of the country. The choice of these regions reduces the variability in control variables that could affect the evolution of risk management policies. By increasing our control on variables, we avoid a loss of degrees of freedom that would require a higher number of observations, as well as a higher risk of endogeneity that would reduce the efficiency of our estimator (Greene, 2012). This is why it was particularly important, for us, to focus on regions that shared similar political institutions and similar resources allotments in agriculture. Moreover, these regions are often used as a comparison point either in agriculture (Winson, 1985) or in other sectors (Haddow, 2015), which highlight the rationale for such a comparison.⁴⁹

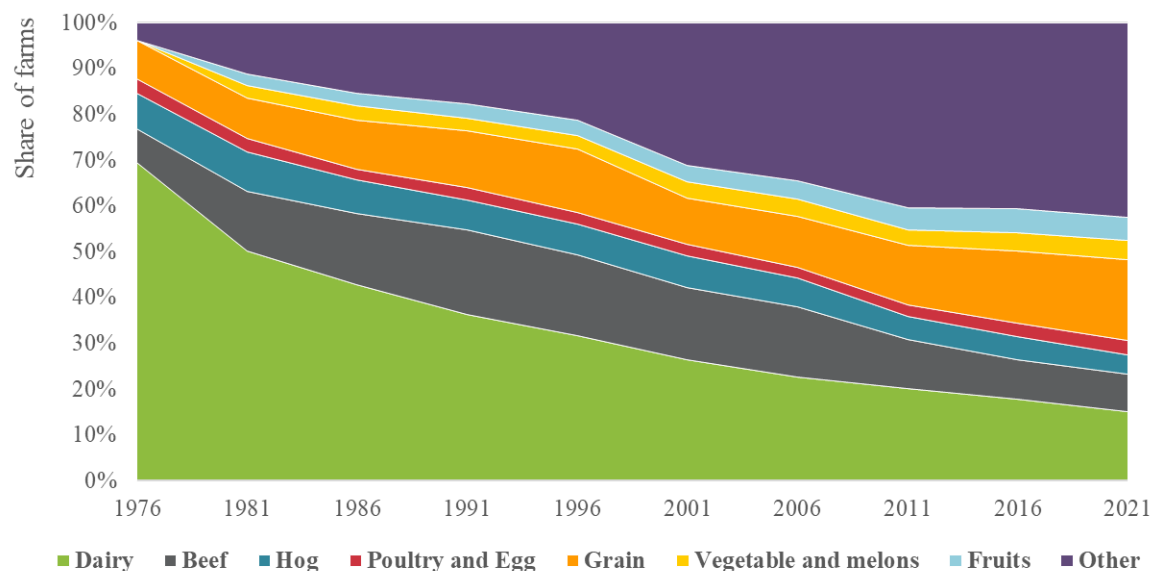
In this chapter, we present the agricultural situation in both provinces to make the case that these two provinces have comparable agricultural potential, and thus offer a good control to disaggregate the impact of the variables of interest. It is also the occasion for us to identify the presence of the different paths of agricultural evolution proposed by van der Ploeg (2008) (i.e., industrialization, repeasantization, and deactivation) in each province. Unfortunately, changes in production models are associated with new characteristics for farmers and agriculture, and these new characteristics are largely ignored by official statistical agencies, especially in the beginning of the process. As such, we had to rely on the existing information to qualify the presence of each process of evolution even if the information is incomplete or only exist for a specific sector. It should still be kept in mind that the objective is to show the presence of the tendencies identified by van der Ploeg, and not a number of farms or economic impacts associated with each

⁴⁹ For some examples in agriculture see for instance: Caldwell (1988), Dale (2019), Montpetit and Coleman (1999), Skogstad (1990), Tamini et al. (2015), and Wampach (1988).

farming style since we consider the place given to each vision of agriculture in the discourse rather than their actual prevalence in terms of farms.

Agriculture in Québec

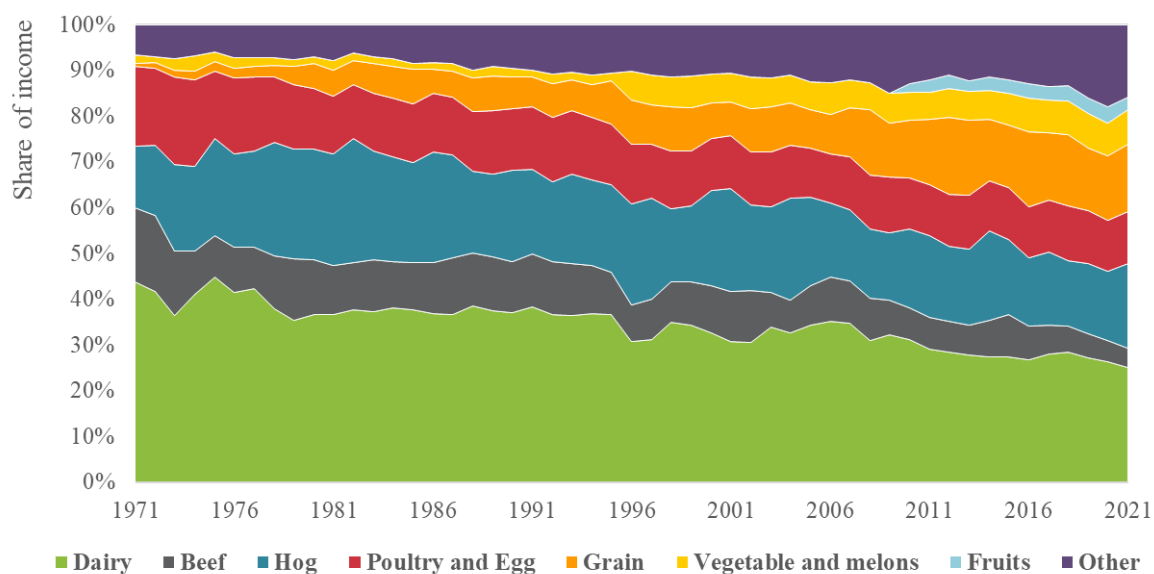
Agriculture used to be a prime industry in Québec at the beginning of the twentieth century, but now only represents 1.5% of the province's gross domestic product (GDP) (see Figure 12) for a total of CA\$5.4 billion in 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2022j). Most of the farms are located in the south, along both sides of the St.-Lawrence River. There were 29,380 farms in Québec that occupied about 1.9 million hectares in 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022h; 2022i). On average, Québec's farms were valued at CA\$2.5 million, with land and production quotas being the main asset values (Statistics Canada, 2022c).



¹ Unfortunately, due to methodological considerations, it is not possible to isolate maple syrup farms on a longitudinal basis since Statistic Canada created the category in 2011. As such, it was maintained for the whole period in 'Other'. Maple syrup farms represent the majority of these 'Other' productions.

Figure 4. Main productions in terms of farms, Québec 1976–2021, quinquennial data¹ (Statistics Canada, 2022h; n.d. and our calculations)

Maple syrup recently becomes the biggest agricultural industry in Québec based on the number of farms, involving 19.8% of the farms.⁵⁰ It is followed by field crops (17.6%), dairy (15.1%), and beef (8.2%) (see Figure 4) (Statistics Canada, 2022h). However, in terms of income coming from the market, animal productions dominate. Dairy farmers generated 24.7% of 2020 monetary income, followed by the hog production (17.4%). They are followed by field crops (14.1%), poultry and eggs (10.8%), and fresh vegetables (7.1%) (see Figure 5) (Statistics Canada, 2022b).



¹ Unfortunately, due to methodological considerations, it is not possible to isolate maple syrup farms on a longitudinal basis since Statistic Canada created the category in 2011. As such, it was maintained for the whole period in ‘Other’. Maple syrup farms represent the majority of these ‘Other’ productions.

Figure 5. Main productions in terms of income, Québec 1971–2021, annual data¹ (Statistics Canada, 2022b and our calculations)

The dominant farm size in Québec involves one or two household members with, potentially, one hired resource. It then results in 41,995 farm operators in 2016, the last year for

⁵⁰ On Figure 5, maple syrup is pooled in the ‘other’ category. It is only since 2011 that maple syrup is isolated as a production. To maintain consistency over the period, we kept maple syrup in the ‘other’ category throughout the period.

which data were available. This number is declining over the time, following the decline in the number of farms as presented in Figure 13 and Figure 14 (Statistics Canada, 2019b). Though the number of farms increased in 2021 for the first time since the 1940s, it remains unclear if the increase actually represents new farmers or the multiplication of legal entities farming for fiscal reasons. Including hired workers, the number of individuals involved in agriculture in 2020 was estimated to be 47,335, a somewhat stable amount considering the decline in terms of farms (see Figure 6) (Statistics Canada, 2022k). As such, farming is facing concentration both in terms of acreage (see Figure 10) and farm values (see Figure 11).

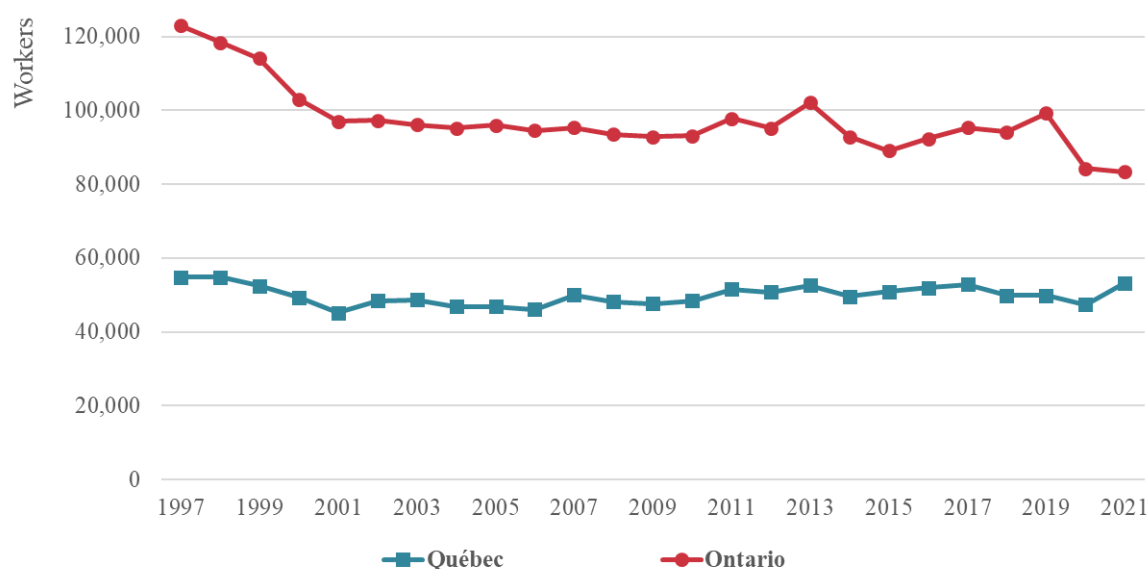


Figure 6. Number of workers involved in agriculture, Québec and Ontario, 1997–2021, annual data (Statistics Canada, 2022k and our calculations)

There is significant variability in the number of employees per farm. On one side, there exist farms hiring more than 200 employees at the peak of the season for whom temporary foreign workers is a necessity. On the other side, around 64% of the farm operators receive off-farm income as a supplement to their farming activities, a sign that farming may not be a full-time activity for them (Statistics Canada, 2019b).

Agriculture in Ontario

Like in Québec, agriculture in Ontario is mostly concentrated in the southwest of the province where the soil and climate conditions are better suited. Nonetheless, every region of Ontario has some farms, with other strong regional concentrations in the East and the Center (Statistics Canada, 2022h). In 2021, there were 48,346 farms in Ontario operating about 3.7 million hectares (*Ibid.*; Statistics Canada, 2022i).

Almost 4 farms out of 10 (37.6%) of Ontario farms are classified as field crops farms, followed by cattle (16.5%), dairy (6.6%), greenhouse (3.5%) and vegetable growers (3.2%) (see Figure 7) (Statistics Canada, 2022h). The preponderance of field crops needs to be considered in relation with the monetary income provided by each sector.

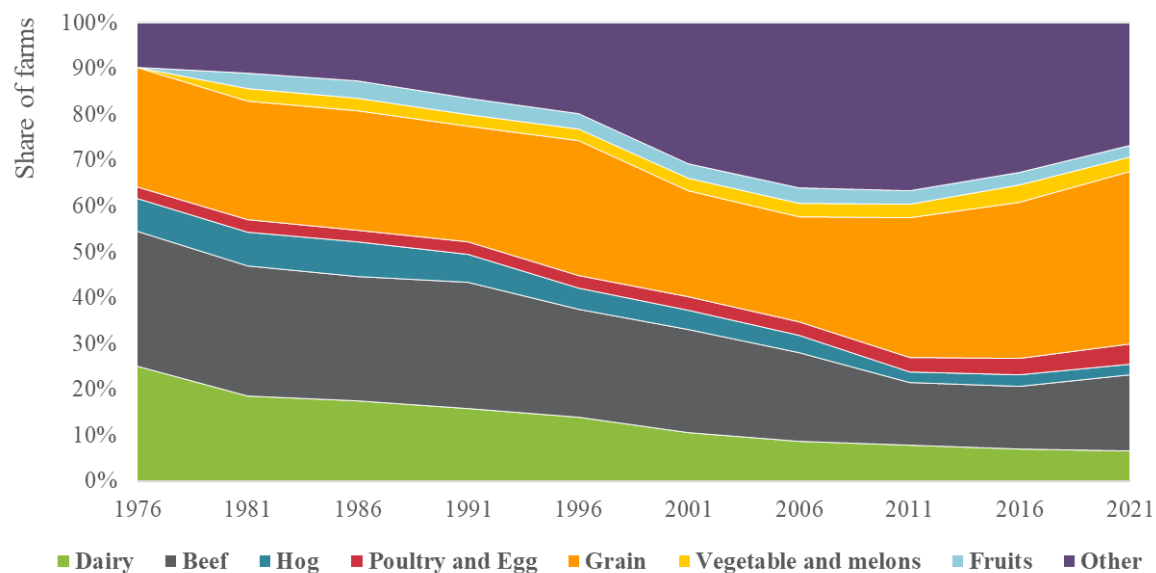


Figure 7. Main productions in terms of farms, Ontario 1976–2021, quinquennial data (Statistics Canada, 2022h; n.d. and our calculations)

In terms of gross income,⁵¹ field crops (24.6%) were the most important sector in 2020 followed by dairy (13.6%), greenhouse (12.9%), poultry and egg (9.3%), hog (7.9%), and beef (7.8%) (see Figure 8) (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Taken all together, agricultural activities generated CA\$8.4 billion of GDP, equivalent to 1.2% of Ontario's GDP in 2020 (see Figure 12) (Statistics Canada, 2022j).

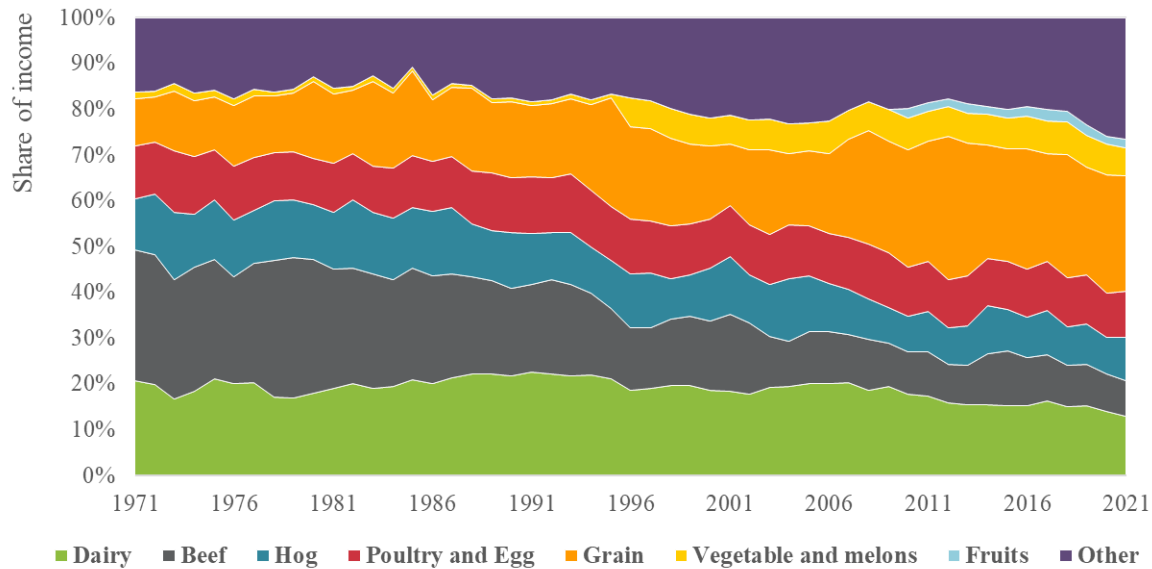


Figure 8. Main productions in terms of income, Ontario 1971–2021, annual data (Statistics Canada, 2022b and our calculations)

Employment in Ontario's agriculture varies from sector to sector. Statistics Canada's data show how the number of people involved in agriculture (84,240 in 2020) is actually close to the number of farm operators (70,470 in 2016) (Statistics Canada, 2019b; 2022k). However, these aggregated data are hiding some discrepancies within Ontario's agriculture by commodity and farm size. In fact, less than half of Ontario's farm operators solely rely on income generated on the farm and 54% of them received off-farm income in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2019b). On the other hand, some big farms can hire up to a few hundred employees and may rely on temporary

⁵¹ We restricted gross income to the one obtained from the market. It namely excludes direct payments.

foreign workers to supplement the national workforce. In particular, greenhouse, nursery and floriculture production had, on average, 5.7 employees per farm in 2016 as opposed to 0.2 employees per farm for the grains and oilseed farms (Government of Canada, 2020). Observing the trends in the decline of farm numbers (Figure 13) and farm operators (Figure 14) while the number of workers is relatively stable over time (Figure 6), farms are getting bigger, a conclusion shared by the Government of Canada (2020).

Finally, the average size of farms also points toward farming activities that are suitable for one household with an average value of about CA\$3.7 million, a growing figure (see Figure 10 and Figure 9). Once again, the use of average data is prone to hide heterogeneity inside agriculture, especially considering the high value of quotas present on supply management farms.

Comparing Agriculture in Québec and in Ontario

As it can be seen in Table 2, there are a little more than 60% more farms in Ontario than in Québec, which also reflects in the total number of hectares in production and the number of farm workers (about 96% more hectares and 78% more farm workers in Ontario than in Québec). Since Ontario is a more populous province with more area prone to agriculture, these differences must be pondered.

Table 2. *Québec and Ontario's agriculture (Statistics Canada, 2019b; 2022b; 2022c; 2022h; 2022i; 2022j; 2022k)*

	Québec	Ontario
Number of farms (2021) ¹	29,380	48,346
Number of hectares in production (2021)	1,871 million	3,663 million
Gross domestic product of agriculture (2020) ²	CA\$5.4 billion	CA\$8.4 billion
Share of agricultural gross domestic product (2020) ³	1.5%	1.2%
Main productions (in terms of monetary income) (2020)	Dairy (24.7%) Hogs (17.4%) Field Crops (14.1%) Poultry (10.8%) Fresh vegetables (7.1%)	Field Crops (24.6%) Dairy (13.6%) Greenhouse (12.9%) Poultry (9.3%) Hogs (7.9%)
Main productions (in terms of number of farms) (2020) ⁴	Maple Syrup (19.8%) Field Crops (17.6%) Dairy (15.1%) Cattle (8.2%) Fruits and nuts (5.0%)	Field Crops (37.6%) Cattle (16.5%) Dairy (6.6%) Greenhouse (3.5%) Fresh Vegetables (3.2%)
Number of farm operators (2015) ⁵	47,995	70,470
Share of farm operators who received off-farm income (2015) ⁶	36%	46%
Number of workers involved in agriculture (2020) ⁷	47,335	84,240
Average value of farms (2020)	CA\$2.5 million	CA\$3.7 million

¹ The definition of a farmer by Statistics Canada excludes farms that do not reach the minimal threshold of income (CA\$10,000) to qualify as a producer. Oppositely, it can over-represent other farms if they consist of different independent companies regrouped under the same owner.

² Including crops and animal production and support activities for crop and animal production, in current CA\$.

³ Including crops and animal production only.

⁴ Based on NAICS classification, implying that farms are classified based on the activity that generated most of their income.

⁵ This number allows counting a maximum of three farm operators per farm. However, an owner can only appear once in the data even if they own more than one farm.

⁶ The share of profit redistributed to owners of a farm registered as a corporation is considered as off-farm income by Statistics Canada. As such, this is potentially an over-representation of the actual part of the income coming from non-farm activities.

⁷ This data is at risk of not including temporary foreign workers.

From the data presented, we could also conclude that Ontario has bigger farms since the average value of a farm is about 50% higher than in Québec (Figure 9). However, this is the result of a value per acre 87% higher in Ontario than in Québec (Statistics Canada, 2020a). Instead, when we consider the average size in terms of hectares owned (see Figure 10) or in terms of GDP generated per farm, per farm operator or per worker, Québec's farms appear to be bigger (see Figure 12).

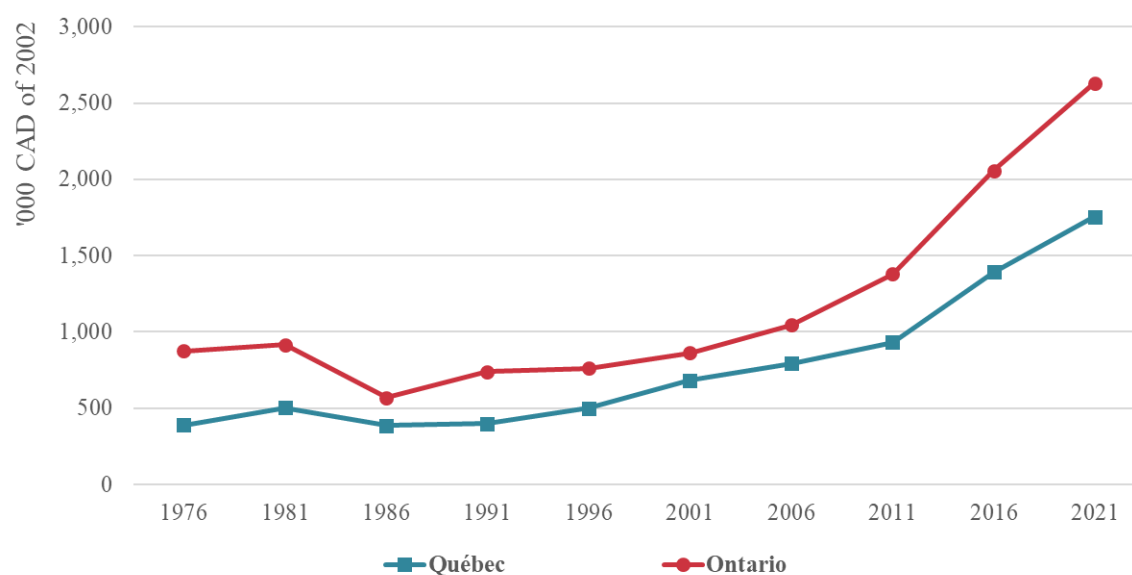


Figure 9. Average farm value, Québec and Ontario, 1976–2021, quinquennial data (Statistics Canada, 2022a; 2022c; n.d. and our calculations)

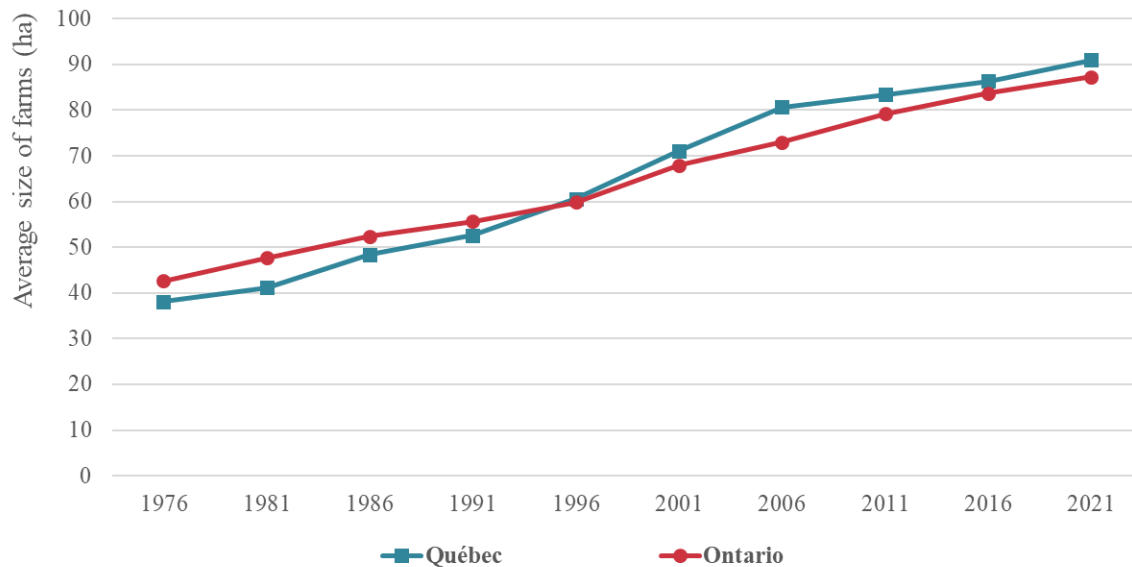


Figure 10. Average number of hectares owned by farmers, Québec and Ontario, 1976–2021, quinquennial data (Statistics Canada, 2022f and our calculations)

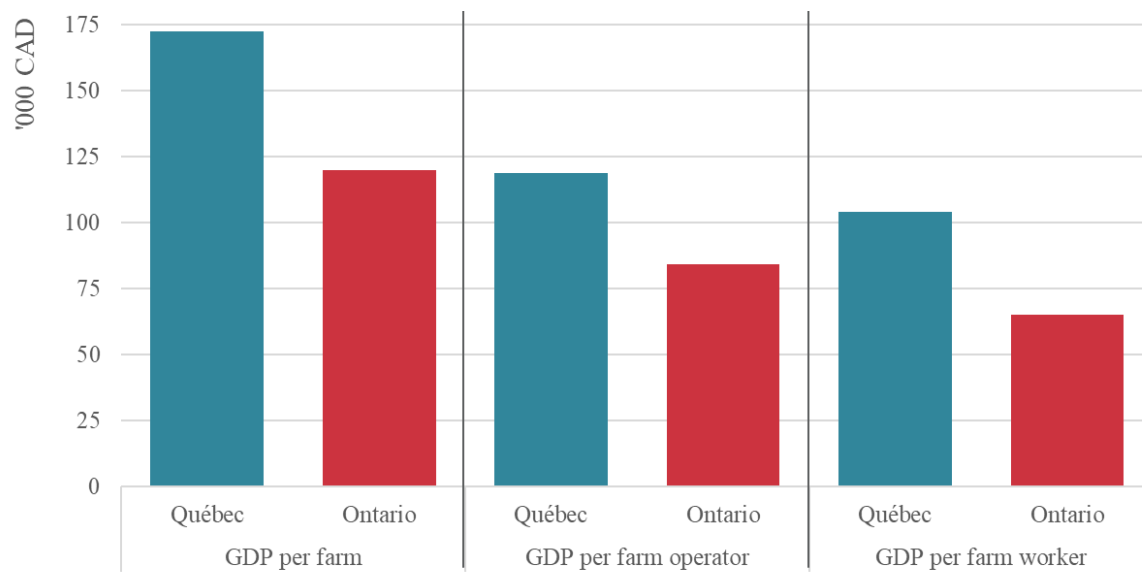


Figure 11. Average GDP per farm, per farm operator and per farm worker, Québec and Ontario, 2021 (Statistics Canada, 2019a; 2022g; 2022j; 2022k and our calculations)

Another indicator can also contribute to nuancing the discrepancies between the size of farms between the provinces is the bigger share of smaller farms that are present in Ontario based on their annual gross revenue for 2018, the most recent data available. In Table 3, we can see that a bigger share of Ontario farms made less than CA\$250,000 in 2018 as compared to

Québec. However, the share of bigger farms (over CA\$1 M) is similar in both provinces. This discrepancy between farm sizes in the provinces might then explain why average data lean toward bigger farms in Québec than in Ontario.⁵²

Table 3. *Share of Québec and Ontario's farms based on their 2018 gross income in CA\$ (Statistics Canada, 2020b)*

	Québec	Ontario
\$10,000-\$24,999	13%	19%
\$25,000-\$49,000	14%	17%
\$50,000-\$99,999	14%	16%
\$100,000-\$249,999	19%	18%
\$250,000-\$499,999	16%	11%
\$500,000-\$999,999	14%	10%
\$1,000,000-\$1,999,999	6%	6%
>\$1,999,999	4%	4%

As for the main productions in both provinces, they happen to be similar, especially over time (see Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 7 and Figure 8). Supply management commodities and grains and oilseeds are amongst the top productions, with cattle being more important in Ontario than in Québec, while maple syrup is more prominent in Québec. Hogs are also an important commodity in terms of revenues, though fewer farmers are involved with hog production directly. The share of farms classified as ‘other’ also represents a wide array of farms but for which it is hard to get information as the level of detail from the North American Industry Classification System prohibits us from digging further in the data. From what it is possible to

⁵² Unfortunately, specific requests to Statistics Canada must be made to decompose by farm size many of the indicators presented in this chapter. This limited our capacity to dig deeper in the differences between the two provinces.

understand, most ‘other’ farms in Québec are farms that are growing crops that are not listed which may likely point toward hay production. Similarly, in Ontario, many ‘other’ farms can be associated with the likely hay production but also, at a lower level, with greenhouse production, floriculture and nursery as well as cannabis and tobacco. The main difference in Ontario, however, comes from the thousands of farms that are qualified as ‘other animal production’ which points toward productions such apiculture, equine production, fur-bearing animals and other unclassified animal productions (e.g., emu, bison) (Statistics Canada, 2022b; 2022h).

Finally, in terms of the contribution of agriculture to the wealth of each province, agriculture in Québec seems to take a more prominent place than in Ontario on the period for which data were available (see Figure 12). Since 2007, a growing trend is present in both provinces, but during the 2003–2007’s period, Québec’s GDP from agriculture was mostly stable as opposed to other industries that saw economic growth.

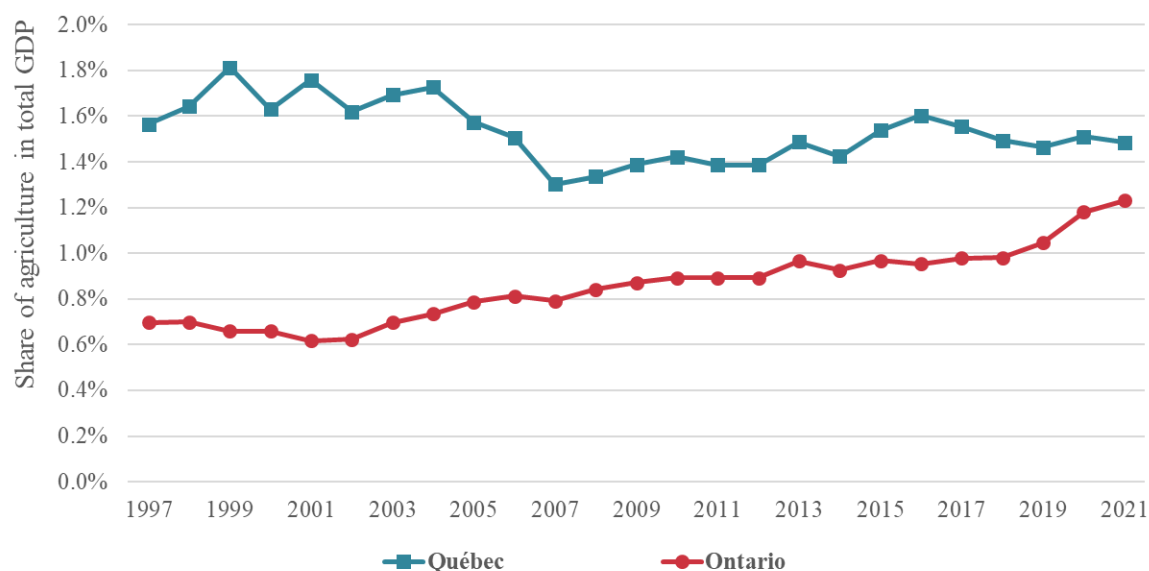


Figure 12. Share of agriculture gross domestic product in total gross domestic product for Québec and Ontario, 1997–2021, annual data (Statistics Canada, 2022j and our calculations)

Evolutionary Trends of Agriculture

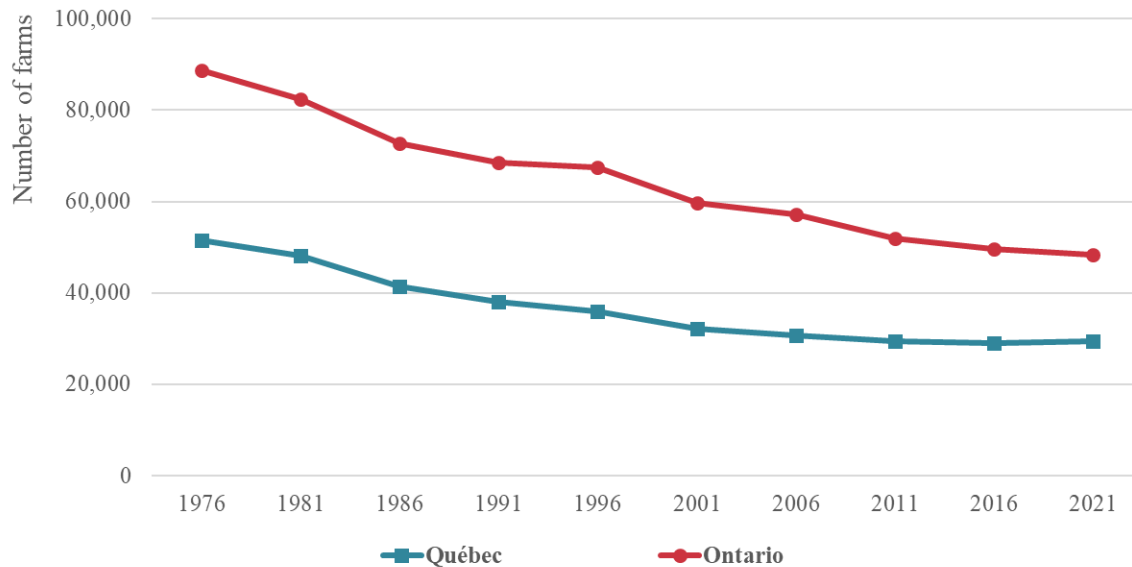
To understand the development of heterogeneity in agriculture, we followed and updated Boulianne's (2011) work on the patterns of evolution in Québec agriculture. We also extend her work to Ontario. We then conducted an assessment of the evolutionary paths of agriculture identified by van der Ploeg's (2008) which are deactivation, industrialization and repeasantization.⁵³

Deactivation

Deactivation is the easiest process to observe since it implies that farmers are leaving agriculture. As Figure 13 presents, there is a net decrease in the number of farmers in both provinces over the period.⁵⁴ However, this is likely to be an underestimation since it only considers the number of active farms. As such, the losses of farms are partially compensated by new farmers joining agriculture. A similar pattern can also be observed in terms of farm owner as presented in Figure 14. Unfortunately, Statistics Canada only publishes the number of farms and not the variations.

⁵³ It should be noted that Francoeur (2018) concentrated most of her dissertation to assess the presence of the deactivation and repeasantization in Québec. As such, readers are referred to her work to further deepen their understanding of these processes in Québec. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, such an exercise has not been realized in Ontario. At best, we can suggest the work of Devlin (2004) for elements confirming the presence of industrialization and deactivation in Ontario, until 2001.

⁵⁴ Except for 2021 for Québec which, as mentioned previously, might be caused by the changes in the fiscal organization of farms.



¹ For the period 1976 to 1996, only farms with a gross revenue superior to CA\$2,499 were considered. As such, this graph hides the strong decline in very small farms that happened during the 1970s and 1980s.

Figure 13. Number of farms¹, Québec and Ontario, 1976–2021, quinquennial data (Statistics Canada, 2022g; n.d. and our calculations)

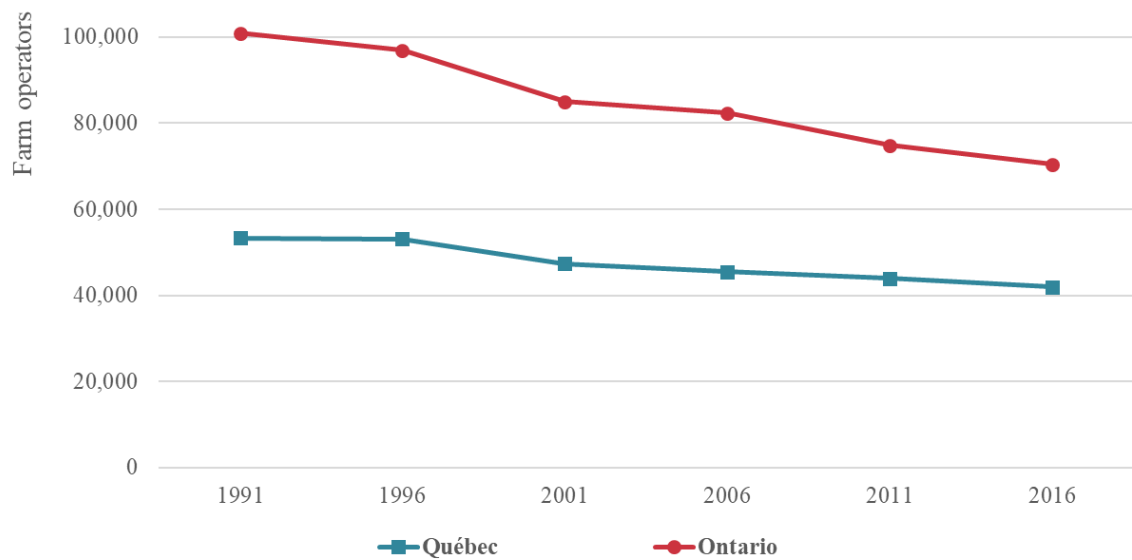


Figure 14. Number of farm operators in Québec and Ontario, 1991–2016, quinquennial data (Statistics Canada, 2019a and our calculations)

Moreover, deactivation is not only quantitative. Qualitative deactivation would imply the marginalization of farmers in the society and in rural areas. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of

studies that formally addressed this situation in Canada (M. F. Bellemare, personal communication, April 1, 2020) or anywhere else in the world (Rivard & Merkley, 2021). Coleman (1999) in an unfinished paper mentioned how Canadian farmers appear less protected against the losses of political influence in Canada as compared to other countries. This would be caused, for instance, by a lack of a farmers' party and a split of farmers between different political parties as well as weak federal institutions involving farmers. In a narrower and contested research paper on the political influence of supply management farmers, Hall Findlay (2012) mentions that these farmers now do not represent a group numerous enough across Canada to justify maintaining this policy based on the number of votes they can bring, so whether other factors are at play to justify state protection of agriculture, or politicians are making erroneous assessment of their potential support. More recently, Rivard and Merkley (2021) found themselves unable to fully explain the support for supply management policies in Canada, suggesting that niche public policies help farmers to avoid public attention and so maintain their support. Otherwise, their findings show that the framing of the policy is likely to be the most significant factor of influence for the public to support or refute a farming policy. Hence, by maintaining strong and efficient interest groups, farmers could reduce their qualitative deactivation if their communication frames the issues adequately.

Industrialization

The process of industrialization can be observed by the creation of networks of enterprises owned by the same actors. To the best of our knowledge, there exists no public

indicator that would directly show such network development.⁵⁵ Still, personal knowledge and anecdotal evidence highlight some of these networks in Ontario and Québec. Many of these farmers can be observed in hog production (e.g., Isoporc), poultry (e.g., Groupe Nutreco, Burnbrae farms), and vegetable production (e.g., Highland Mushrooms, VegPro and Onipro, Savoura-Sagami). Transactions of some of these big enterprises even had to be analyzed by financial market authorities in order to make sure that it would not create an actor able to control the market (e.g., Savoura's acquisition by Sagami, Olymel acquisition of F. Ménard). Recently, a Québec farmer involved in all productions steps of several commodities made the news as he owned an empire producing for over CA\$700 million in agriculture (Kienlen & Cheater, 2023).

Also, some of these actors, as well as others, are practicing vertical integration in agriculture. Through this mechanism, they link their industrial activities of supplying farming inputs or processing food with farming activities. Royer and Vézina (2012) documented the presence of such practices in Québec, stating that it was present though hard to establish to what extent it was a growing concern.

Another aspect of industrialization is the increasing recourse to external inputs instead of producing these inputs on the farm. This then results in a lower margin of profit since the farm is responsible for less value-added. Figure 15 shows the decline of the income of farmers coming from the market declined over the period, at least until 2010 when market conditions led to increased prices.⁵⁶ During the same period, the total debt of farms tripled. This highlights a

⁵⁵ In early 2023, Québec government announced a future change in its Registry of enterprise, letting us believe that such an analysis might be possible in the future.

⁵⁶ Since these data only include income from the market and not governmental payments, it cannot be considered as the profit margin of farms.

stronger involvement of lenders in agriculture which then obtain part of the ownership of the farm they invested into (see Figure 16).

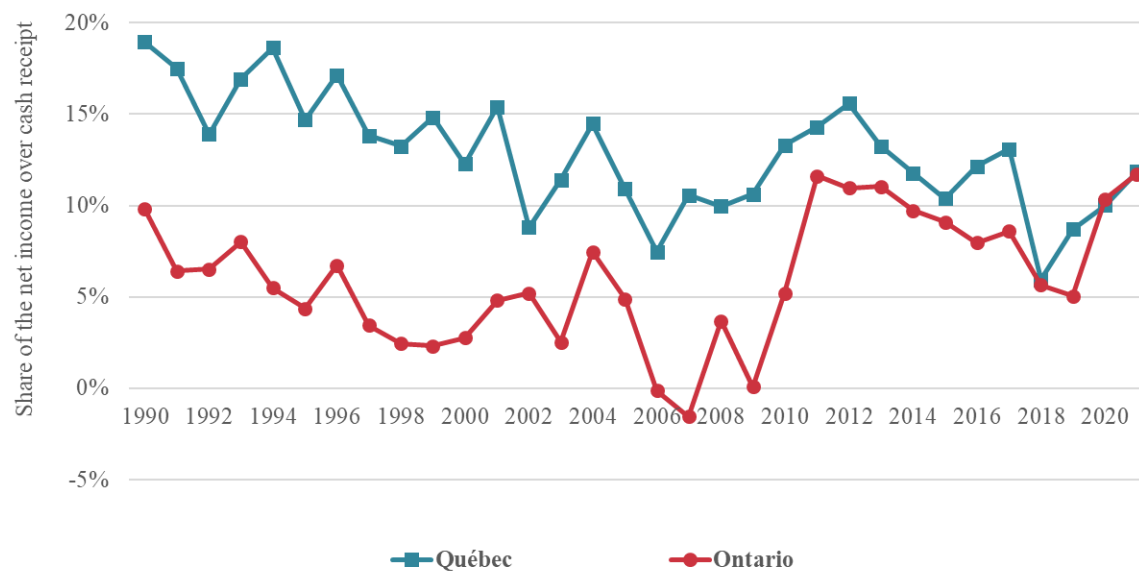


Figure 15. Share of the net income in cash receipt for Québec and Ontario, 1990–2021, annual data (Statistics Canada, 2022e and our calculations)

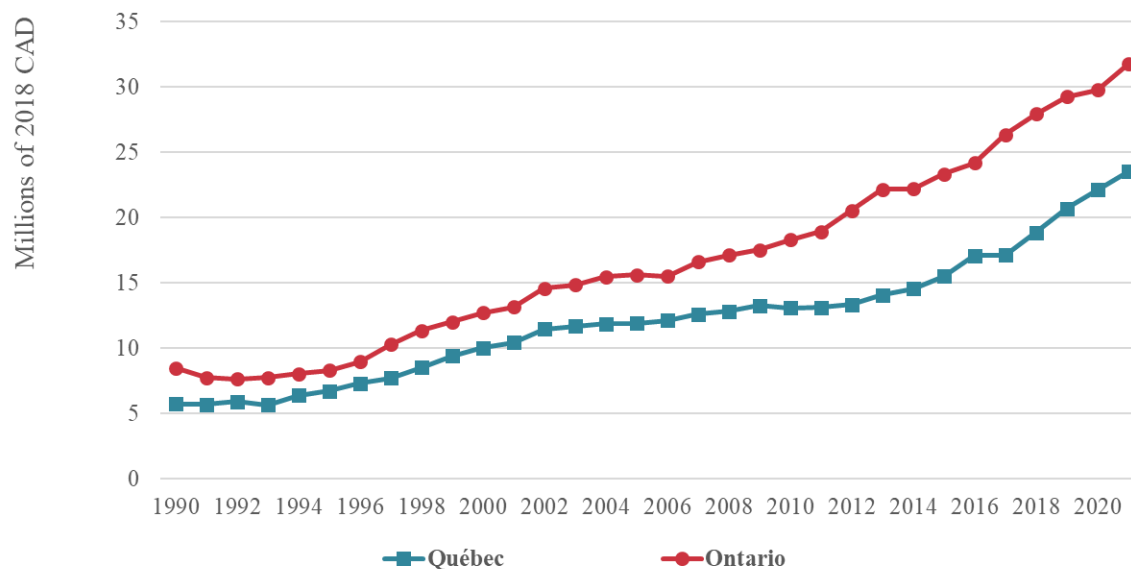
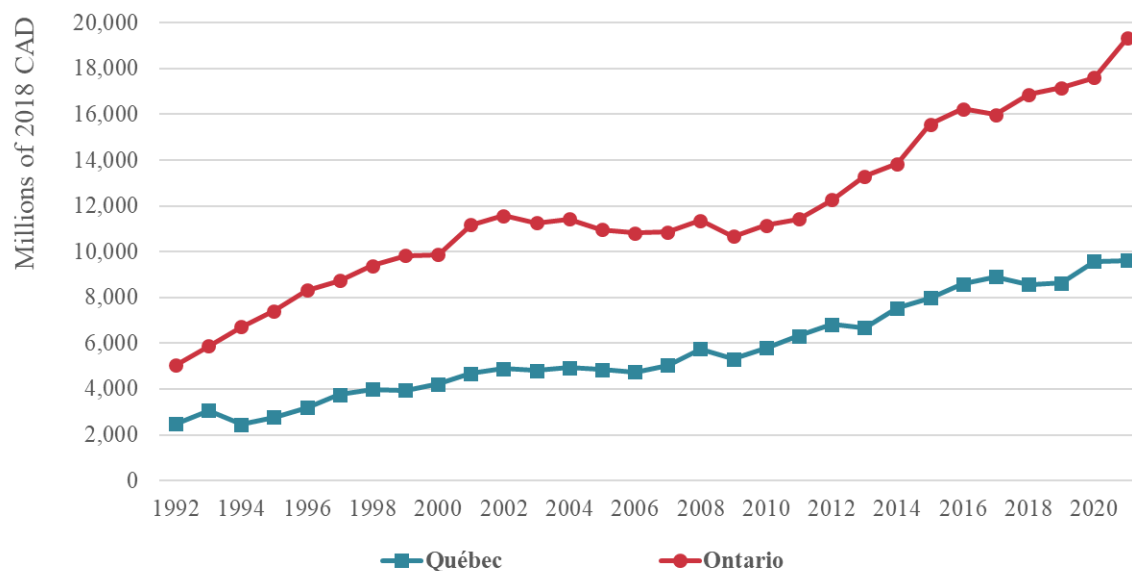


Figure 16. Total debt of farmers in 2018 CA\$, Québec and Ontario, 1990–2021, annual data (Statistics Canada, 2022a; 2022d and our calculations)

Part of the debt and the decreasing share of value-added generated by farmers is the result of technology changes. As Devlin (2004) mentioned, the last decade of the twentieth century saw

many new technologies appearing such as GMOs, food safety requirements and the normalization of the use of computers. With the multiplication of precision agricultural practices, integrated pest management techniques, drones and automated vehicles, technologies still seem to be an important aspect of farming. Moreover, some of these technologies that rely on the use of big data further increased the dependence of farmers to the suppliers of these technologies since improvements depend on the data owned by these companies.



¹ NAICS codes: 11 (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting), 311 (Food Manufacturing) and 312 (Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing)

² These are data from the point of departure from Canada. As such, commodities produced in Manitoba and shipped from Montréal would be classified under Québec in this graph.

Unfortunately, these are the best existing approximation.

Figure 17. Total agricultural exports^{1,2} in 2018 CA\$, Québec and Ontario, 1992–2018, annual data (Government of Canada, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2020a and our calculations)

Finally, another sign of industrialization is the greater reliance of the agricultural industry of both provinces to international markets. As presented in Figure 17, the value of exports increased between 1992 and 2021 by 3.8 times for Ontario and 3.9 for Québec, a sign that their agriculture is getting increasingly distributed over international market channels.

Repeasantization

As for the deactivation, repeasantization can be both quantitative and qualitative (Francoeur, 2018). It means that new farmers can start their own farms or existing farmers are adjusting their practices and vision in line with the peasant ideal-type. The size and the choices of production could also be criteria to differentiate each type of agriculture (Boulianne, 2011), though van der Ploeg (2008) mentions how these criteria are actually the result of the patterns at play.

The census data as well as other specific surveys do not allow putting actual numbers on new farms beginning in Canada, nor in the provinces to assess for a quantitative repeasantization. We can, however, mention, from a study realized with farmers under 40 years old in Québec, that beginning farmers that recently started agriculture are more prone (43%) to do so by starting a new business as compared to beginning farmers who started more than 10 years ago (26%). As such, we can presuppose that it is getting more frequent for beginning farmers to add farms to the existing total (MAPAQ, 2016).

Another element showing that some peasants aspects are taking ground in Ontario and Québec is the growing recourse to direct marketing. In Ontario, amongst the farms that were active in 2015, those that had at least one owner under 40 years old were 4.5 times more prone to rely on direct marketing (*Ibid.*). It then also suggests that new farmers tend to adopt some repeasantization ideas. This pattern might also be true for agriculture in general, though historic data are scarce. For instance, 2016's Canadian census added for the first time a question regarding the use of direct marketing by farmers. It then shows that 15.1% of Ontario's farms (Statistics Canada, 2017b) and 18.9% of Québec's farm (Statistics Canada, 2017c) are relying on direct sales for at least part of their income. This can partly be done in the 175 farmers market in

Ontario present in 2015 (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2020a) and the more than 120 in Québec in 2019 (AMPQ & UPA, 2019).

The increased interest in organic farming might also be considered as an indicator for qualitative repeasantization. Between 2011 and 2016, Ontario saw an additional 58 farms being certified as organic producers, reaching 1.7% of the total number of farms in the province (Statistics Canada, 2017b). In Québec, the organic sector is much more present, fostered by the large number of certified organic maple syrup producers.⁵⁷ Between 2011 and 2016, the share of Québec's farms that were certified organic jumped from 3.5% to 4.4% (Statistics Canada, 2017c).⁵⁸ Of course, relying on direct marketing or being certified organic does not mean a farm is a peasant; it only shows that some elements associated with a peasant vision are becoming more popular and we could then expect to observe them in the discourses surrounding agriculture. It should also be kept in mind that visions of agriculture can be combined and we find large companies involved in organic production (e.g., Burnbrae farms, duBreton, Enviro Mushrooms) or direct marketing (e.g., Lufa farms).

Finally, off-farm income is still present, though on a declining slope. On average, 46.3% of Ontario farmers had an off-farm job in 2015, a loss of 1.5 points of percentages in 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2017b).⁵⁹ In Québec, the trend is similar though only 36.3% of farmers had an off-farm job in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2017c). As such, it does not seem that external sources of income are increasing but they are still relatively frequent.

⁵⁷ 40% of certified organic farms were maple syrup producers in 2018 (CARTV, 2018).

⁵⁸ As a reference, the national average in 2016 was 2.2% (Statistics Canada, 2017c).

⁵⁹ The share of profit redistributed to owners of a farm registered as a corporation is considered as off-farm income by Statistics Canada. As such, this is potentially an over-representation of the actual part of the income coming from non-farm activities.

Conclusion

Thus, when compared, Ontario and Québec agriculture generally appear close one to another. First, Ontario has a more numerous farm sector due to more favorable land for agriculture and a bigger population. However, when brought back to indicators that take in consideration the economic size of both provinces, Québec's farming sector seems to be more important for the province that it can be in Ontario.

Also, the distribution of commodities produced in both provinces is highly similar with more field crops and greenhouses in Ontario as opposed to a stronger maple syrup sector in Québec. Thus, sectoral policies might be different to answer these sectors' specific needs but since dairy, cattle, field crops and hogs' productions remain major industries for both provinces, differences remain small.

Finally, when average data are considered, farms in Québec appear to be bigger. However, it does not necessarily mean that Ontario's farms are systematically smaller than in Québec since Ontario also displays to a certain extent both extremes of big farms and smaller ones. Moreover, using available — but incomplete — data, we showed that van der Ploeg's evolutionary paths for agriculture appear to be present in both provinces to a certain extent. We could then expect to find some elements of discourses that would reflect these tendencies.

Chapter 5 – Research Model and the Methods of Data Gathering

In order to answer our research questions, we adopted a research design that relies on qualitative methods with the purpose of establishing causality links between our variables. For some authors (see for instance McDavid et al. (2013) and White (2010)), causality and qualitative approaches cannot be reconciled, while others (e.g., Maxwell (2012)) instead advocate that qualitative methods might be the only way to truly understand the causes of a phenomenon. The argument for the latter being about the capacity of qualitative research to assess different perspectives and recreate the rationale behind the actions taken.

To facilitate the reconciliation with qualitative research and causality, we followed King et al.'s (1994) recommendations on research designs to achieve causal inferences. They argue that there exist two types of inferences: descriptive and causal. In the first case, descriptive inference is useful to learn about unobserved facts and to increase the capacity of circumscribing a phenomenon. In the second case, causal inferences are the process of using descriptive elements in a specific way so causality links can emerge (*Ibid.*).⁶⁰ For King et al. (*Ibid.*), causality can only be achieved if descriptive elements are organized following scientific inference rules as usually done in quantitative research. Moreover, the research process must be fully transparent, and authors must recognize that uncertainty is inherent to any causality statement.

In line with their recommendations, we present in this chapter the research design we used for this dissertation, including the different steps of data generation and analysis. We made sure to describe with sufficient detail every step of the process so others can replicate our design. In our research, we mobilize both types of inferences. The descriptive inference is used to

⁶⁰ Causality is represented by the systematic effect of random variables (King et al., 1994).

transform our data in the values of our different variables. The causal inference is then represented under an equation to avoid any misunderstanding of the types of links we are identifying (*Ibid.*). Such a representation does not imply any reliance on specific quantitative elements, but is simply a clarification tool.

More precisely, in this chapter, we first develop our hypotheses based on the public policy theories and visions of agriculture we presented earlier. These hypotheses are organized in two sets, following our two research questions. Second, we present our research model. This model determines the data needed to answer our research questions and observe the phenomenon inquired (i.e., the factors influencing policy change and policy stability). In particular, it identifies the dependent and independent variables. Third, we present in detail the processes used to identify the policies studied, including the definitions and limits of the type of policies considered. Fourth, we develop on the data generation and data treatment procedures for our variables. This includes the type and range of documents considered in the document analysis as well as the coding mechanisms that were used. Finally, we regroup all the methodological information leading to results obtained through these methods.

Hypotheses

The Role of Institutional Arrangements

As presented in the first chapter, our first research question reads as: How are the different institutional arrangements of agricultural policies in Québec and Ontario affecting the evolution of risk management policies? To answer this question, we propose a set of two hypotheses that address both ideal types of the institutional arrangements' continuum. Our first hypothesis (H1) stipulates that when institutional arrangement is leaning toward pluralism, groups must make sure to adequately represent their members and distinguish themselves from

other groups to avoid losing members (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989; Capdevielle, 2001). In practice, it means that they serve their members and do not try to direct them in a specific direction, neither filter much of their demands to the state (Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Therborn, 1992). Following this reasoning, we expect that policy formulation in pluralist institutional arrangement is subject to a wider variety of influences as it receives different demands and enacts solutions accordingly (Baumgartner et al., 2009a).

- H1: As the institutional arrangement leans toward pluralism, the state will more likely side with policy options that yield the greatest reelection potential (Arnold, 1990).

If H1 were to be true, we should then observe in institutional arrangements leaning toward pluralism: diverging demands received by the state (Schmitter, 1974), policy networks that have more actors included (*Ibid.*; Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989), while policy changes are following the more populous or the most involved group (Arnold, 1990).

Our second hypothesis (H2) instead stipulates that meso-corporatist institutional arrangements shall offer a monopolistic status to the corporatist group, so they become an active intermediary that filter farmers' demands but also coerce its members to act for the benefit of all (Benoit, 2010; Bull, 1992; Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989). In particular, the group must protect its specific relationship with the state to maintain its corporatist advantages (Cawson, 1986; Hassenteufel, 1990; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Molina & Rhodes, 2002; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Williamson, 1989). As such, they may restrict the demands from their members to avoid a clash with the state (Jobert & Mueller, 1987; Williamson, 1989). Hence, policy changes should require a consensus between the group and the state. Then, if the majority of farmers or the state carry a specific vision of agriculture, they should quiet down demands aiming toward other visions. On the other hand, if these other visions gain the support of the

corporatist group, they should be fostered by the whole organization's resources which increases the chances of having beneficial policies implemented.

- H2: As the institutional arrangement leans toward corporatism, the state will more likely negotiate policy options with the corporatist group (Cawson, 1986).

If H2 were to be true, we should then observe in institutional arrangements leaning toward corporatism: a recognition of a single group representing the beneficiaries of the policies (Schmitter, 1974), policy networks that have a very limited number of actors involved (Benoit, 2010; Pohjola, 1992), a specific place granted to the corporatist group in the decision-making process such as on an agency's board that creates a convergence in the demands received by the state (Cawson, 1986; Hassenteufel, 1990; Jobert & Muller, 1987; Molina & Rhodes, 2002; Streeck & Kenworthy, 2005; Williamson, 1989), and a policy agenda led by policymakers rather than lobby groups (Cawson, 1986; Williamson, 1989).

The Capacities of the Visions of Agriculture to Obtain Policies

Our second research question reads as: Following van der Ploeg's typology of agriculture, how did each vision of agriculture manage to obtain risk management policies in line with associated demands? Since we rely on van der Ploeg's (2008) typology of farming style to organize the assessment of the discourses expressed, we developed three hypotheses (H3 to H5) to answer our second research question.

For our third hypothesis (H3), we follow Francoeur's (2018) assessment of an increasing recognition by the state of the multiple functions of agriculture, as it produces commodities and non-commodity outputs such as landscape preservation, socioeconomic vitality of rural regions, or biodiversity preservation (i.e., multifunctionality of agriculture) (OECD, 2008). This growing

recognition is the result of an acknowledgment by the population of the other benefits potentially provided by agriculture, even if multifunctionality might not be the dominant paradigm present in the regions studied (Skogstad, 2008b). Since Peasants are the farming style displaying the highest level of multifunctionality (van der Ploeg, 2008), they should be supported by the general positive presentation by the media of multifunctionality benefits as well as by important ambassadors of peasant-like agriculture that are receiving positive media coverage in mainstream media.⁶¹ As such, our third hypothesis stipulates that proponents of policies driven by a Peasant vision of agriculture mostly rely on their positive social construction to obtain policy change since they lack strong actors to represent them in the policy discussion.

- H3: Policy inspired by the Peasant vision of agriculture would be more likely to reflect farmers as a construction that is ‘dependent’ (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997).

If H3 were to be true, we should then observe when programs change following Peasant vision of agriculture: small budgets for new programs (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), limited marginal changes in existing programs (*Ibid.*), more actors being involved in the policy network (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009), a positive depiction of agriculture (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), and an attempt of interest groups to redefine themselves based on ideas close to the Peasant vision of agriculture (e.g., multifunctionality) (Ingram & Schneider, 2005).

For the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, the logic is different since this vision aligns with the dominant paradigm coming from the World War II (Francoeur, 2018). Still, changes in

⁶¹ The case of Jean-Martin Fortier is probably the most remarkable example in this sense. Supported by one of the richest men in Canada, Mr. Fortier developed with its ‘Ferme des Quatre-Temps’ a small-scale mixed farm that he uses as a demonstrating platform to share the skills with future farmers. His media exposure is quite strong with a TV series realized on his project and a bestseller book translated in seven languages and distributed worldwide.

paradigms (Gaboury-Bonhomme, 2018) may open the door for other visions of agriculture. For instance, it can be represented by van der Ploeg's (2008) processes of industrialization, repeasantization and deactivation that are all focused on the changes faced by Entrepreneurial agriculture. In terms of policies, it can place Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture in a defensive position to protect the existing state intervention. Our fourth hypothesis (H4) then stipulates that those proponents of the Entrepreneurial visions of agriculture are attempting to prevent change. Following Baumgartner and Jones (2009), this would mean that they are trying to increase the friction against policy change by restricting the polity access to new actors and capturing the media and population's attention. They would do so by presenting agriculture as being a positive contributor to the society, and avoiding any associations with negative aspects of agriculture.

- H4: Policy inspired by the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture would be more likely to reflect farmers as a construction that is 'advantaged' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997).

If H4 were to be true, we should then observe when programs are stable or changing following Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture: large budgets and little participation restrictions (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), frictions against changes (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009), attempts to negate the inclusion of new actors (*Ibid.*), a positive depiction of agriculture (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), and a focus of media attention on farmers' problems that need an external cause from the state as a solution (*Ibid.*).

As for Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture, it actually consists of seeing agriculture as big companies with, often, international networks. By following Schneider and Ingram's (1993) assessment of social construction, farmers as presented through the Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture would tend to fall in categories of the actors with strong political power but negative social construction (i.e., contenders). In this idea which can be supported by environmental

critiques of the impacts of big corporate farms, their political force would allow them to avoid the strong regulations from the state. According to Schneider and Ingram (1997), this places proponents of such a vision of agriculture in a position where they continually try to escape media attention that would point to any of their activities in a negative perspective. Instead, they should use their backchannel influence to include exemptions and specifications in regulations to maintain farmers' specific accesses to beneficial programs (*Ibid.*). Also, van der Ploeg (2008) explains how Agri-food firms are able to use their network to shape the construction of food production, including all the processes involved. Hence, even without being actively involved in policymaking, such companies manage to condition the discussions about agriculture. Our last hypothesis (H5) then stipulates that to gain beneficial policy changes, proponents of this vision of agriculture will influence the existing members of the polity while avoiding the population's interest. By doing so, they expect to receive positive responses to their demands through obscure policy change.

- H5: Policy inspired by the Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture would be more likely to reflect farmers as a construction that is 'contender' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997).

If H5 were to be true, we should then observe when programs are changing following Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture: program participation's criteria that supposedly but ineffectively restrict Agri-food firms' eligibility (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), benefits provided to Agri-food firms through complex and opaque mechanisms (*Ibid.*), attempts to negate the inclusion of new actors (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009), a negative depiction of agriculture (Schneider & Ingram, 1997), and the avoidance of media attention (Downs, 1972).

The Research Model and the Variables Considered

In order to represent all of our interactions and potential influences over policy change for the programs studied, we built a panel data research model (see Figure 18). Each variable is also presented in more detail in the following subsections. We decided to consider risk management programs administered by Québec or Ontario as our unit of analysis, and the status of each program every year of its existence as the actual data point of our panel data research model. We had to rely on programs instead of policies since both provinces have built their intervention in agriculture through the accumulation of piecemeal programs rather than through large, encompassing, policies that could act as guidelines for state intervention.

Hence, our research model aims to capture how the evolution of the representation of agriculture through farming styles influenced changes in policies (farming styles in Figure 18). Based on the theories presented in Chapter 3, mechanisms by which the representation of agriculture can influence policy evolution can come from the mobilization of new actors, a crisis that increases awareness of the general population or a change in the social construction. For the mobilization of new actors, we considered the actions of a successful policy entrepreneur (policy entrepreneur in Figure 18), a change in the policy network (policy network in Figure 18), or a change in the policy venue (policy venue in Figure 18). For the presence of a crisis, we considered the media attention given to the issue targeted as a proxy for the general population's involvement on the issue (social climate in Figure 18). As for the social construction, we considered the language used by interest groups and elected officials, and the policy design as representative of the social construction of agriculture (social construction in Figure 18). We did not consider the actual level of support provided to agriculture, nor the availability of funds for the government or the economic situation of the state as a proper variable. Instead, we

considered the social construction of agriculture as indirectly measuring these effects (i.e., increased budgets for agriculture program while cuts are made in other programs should reflect a positive social construction).

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Policy evolution}_{P,t} = & \alpha + \beta_1 * \text{social construction}_{r,t} + \beta_2 * \text{institutional arrangement}_{P,t} \\
& + \beta_3 * \text{farming style}_{P,t} + \beta_4 * \text{policy entrepreneur}_{P,t} + \beta_5 * \text{policy} \\
& \text{network}_{P,t} + \beta_6 * \text{policy venue}_{P,t} + \beta_7 * \text{social climate}_{r,t} \\
& + \beta_8 * \text{structure of the government}_{r,t} + \beta_9 * \text{political orientation} \\
& \text{of the dominating party}_{r,t} + \beta_{10} * \text{seniority level of the minister} \\
& \text{in charge}_{r,t} + \beta_{11} * \text{influence of the federal government}_{P,t}
\end{aligned}$$

With P: program and t: time (year) and r: region

As a simplification, we omitted the dimension P when using the dimension r, since a variation between regions involves a variation between programs.

Figure 18. Research model

Moreover, we also consider that the institutions in place can mitigate — or foster — the paths for change. As such, we included the organization of the interactions between the state and interest groups on a scale from pluralism to corporatism (institutional arrangement in Figure 18). This then allows us to assess the process of pressure for change in the existing mechanisms of decision-making and then further understand how friction can mount.

Finally, we added some control variables that can also play a certain role in the policymaking process. These relate to the organization of the government in place and its minister of agriculture (structure of the government, political orientation of the dominating party, seniority level of the minister in charge, influence of the federal government in Figure 18).

In order to simplify our model, we omitted to consider, in our equation, the potential interactions between our variables. However, these interactions are taken into consideration in

our analysis, facilitated with the qualitative approach that can probe the relationship between variables. Figure 19 presents these interactions, while relying on Schneider and Ingram (1997) feed forward effect's representation (see also Figure 2).

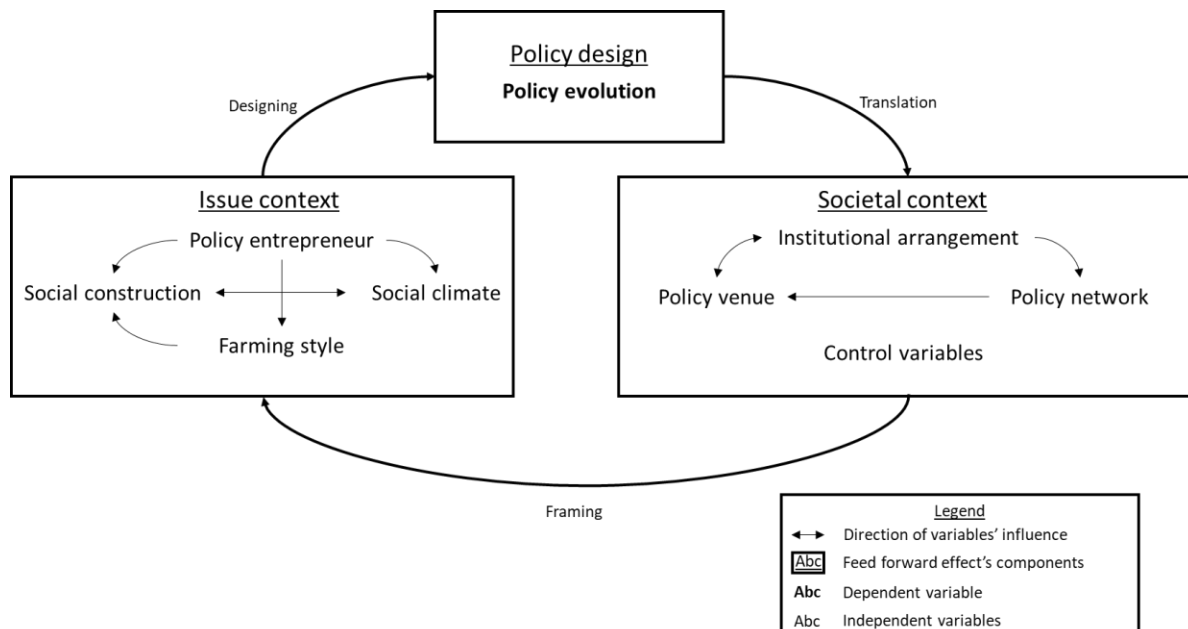


Figure 19. Variable interactions in the research model (adapted from Schneider & Ingram, 1997)

Under the societal context, we can find three of our explanatory variables and all the control variables. First, the policy network can influence the choice of a policy venue since the former defines the actors that are involved in an issue, and thus who is in charge of the issue. Second, the policy venue interacts with the institutional arrangement. For instance, if a policy is managed directly by a ministry, decisions are likely to be more political than if the program was managed by an agency. In the latter case, it is easier to provide formal power to interest groups since the structures are more independent from the legislative power. However, the relationship can also be the opposite. In a case where new programs are developed or existing programs are redefined, the presence of a specific institutional arrangement can direct the policy venue's

choice. Third and last, the institutional arrangement shapes the policy network by defining the rules of participation and resources' acquisitions of interest groups.

Under the issue context, we can find the other four explanatory variables and their interactions. First, the social climate can help to bolster or hinder an existing social construction, following the alignment between the problem raised by the social climate and the actual perception of the target population. Oppositely, a group trying to change its social construction could create a social movement that results in a crisis. Second, the presence of a policy entrepreneur can influence the other three variables. By their actions, policy entrepreneurs aim to push for a policy change, following a new perspective. In this sense, it can generate attention from the public to affect the social climate, it can help to depict some groups in a different social construction than previously, and it can put at the forefront the demands from a specific vision of agriculture. As for the last interaction, it is the result of each vision of agriculture that can carry a different social construction and thus receive different policy options.

Finally, we omitted from our research model the variables related to the form of the policy implemented (e.g., policy type, sectoral intervention, policy area) since we restrained the programs we cover to risk management policies that all intervene with similar objectives of improving and stabilizing farmers' income. Thus, as it can be seen for each program, they all consider a situation where the government offers subsidies to farmers. Similarly, we omitted variables related to the place agriculture has in the society (e.g., importance of agriculture as an industry, main productions). By doing so, we consider that agriculture between our two provinces and over time are interchangeable, as they do not have characteristics that would explain policy evolution. This is a difficult choice that was made to avoid endogeneity. For instance, the expression of a farming style can be related to the evolution of agriculture. As such,

over time, if some farming style receives more attention, it can be the result — at least in part — of a tendency toward this farming style. Similarly, by coding for the differences between the two provinces, we would likely replicate the institutional arrangement variable and thus introduce endogeneity. Hence, since the focus of this dissertation was about institutional arrangement, we maintained this variable instead. We also did not formally differentiate between the groups or individuals expressing their preference in the policy venue. We thus consider all actors to carry the same political power. However, the qualitative aspect of our variable allows us to indirectly consider the influence of the groups since a corporatist group should have more influence than pluralist interest groups. We also attempted to comment on the design of program changes we observed to link them with the expression of political influence.

So, for each of our programs, we have one data point for every year of the period we cover, allowing us to assess longitudinal information. By organizing our variables on a yearly basis, we aim at integrating the feed-forward effect from $t-1$ program changes. In the variables considered, some of them vary with each program (e.g., the institutional arrangement in which the policy exists, the policy entrepreneur(s) involved), while others are considered varying only between the different regions but are constant between the policies of a same region (e.g., the social construction of the target(s) of the policy, the structure of the government involved with the policy). These variables are, respectively, identified by the dimension P and r in Figure 18. Moreover, our variables can be considered as varying over time and so have a dimension t .

Dependent Variable

Policy Evolution

Policy evolution is our only dependent variable. It represents the state of a program in comparison to the previous year. Hence, we have one data point for each of the nine programs considered for every year they existed (see the section Identification of the Programs below for more details on each program). It also means that we do have data for some programs that go back until the 1960s (e.g., crop insurance), while other programs only lasted for a few years (e.g., Ontario Whole Farm Relief Program). For programs that were already present before 1990, we did not qualify every year prior to 1990 but rather focused on the elements that could be helpful to explain changes between 1990 and 2020. For instance, rationales behind the programs and supports from interest groups were targeted. Since we are interested in the evolution of the policy and factors that led to this evolution, we considered policy outputs rather than policy outcomes (i.e., what was actually changed in the actions of the state and not the consequences of the new actions from the state).

We acknowledge that not every change is equivalent and that some changes can be harder to obtain and may result of a fiercer struggle. We then relied on Hall's (1993) assessment of policy change to qualify the policy evolution of each program considered. For him, states adjust their policy through a social learning process which is "a deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information" (Hall, 1993, p.278). These adjustments can take three forms: change in the settings of policy instruments, change in policy instruments, and change in policy goals. To qualify each change, we relied on our judgment and the guidelines provided in the next paragraphs. Next chapter also reviews, case by case, the changes that were observed and, as such, their qualification.

The least important change that can be implemented by states is changing the settings of policy instruments. These are generally routinely proposed by bureaucrats that use their expert's knowledge to assess the needs of the policy (*Ibid.*). As such, they are more likely to be decided inside the internal structures of the ministry or the agency that administer the policy and programs, rather than funneling inside the parliamentary system. Some examples of such changes include a modification of the subsidies offered per beneficiary, a raise/decrease of the level of insurance coverage and an expansion/reduction of the budget dedicated to a policy.

The second form of change is when decision-makers decide to add a new program, remove an old one or simply modify the mechanisms behind the intervention of an existing program. For Hall (*Ibid.*), it is possible that the instruments that are used to address a policy issue change even if the rationale behind the state intervention remains the same. Often, these changes result from the demands of interest groups that are not satisfied with the way current instruments are working.

The third form of change described by Hall (*Ibid.*) echoes the punctuation suggested by Baumgartner and Jones (Baumgartner, 2013). It happens when the goals of the policies or the images that support its existence are replaced with a new vision. For Hall (1993), such changes happen when many unsuccessful attempts to adjust and change existing programs have failed to generate satisfying results. This multiplication of failures then places elected officials in a position where they need to change their approach in order to maintain their own image. Following the work of Skogstad (2008a; 2008b), the important changes that bring elected officials to modify the policy goals are represented by the changes of paradigms presented in the first chapter. Hence, they are rare and previous authors were unable to attach lasting policies evolution toward a new paradigm in Canada (*Ibid.*) and Québec (Gaboury-Bonhomme, 2018).

To these three forms of change, we added a fourth one that represents the stability of a policy. This use of the term ‘stability’ should not be confused with its usage by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) that includes policy changes but without a specific direction. Instead, we used stability to qualify programs that were not modified in a specific year. However, in the analysis of changes following the demands from farming style, the policy stability of Baumgartner and Jones is considered.

Explanatory Variables

Social Construction

The social construction variable represents the valence of the target population of the policy. According to the social construction of target population theory, policies are determined by the social construction attributed to the individuals that are targeted by the policy. If the social construction is positive, they should receive beneficial policies, while they should receive punishments or limitations if the social construction is negative.

So, by itself, the social construction should not justify a change of policy unless the existing policies are not aligned with the social construction of the target population. We then measure a change in the social construction variable that should reflect the actual social construction and political power of the target population (1993; 1997).

Unfortunately, social construction cannot be measured easily. When they designed their theory, Schneider and Ingram (*Ibid.*) simply proposed social construction based on their appreciation of the general society, which was criticized by Lieberman (1995) who argues that it was impossible to test the theory without a formal process of social construction’s assessment. The solution we used is to consider discourses held in parliaments and in official documents qualifying farmers and their considerations either through a positive or a negative perspective.

Table 4 presents the elements we looked for in the discourses to assess the social construction of the target population. We considered the repetition of the observation of such elements as a basis to qualify the positive or negative social construction with the terms ‘very’ or ‘weakly’.

Table 4. *Elements used to codify the social construction of the target population*

Positive	Negative
Additional budget Supportive policies Low barriers of access Agencies reaching out to potential beneficiaries Burdens are justified as a necessity Comparison with the competitors External sources of problems Contribution to the economy, positive externalities	Lower budgets Burdens received Opaque and confusing mechanisms Discretionary power to agencies Vocal on some examples of actors adopting bad practices Hindering the economy, negative externalities

For instance, praising agriculture as a source of economic wealth for regions or as contributing to feeding the world is a positive representation of agriculture. In particular, we considered that discussions toward support for multifunctionality of agriculture have a positive social construction (echoed by Mundler & Ruiz, 2015). Oppositely, discourses can also picture agriculture as presenting an environmental or health hazard if food is contaminated or pollution is rejected in the environment.

Institutional Arrangement

The second explanatory variable refers to the organization of interest groups and their relationship with the state. In that, it represents the pluralism-corporatism continuum that we highlighted in Chapter 3. As such, this variable supposes that the way interest groups are organized can influence their capacity to obtain a policy change. For instance, in comparison to

pluralism, corporatism might restrict the access to new ideas and new actors, but it can also foster a change by showing a united front to the state.

Following the recommendations of Kanol (2015b) and the experience of Montpetit and Coleman (1999) on Ontario and Québec's agri-environmental policies, we consider that institutional arrangement can vary between policies as well as over the time. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that pluralism and corporatism are only ideal-types, so we coded this variable as degrees of corporatism or pluralism displayed. Table 5 presents the elements we looked for in the discourses to assess the institutional arrangement. We considered the repetition of the observation of such elements as a basis to qualify the corporatism or pluralism institutional arrangements with the terms 'strong' or 'weak'.

Table 5. *Elements used to codify the institutional arrangement*

Pluralism	Corporatism
Multiple independent interest groups	Small number of interest groups, or if multiple interest groups are present, they are chapters from the same organization
Interest groups not officially recognized	Specific status granted to a certain group
No specific power granted to interest groups	Coercion used by the corporatist group
Diversity in the elements or preferences from interest groups	Deference of decision-making to a body where the corporatist group is involved
	Large number of meetings between the state and corporatist group's representatives

Farming Style

The farming style variable represents the pressures coming from producers to obtain programs that are aligned with their demands. It allows us to consider for the heterogeneity of agriculture in its demands. As presented in Chapter 2, following van der Ploeg's (2008) typology of agriculture, we defined three ideal-types of farmers: Peasants, Entrepreneurs and Agri-food firms. To represent the ideal-type characteristics (Vanclay et al., 1996; 2006), we considered three ordinal variables corresponding to each farming style (i.e., Peasant, Entrepreneur, Agri-

food firms). It is then possible, though unlikely, that one data point scores high in each farming style. We consider it unlikely due to the characteristics of each farming style that tend to be opposed, at least between two of the three styles (e.g., source of labor, level of multifunctionality).

As for the previous variables, we rely on our judgment and theoretical information to qualify this variable. Table 6 presents the elements we looked for in the discourses to assess the presence of each vision of agriculture. We considered the repetition of the observation of such elements as a basis to qualify a domination of a specific vision for every year. If this method does not allow us to have data for every year we considered, it still generates numerous data points for each program.

We thus defined that farming styles vary between programs and across time since we consider that the discourses are influenced by the institutional environment and evolve across time. Moreover, as argued by van der Ploeg (2008) and Boulianne (2011), agriculture is facing three diverging evolutionary paths since the 1990s that we defined in Chapter 2 as the industrialization of agriculture, a repeasantization movement and the deactivation of agriculture. As a result, as we progress in time, we should observe more elements supporting Peasant and Agri-food firms' visions of agriculture and fewer that involve Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. Nonetheless, we expect that these tendencies are insufficient to generate important and lasting change, so even if cases involving Peasant and Agri-food firms' visions are more frequent, they should have a marginal effect over the period (*Ibid.*; Francoeur, 2018).

Table 6. *Elements used to codify the farming style variable*

Peasant	Entrepreneurial	Agri-food firms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms represented as small enterprises (e.g., part-time agriculture, farms with the lowest amounts of sales) • Beginning farmers • Increased autonomy of farmers (e.g., reduced use of input or loans) • Diversification of farms and agriculture, self-consumption • Multifunctionality of agriculture (e.g., environmental protection, ecological good and services, rurality) • Natural production processes, ecology • Value-added agriculture (higher prices paid by consumers) • Reliance on skill and knowledge of farmers • New marketing schemes • Counterculture and alter-globalization • Alternative networks of support and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family-size farms • Reduction of the number of farms (concentration) • Specialized agriculture • Homogeneity of agriculture • Focus on profit optimization • Investment in agriculture, market development, state support • Professionalization of agriculture, extension services • Use of science and technologies, loans, chemical inputs, hired labor • Vulnerability of agriculture caused by Agri-food firms • Recognition of agriculture's exceptionalism regarding other industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms represented as large enterprises (e.g., multinational, farms with the highest amounts of sales, numerous legal entities, several production sites) • Food production chain • Firms using market coordination mechanisms to share the risk (e.g., sharecropping, production contract, technology-focused products) • Vertical integration • Market liberalism and exports

We acknowledge that by relying on the farming styles as a proxy for the industry's demands to the state, we consider that the visions of agriculture are constructed around van der Ploeg's farming styles. Since we used the farming styles as a filter for the visions of agriculture, it can limit our capacity to capture, to its full extent, the differences between the messages sent to the state. However, from our review of the existing literature regarding typologies of agriculture and representation of agriculture, we consistently found research and conclusions pointing toward a representation of farmers based on their own characteristics and not from their

representation of the vision of agriculture by the general population (see for instance Bruneau, 2013; Chiffolleau, 2017; Chupin & Mayance, 2016; Clerc, 1990; Cordellier, 1990; Coulomb, 1990; Deléage & Sabin, 2012; Delorme, 1996; Hervieu, 1990; Hervieu & Purseigle, 2015; Hobeika, 2013; Lagrave, 1990; Lagrave & Hubscher, 1993; Muller, 2014; Repplinger, 2016; Samak, 2013).⁶² The incapacity to find a wider array of results might also be the result of our own bias that sees agriculture as a research focus, and not as a specific component of a research program.

Policy Entrepreneur

The policy entrepreneur variable represents the actor that proposed and carried a policy change. It is the first of three variables addressing the mobilization of new actors as a factor of change. As presented by Kingdon, skillful policy entrepreneurs are able to identify opportunities at the political level to propose a policy change (Zahariadis, 2014). They do so by assessing which policy venue would be the most receptive to the particular policy image they promote (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009). Their actions can then empower new political actors that were previously left aside of such decisions and thus create punctuation in the policy evolution.

We regrouped policy entrepreneurs in four categories: elected officials, bureaucrats, farmers' groups, and non-traditional interest groups. These non-traditional interest groups include actors such as environmental groups, consumer groups and public health actors. We relied on the level of activity toward a specific policy change and the proposition of new avenues for policies to qualify which actor should be considered as the policy entrepreneur. Of course, the only actors considered were the one in favor of such a policy change. We then presuppose

⁶² For a counterexample, though quite limited in its analysis, see Bourad (2016).

that a policy entrepreneur that promotes a policy change will be highly vocal on the matter and multiply the attempts to achieve its objective. Moreover, it should be identified by itself and other actors as the promoter of the policy change.

Policy entrepreneurs were coded for each policy, considering that different actors are active on different policies. We also considered a time dimension since many changes could have been implemented for a single policy over the time and all the changes might not always be the result of the actions from the same actors. Still, in periods of stability, policy entrepreneurs are harder to identify since there might be no public debate about the programs.

Policy Network

Policy network is the second variable addressing the mobilization of new actors as a factor of change. The punctuated equilibrium theory predicts that punctuations occur when the policy network is modified since the new actors are bringing a new conception of what the policy should look like.

We thus consider the policy network of each of our policy identified over our period to see if — and when — new actors were invited in the discussions regarding the policy. Even if it remains the same, Baumgartner and Jones (2009) mention that some changes could still be expected, but they should lack unity in the direction promoted (negative feedback).

Since the policy network might be influenced by the institutional arrangement, there exists a risk of collinearity with the institutional arrangement variable. However, as Betthäuser (2017) showed, even in a corporatist setting, non-corporatist groups can influence policymaking if they are consulted by decision-makers or meet with elected officials. Hence, we cannot assume

that policy networks are solely the result of an institutional arrangement that would restrict the number of actors. Instead, we need to allow for any type of actors to be involved.

Policy Venue

The policy venue variable is the last variable addressing the mobilization of new actors as a factor of change. As for the policy network, the punctuated equilibrium theory predicts that punctuation occurs when the policy venue is modified. When it happens, it means that a new institution bears the authority over the policy and the new institution is likely to bring new ideas.

We coded this variable according to the institution that oversees the changes of each individual program (i.e., the supply side of policies). This variable could take two values. First, programs could be managed directly by the personnel of the ministry, no matter which division was in charge. Second, both provinces have para-governmental institutions that are semi-independent from the ministries and have a separate board where farmers are involved. In Québec, it is the Financière Agricole du Québec as in Ontario it is called Agricorp.⁶³

Since a recurrent policy venue may institutionalize the relationships between the actors, it is quite possible that collinearity between institutional arrangements and policy venue appear. This is especially true if we consider policy venues as the institution deciding programs and the institutional arrangement as the arrangement between the policy venue and the actors requesting policies (i.e., interest groups). Still, similar institutional arrangements are present with more than a single policy venue so we might observe some variation anyhow.

⁶³ As opposed to programs that would simply be implemented by farmers' groups without the involvement of the state.

Social Climate

The social climate variable represents the level of attention from the general population toward an issue; to which extent a policy change might result from pressures coming from the general population. It then echoes the second evolutionary path mentioned by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) in the punctuated equilibrium theory as it follows Down's (1972) cycle of attention. Based on these ideas, policy change may result from a mobilization of the population as they observe a crisis that needs a rapid and specific solution.

We considered an absence of crisis as the norm in both regions. To define a crisis, we instead relied on the generalist media coverage as a proxy for the population's attention. When the programs we considered were highly criticized in the media, we inferred it as a crisis. To be classified as a crisis, the issue must have been discussed more than once a month per newspaper covered (i.e., if the number of newspaper articles in a year is greater than twelve times the number of newspapers covered, we considered it as a media crisis).⁶⁴ We also considered large protests and public relations campaigns as deteriorating the social climate, but to a lower extent.

Control Variables

Structure of the Government

The structure of the government variable refers to the strength of the government in place. Due to the British parliamentary system prevalent in Canada and its provinces, the leader of the political party or coalition that managed to elect the most candidates is tasked by the lieutenant-governor to form the government for the province. The government then usually

⁶⁴ Since the availability of media coverage varies across time, we have retained a measure of coverage per media.

remains in place until they decide to launch elections, they reach the end of their mandate, or they fail a vote of confidence in parliament.

Table 7. *List of governments in Québec and Ontario (Assemblée Nationale du Québec, 2020; Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2020)*

	Ontario		Québec	
Majority governments	1990–1995	Bob Rae (ONDP)	1985–1994	Robert Bourassa (QLP)
	1995–1999	Mike Harris (OPC)	1994	Daniel Johnson (QLP)
	1999–2002	Mike Harris (OPC)	1994–1996	Jacques Parizeau (PQ)
	2002–2003	Ernie Eves (OPC)	1996–1998	Lucien Bouchard (PQ)
	2003–2007	Dalton McGuinty (OLP)	1998–2001	Lucien Bouchard (PQ)
	2007–2011	Dalton McGuinty (OLP)	2001–2003	Bernard Landry (PQ)
	2014–2018	Kathleen Wynne (OLP)	2003–2007	Jean Charest (QLP)
	2018–present	Doug Ford (OPC)	2008–2012	Jean Charest (QLP)
Minority governments	2011–2013	Dalton McGuinty (OLP)	2014–2018	Philippe Couillard (QLP)
	2013–2014	Kathleen Wynne (OLP)	2018–present	François Legault (CAQ)
	2007–2008	Jean Charest (QLP)		
	2012–2014	Pauline Marois (PQ)		

OPC: Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

OLP: Ontario Liberal Party

ONDP: Ontario New Democratic Party

PQ: Parti Québécois

QLP: Québec Liberal Party

CAQ: Coalition Avenir Québec

When the governing party possesses a majority of seats in parliament, they tend to be able to make their political decisions without too much fear of being cast out of their position. However, in a case where no party is able to reach a majority of seats, the party with the most seats is asked to form the government. It will then be considered as a minority government where it has to work with the other parties to secure the votes on its propositions and avoid being defeated.⁶⁵ Hence, governments in a minority position might be less proactive in proposing

⁶⁵ As opposed to many European governments, Canadian and provincials' minority government do not traditionally work under a coalition government where they would name other parties' members of parliaments as ministers. Instead, they try to obtain piecemeal support for their measures.

policy changes. If, over the period of time we covered, majority governments were the norm for both provinces, minority governments were also present in both provinces (see Table 7).

The Political Orientation of the Dominating Party

As with the structure of the government, its composition can also affect its capacity and willingness to propose policy changes, since the different parties in place may have a different vision of the role of the state. For instance, parties advocating for a more radical or reactionary political attitude might favor more changes than parties with liberal or conservative political attitudes (O'Neil, 2015). As such, we considered the political orientation of the dominating party based on the Prime Minister. Table 7 also lists Prime Ministers and their affiliation in both provinces for the period covered in this dissertation.

The Seniority Level of the Minister in Charge

In addition to the preferences of the government in place, its interest regarding agriculture can also influence the potential for policy change. To observe the interest regarding agriculture, one indicator can be the seniority of the minister responsible for the ministries of Agriculture (Lewis, 2003). We can expect that if senior ministers hold the Ministry of Agriculture, it is because the government in place considers agriculture as important. In addition, senior ministers might have more leverage to negotiate inside the government for policy changes. Table 8 presents the list of agriculture ministers in Québec and Ontario over the period covered. We defined the seniority level based on other political appointments held by the ministers over the years. Ministers were considered as senior if they held, at any point in their career, the function of Prime Minister, Vice-premier, in-house Leader of a political party, President of the Legislative

Assembly, President of the National Assembly, or of Minister of the Council of Treasure, Finances, Health or Education. Otherwise, they were considered as a junior minister. This list is inspired by the work of Lewis (*Ibid.*) on the composition of the federal cabinet by the Canadian Prime Minister. We adapted the list to reflect the discrepancies between federal and provincial powers (i.e., replacing trade and justice ministers by Health and Education, which are the two biggest spending of provincial governments in Canada), as well as parliamentary roles outside of the Cabinet (i.e., including in-house Leader of a political party, President of the Legislative Assembly, and President of the National Assembly).

Table 8. *List of Agriculture Ministers in Québec and Ontario (Assemblée Nationale du Québec, 2020; Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2020)*

	Ontario		Québec	
Senior ministers	2005–2010	Leona Dombrowsky	1985–1990	Michel Pagé
	2013–2014	Kathleen Wynne	1998–2001	Rémy Trudel
			2005–2007	Yvon Vallières
			2012–2014	François Gendron
			2014–2017	Pierre Paradis
Junior ministers	1990–1995	Elmer Buchanan	1990–1994	Yvon Picotte
	1995–1999	Noble Villeneuve	1994–1996	Marcel Landry
	1999–2001	Ernie Hardeman	1996–1998	Guy Julien
	2001–2002	Brian Coburn	2001–2003	Maxime Arseneau
	2002–2003	Helen Johns	2003–2005	Françoise Gauthier
	2003–2005	Steve Peters	2007–2009	Laurent Lessard
	2010–2011	Carol Mitchell	2009–2010	Claude Béchard
	2011–2013	Ted McMeekin	2010–2011	Laurent Lessard
	2014–2018	Jeff Leal	2011–2012	Pierre Corbeil
	2018–present	Ernie Hardeman	2017–2018	Laurent Lessard
			2018–present	André Lamontagne

Note: In Québec, until 1994, Agriculture Ministers also had an Associate minister. However, since the associate ministers were not in charge of risk management programs and depend on the Minister for their budget, associate ministers were omitted from the analysis. Similarly, in Ontario, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs had been separated in two ministries, so we listed only the Minister in charge of Agriculture.

The Influence of the Federal Government

The way political powers are divided between the different levels of government can also influence the capacity of a government to change a policy. In particular, in the Canadian context of state intervention in agriculture, powers are shared between provinces and the federal government. As such, federal actions can influence or coerce provinces to adopt policies in line with the federal preferences (Shipan & Volden, 2012).

By targeting the interventions of two provinces from the same country, we expect to fully control for this variable and thus expect no variation across regions or policies. However, since the federal government adopts frameworks in collaboration with provinces and territories to define its intervention in agriculture, a change across time might be observed. In particular, it is possible that provinces adopt changes as a result of the federal-provincial frameworks. Such frameworks were adopted in 2002, 2007, 2013 and 2018.

Identification of the Programs

The programs were first identified through a review of the existing programs and their predecessors in both provinces, with the help of information available in the academic literature or on the website of the ministries and agencies involved in agriculture. Through this process, we retained nine risk management programs (five in Québec and four in Ontario). Then, to determine the status of each program (i.e., if there was a change or not, and the scope of the change), the dependent variable, we relied on annual reports of official agencies in charge of administering these programs (i.e., Financière Agricole du Québec and Agricorp), parliamentary discussions and other official documents obtained through Freedom of Information requests. These reviews were also an opportunity to make sure that we captured all programs that have

been present during the period covered. As presented in one Ontario program, we decided to retain only one example representing the 15 ad hoc programs observed in our research period. This choice was made to maintain a feasible research design and considering the limited information available on most of these ad hoc programs.

Each program was followed over a long period of time in order to determine which changes happened and what caused these changes. It then allowed us to obtain an in-depth understanding of the ‘life’ of each of the programs. By the same process, it also allowed us to determine the status of each program for every year it existed, including a status of stability.

To define which programs were considered for each category, we used the definitions presented in the next subsection. A single researcher matched programs with the definition which can create a measurement bias. However, the measurement bias is likely to be systematic since it was applied by the same researcher over the whole process. Moreover, since programs were selected based on an independent variable (the policy area), it reduces the potential selection bias (King et al., 1994). Then, as we focus on causal inference, the uncertainty coming from this process can be considered low.

Risk Management Programs

We considered that programs improving, balancing or compensating farm income are risk management programs. In addition, if programs were impacting prices received by farmers through direct state intervention, they were also considered as risk management programs. For these latter programs, the particularities of collective marketing administered by farmers’ groups were thereby excluded since they result from the action of commodity groups rather than actions from the state. Instead, the category we created aimed at targeting programs such as crop

insurances, price support, and other programs that guarantee an income from state intervention. These include programs that would be similar to U.S. Agriculture Risk Coverage, loan rates, crop insurances and Price Loss Coverage, Canadian AgriInvest and AgriStability, and European direct payments.

The nine programs covered in this dissertation are listed below and the next chapter includes a presentation of each in detail, their evolution, and how important variables were at play to foster these evolutions.

- Agri-Québec: Québec program doubling savings from farmers (2010-present)
- Agri-Québec Plus: Québec program protecting against low margins (2014-present)
- Crop Insurance: Québec program offering an insurance against weather impacts and pest invasions (1967-present)
- Farm Income Stabilization Account: Québec program doubling savings from farmers (2001–2003)
- Farm Income Stabilization Insurance: Québec program offering a price insurance (1975-present)
- Market Revenue Insurance: Ontario program offering a price insurance (1992–2005)
- Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program and Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program: Ontario programs protecting against low margins (1998–2000 and 1999–2001)
- Production Insurance: Ontario program offering an insurance against weather impacts and pest invasions (1966-present)

- Risk Management Program: Ontario program offering a price insurance (2007-present)

Methods to Collect Data

We relied on a document analysis using five different types of documents: verbatim transcripts of parliamentary discussions and documents deposited during parliamentary discussions, official program documents, printed media coverage, FADQ's board minutes, and governmental internal documents on programs.

Document analysis is a “systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” (Bowen, 2009, p.27) to generate knowledge on the research topic (Mogalakwe, 2006). It then brings the researcher to focus on the content and the meaning of documents as data that can be gathered and analyzed to bring context information, generate new questions of interest, supplement known information, verify the findings, and most importantly here allow the tracking of changes (Bowen, 2009; Pershing, 2002). This method has the advantage of reducing the sensibility of the reflexivity and the positionality of the researcher since the documents stand by themselves, can be accessed easily without being obstructive, and have not been created for the purpose of the research (*Ibid.*). Using documents produced at the time when discussions were held helps to alleviate for temporal biases or a bias that could come from a contemporary tropism regarding the analysis of the past. As Pershing (2002) mentions, the documents — and we could add discourses — reflect the state of mind of the authors at the precise moment when they were written, incorporating the political aspect of these. Since the research design attempts to understand the political representation of agriculture during these years, discourses made

available to the public (e.g., discussions held by interest groups in the public sphere and elected officials public comments) can be quite helpful.

This, however, comes at the expense of being limited to what has been published, while using interviews might have helped us to probe further in the unwritten rationale of the events (Nunkoosing, 2005; Garton & Copland, 2010; Wroblewski & Leitner, 2009). Still, since some programs go back thirty years from when the data collection process was realized, collecting memories and comments on these events would have been difficult and likely impacted by the actual state of mind of participants. Preliminary discussions for potential interviews with experts coming from Ministries, Agencies, and universities showed that some programs and changes covered in this dissertation have been since forgotten. Thus, even if expert interviews were planned at an earlier stage of the dissertation, they were finally canceled. The quantity of information available to conduct the document analysis also justified the methodological change.

The process of data collection can be categorized in six steps that are further presented in the following subsections. Each step for each program was dealt independently and was fully completed before moving to another one. Steps include identification and collection of the documents, isolation of relevant elements from the documents, codification of the relevant elements, consolidation of the relevant elements by theme, writing of the programs' evolution, and the variable analysis and hypothesis verification. Though these steps are presented in the logical order of their realization, a back-and-forth process was used when necessary to reclassify data or to attribute data to another program for instance.

Identification and Collection of Documents

As mentioned previously, five different types of documents were collected. Since each type has a different sourcing process, they are presented in different subsections.

Verbatim Transcripts of Parliamentary Discussions

Parliamentary discussions are the main source of documents used in this dissertation. They consist of the verbatim transcripts of the parliamentary debates whether they were held in plenary session, commission hearing, special hearing, or any other official sessions. In Québec, a specific legislative commission addresses agricultural activities, as in Ontario we had to rely on discussions held in seven different standing committees that can deal with some of the risk management programs.⁶⁶ Table 9 presents each of the committees covered. Verbatim transcripts and the documents accompanying parliamentary discussions were available on the website of each Legislative Assembly. It should, however, be noted that the Ontario Legislative Assembly's systematic verbatim process started in November 1990, so few months of the expected coverage were missed for Ontario. Additionally, debates surrounding risk management programs in plenary session were also included. To facilitate the identification of the relevant debates, the follow-up of work in commissions and standing committees were targeted, as well as law projects that had to be discussed in plenary session. Since Ontario programs received less

⁶⁶ To narrow down the amount of information to consider, we relied on the short description of the content provided on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's website. We remained quite conservative and kept any content that was unclear or could potentially affect risk management programs. For instance, when the description mentioned terms such as "Pre-Budget Consultations", we kept them for analysis. Oppositely, when the description was unequivocally non-related to our subject, the standing committee was discarded (e.g., Draft Report Ontario Human Rights Commission, Ontario Casino Corporation Act).

attention from their standing committees, the entire plenary session discussions were kept in data collection.

Table 9. *Data Sources of Parliamentary Discussions*

Ontario	Québec
Standing Committee on Estimates Standing Committee on Finances and Economic Affairs Standing Committee on General Government Standing Committee on Government Agencies Standing Committee on Resources Development Standing Committee on Social Policy ¹ Standing Committee on Public Accounts Ontario House	Commission de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries, de l'Énergie et des Ressources Naturelles (Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy, and Natural Resources Commission) ² Assemblée Nationale (House)

¹ The Standing Committee on Social Policy also held the names Standing Committee on Social Development, and the Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy during the years covered

² Prior to 2009, Québec's Commission de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries, de l'Énergie et des Ressources Naturelles (Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy, and Natural Resources Commission) was known as Commission de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food Commission).

Official Program Documents

Program guidelines, websites, handbooks, relevant Acts as well as any other official document that describe the programs were used as a data source. When available, different years of publication were considered to observe changes in programs. These documents were obtained on FADQ, Agricorp, Legislative Assemblies, Ministries and other official website. They tend to remain factual as they are the backbone of how programs are implemented.

Printed Media Coverage

Printed media coverage was analyzed in a specific way since their use was restricted to the social climate variable. As such, and to reduce the volume of data to analyze, a simple count of relevant newspaper articles was conducted. To identify the articles, we relied on two different

aggregators of newspaper articles that are Eureka for Québec newspapers, and Factiva for Ontario newspapers.⁶⁷ The most important provincial newspapers were retained, as presented in Table 10. The range of years covered by both aggregators limited our capacity to simplify the assessment, and we adjusted our threshold to consider a social crisis when the issue was discussed more than once a month per newspaper covered. The search engines of both aggregators were used with the names and acronyms of each program. Since only a count to assess a magnitude of social climate was needed, the actual content of the articles was skimmed, at least to correct for duplicates. A total of 683 articles for Québec and 185 articles for Ontario were identified.

Table 10. *Newspaper Coverage, by province*

Ontario (Factiva)		Québec (Eureka)	
Newspaper	Years available	Newspaper	Years available
Globe and Mail	1977–2020	Journal de Montréal	2006–2020
Hamilton Spectator	1986–2020	Journal de Québec	2006–2020
National Post	1985–2020	La Presse (print)	1985–2017
Ottawa Citizen	2000–2020	La Presse (online)	1969–2020
Toronto Star	1986–2020	Le Devoir	1992–2020

FADQ’s Board Minutes

In addition to official documents, we filed a Freedom of Information request to the FADQ to get access to its board minutes. Since these minutes are public documents, but part of the information needs to be redacted, an agreement was reached with the FADQ staff that conducted a first sorting of each minute so only program-related information was sent to us. These documents include the motions and discussions held by FADQ’s board on the

⁶⁷ Aggregators were identified with the help of Université Laval’s librarian who specialized in the communications field.

administration of each of Québec's programs which were particularly helpful to track changes to these programs.

A request was also made in Ontario to obtain Agricorp's board minutes, but the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs' staff informed us that these minutes would not be easily accessible⁶⁸ and would not contain that type of information we sought. Hence, this information was not available to document the programs covered. The information retrieved in board minutes has mostly been useful to identify changes to programs, since the rationale behind those changes tended to be redacted. To compensate for this lack of minutes in Ontario, we compared the annual version of the programs we analyzed. It is, however, not as thorough as the minutes since changes in wording can have a deeper meaning.

Internal Governmental Documents

The last type of documents used in this analysis is historic documents that came from an official organization – or affiliated individual to these organizations. They consist of internal notes, review documents, agreements between organizations, annual reports, Auditors General's reports, and a book retracing the first years of insurances in Québec. Some of these documents are accessible online or through parliamentary libraries, though Freedom of Information requests were made to the FADQ and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs to gain access to specific documentation. Since Freedom of Information documents cannot be easily retrieved by readers, these documents are accompanied by a '*' when cited and they have their own list of reference at the end of this dissertation.

⁶⁸ As opposed to Québec's Freedom of Information process, in Ontario, any requests came with a substantive bill for requester.

These documents have the advantage of carrying more of a political aspect than formal documents of programs. For instance, internal notes coming from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs contain strategic advice on what the Minister should say when questioned on a certain topic. Another example would be annual reports and Auditors General reports that highlight specific aspects of an issue that were deemed as important. Thus, they can be helpful to document the representation of agriculture more than proper changes.

Isolation of Relevant Elements

Once the relevant documents were identified, transcripts of parliamentary discussions had to go through another preliminary step due to the high level of documents they included. Some Québec documents have topics discussed clearly identified throughout the transcripts, so a simple review of these topics allowed to substantially reduce the number of documents considered. In other transcripts, topics discussed are not easily accessible and since the data collection identifies several thousands of meetings over the years, we relied on a selection of words through the use of “research” function on Mozilla Firefox 82.0.3. These words can be found in Table 11 below. When the general terms (left column) were found in the text, the few lines surrounding the terms were perused to assess if the discussions were related to risk management programs. If deemed related to our topic, the entire transcript was read. When the specific terms (right column) were found in the text, the entire verbatim was read. In addition, the specific terms — except for agricult* and farm — were used in the research tool of the Legislative Assembly’s Hansard that covers the 1975–2020 period. This allowed us to identify 88 additional discussions involving a certain extent of risk management programs in Ontario’s parliament. The preliminary sorting for documents coming from both provinces really aimed at

discriminating documents clearly not aligned with the research focus. For the non-transcript documents, they were read through and were considered as relevant material.

Table 11. *Terms used to search Ontario documents*

General term	Specific term
Agricult*	Agricorp
Farm	Crop Insurance
Production Insurance	Self-directed risk management
Risk management	Market Revenue Insurance
	Farm Income Disaster
	Whole Farm Relief

Once this subset of documents was identified, each one was read through, and relevant excerpts were copied in a document dedicated to a program. This way, nine independent documents were built with all relevant information compiled. It should be noted that this process was done first for all Québec documents, and then for all Ontario documents. Excerpts kept were still lightly discriminating with information that may refer to the programs but not necessarily in line with our variables. At the end of this process, we ended up with 848 pages of elements to be later coded.⁶⁹ To facilitate the codification process, when possible, the information was classified under historic moments.

Data coming from media coverage were isolated and treated differently. We refer to the section on the social climate variable for more information on this treatment.

Codification of Elements

Starting at this step, each program was considered on its own, though some information could be reallocated or copied to other programs when needed. The information was read again and, when relevant, a theme was added to an excerpt using the comment function of Microsoft

⁶⁹ Québec: 595 pages (including 483 for the FIS); Ontario: 253 pages.

Word 365. The themes that could be allocated were restricted to the different values each variable could take, thus relying on a directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Table 12 summarizes all possible themes. Though we presented for each variable the elements that were sought to code the material with our themes, we recognize that a single researcher made the entire codification which reduces the recourse to triangulation. Unfortunately, the realization of a dissertation as a stand-alone research project reduces the capacities to involve additional individuals with enough knowledge to conduct codification.

Table 12. *Themes used in the codification process, by variable*

Variable	Themes			
Policy evolution	Stability	Change in settings	Change in instruments	Change in goals
Social construction	Very positive	Weakly positive	Weakly negative	Strongly negative
Institutional arrangement	Strong corporatism	Weak corporatism	Weak pluralism	Strong pluralism
Farming style	Peasant	Entrepreneur	Agri-food firms	
Policy entrepreneur	Elected officials	Bureaucrats	Farmer's groups	Non-traditional
Policy network	Expansion	Reduction		
Policy venue	Change			
Social climate	Small crisis	Important crisis		
Structure of the government	Majority	Minority		
The political orientation of the dominating party	Radical	Liberal	Conservative	Reactionary
The seniority level of the minister in charge	Senior	Junior		
The influence of the federal government	Bonification	Reduction		

On some occasions, when elements outside of the scope of the dissertation were significantly raised, other themes were used. It was notably the case of 'international agreements' that referred to the influence of international agreements on program development, and 'Agricorp's governance' which referred to a 2001 management crisis raised by illegal activities conducted by employees. Also, information that showed a little interest was not

codified. Amongst example, we found discussions related to the type of vehicle owned by members of parliament and procedural discussions.

During the coding process, themes were sometimes replaced by the variable name when the assessment (e.g., strong vs. weak) requires additional information to make a proper association. The following steps then allowed recoding some of these elements to refine their themes. The codification step was also a moment to refine the sorting of elements by historic events and associate them with the policy evolution so each codified element could be linked with the dependent variable to start building a causality scheme.

Consolidation of Elements by Theme

Once the elements of a program were sorted by change and entirely coded, we took each program change's elements to recoup the themes that were raised. Hence, we sorted each element of a specific change, by theme, which allowed us to observe which variables were especially at play for a specific change. Both direct and indirect citations were kept to assess repetition of themes, as well as have access to specific examples of what is observed. With the multiplication of a theme and elements supporting it, some form of triangulation of the information became available. As can be seen in each program description, we listed, for each element, every occurrence of an element, which sometimes causes long lists of references. Since we are interested in the discourse and perception of actors, we infer that a repetition of an element was deemed to be a stronger expression of a variable. Moreover, different aspects of the same variable can also be found in the documents, thus triangulating the themes and variables.

Writing of Programs' Evolution

The next step consisted of transposing the elements, themes and variables into a proper text describing each program's evolution. The results of this process are presented in the following chapter. At first, a section was written for each program change before turning all these sections into a cohesive description of the evolution. This stage required a strong effort of synthesis to only retain the core variables that were at play and properly explain the changes and processes of change. The qualification of the expression of the variables (e.g., important, strong) as well as the number of mentions observed were used to represent the level of uncertainty behind the causality link developed between the dependent variable and independent variables.

Hence, not all variables are developed for each program change. Instead, for the sake of brevity, we built figures retracing the elements of each explanatory variable. These figures only focus on the dominated values expressed for each variable and then hide the nuances that can be observed in our entire panel data. Also, elements presented in the text should be seen as the most prominent and most relevant ones found in the documents consulted. The treatment of all information in the next step took in consideration additional nuances.

Variable Analysis and Hypothesis Verification

In parallel of the writing of programs' evolution, we aggregated the data associated with each program in an excel spreadsheet to constitute the panel data dataset. This dataset is thus comprised of the 150 program-years with an attempt to have a value for each variable every year. Though, as previously mentioned, some variables (e.g., policy entrepreneur) do not have a data point for each year, which left us with some empty data points.

This dataset has been useful to assess the significance level of each variable since it modifies the focus from a program to the individual variables. Similarly, we used the dataset in the verification process of our hypotheses. The type of data and their codification did not allow for formal quantitative analysis. Instead, we relied on the simple counts of occurrences and the deep knowledge of each data point gained throughout the analysis. By doing so, we managed to comment on the significance level of our research model and variables, as well as on the confidence we have on each conclusion we make. Additional considerations have been included in the discussion chapter about the assessment of each individual hypothesis.

Conclusion

The research model we developed consists of a representation of the different theories we mobilized in chapters 2 and 3 to better understand the evolution of agricultural policies in Québec and in Ontario. Starting from a perspective of policy change, while considering that stability also has a lot to inform, we mapped the four potential trajectories of policy evolution through our explanatory variables. Though they can interact, the observation of these variables helped us better understand how and why each program evolved in the observed direction.

This research design (see Figure 20) aims at probing the role of the institutional arrangement in the implementation and evolution of agricultural policies, as well as enlightening us on the visions of agriculture that underlie these evolutionary paths. The inclusion of a farming style variable allows to directly observe, in the official discourse of policy actors, how agriculture was described. Hence, it adds a layer of complexity into the farming style literature by not so much targeting the actual evolution of agriculture, but its perception and political influence.

To measure the perception, we relied on official documents and discourses that were held in the public space. Following Arnold's (1990) work, we expect elected officials to act under a limited rationality as they would generate the most support from the population. Considering this assumption, we delved into a variety of official documents and discourse to assess the extent to which each of our variable resonates for each program. Next chapter presents the actual results of this inquiry, following the 'life' of each program targeted and understand the factors at play behind their evolution.



Figure 20. Research Design based on the model developed by Maxwell (2012).

Chapter 6 – Results

The results obtained by the use of our research design on the documents we targeted allow the presentation of the evolution of nine risk management programs that have been in force in Québec or Ontario between 1990 and 2020. This chapter then depicts each program in a similar fashion to facilitate the understanding of their own evolution. A typical presentation starts with a factual description of the mechanisms that compose the program. It includes what the program targets, which organization oversees the program, its main characteristics (e.g., target population, eligibility criteria) and if, and how, policy actors are involved in this program. For each program, we also included a visual summary of the evolution of our dependent and explanatory variables to grasp in a nutshell the information later explained. This visual only focuses on the dominant values for each of our variable, so additional nuances are needed. It is then followed by a thorough description of the main changes observed in the period we covered, and which variables were observed in the documents related to this program change. For a sake of brevity, we omitted to systematically present each variation of every variable in the text, though they were considered in the panel data dataset.

Crop Insurance

Crop Insurance is a Québec risk management program resulting from the collaboration between the federal and Québec governments. The program works as a voluntary insurance for crops against different types of risks resulting from weather impacts and pest invasions (CAPERN, 2019; Lachapelle, 2007). It used to be managed by the Régie des assurances agricoles du Québec (RAAQ) but has been managed by the Financière Agricole du Québec (FADQ) since 2001. Since parts of the funds are coming from the federal government while the

administration is made by provincial entities, Crop Insurance is regularly negotiated between the two levels of government and involve verification from both sides (CAPA, 1991d).⁷⁰ Commodity groups affiliated to the UPA are also involved as 16 commodity tables exist to deal with specific issues related to Crop Insurance in each sector (Groupe de Travail sur l'Évaluation et l'Adaptation de l'Assurance Récolte, 2019). They regroup representatives from the FADQ and commodity groups.

Depending on the commodities covered (see Table 13), they can choose an individual or collective plan. Individual protections are based on an assessment of the crop reality on a specific farm and cover lower yields, the coverage of costs incurred to maintain an area in production while seeding is impossible due to the weather, the coverage of emergency costs to avoid increasing losses, coverage of costs when there is no harvest due to low yield, and a loss of quality (*Ibid.*). Farmers can choose which of these aspects they want to cover. As for collective protections, they compensate all farmers enrolled based on the average situation of a region and not based on their specific site. As such, collective plan protection includes lower yields and specific conditions observed on a single farm (*Ibid.*).

The compensation is either distributed following a comparison between the observed and the expected yield⁷¹ or following non-yield criteria such as acreage that could not be seeded or the feeding needs of the herd (*Ibid.*). It also depends on the coverage options chosen by farmers

⁷⁰ e.g., every five years, actuarial certification needs to be realized.

⁷¹ Expected yield is the 15-year weighted average with factors considering technical and technological changes.

with deductibles available between 20 and 40%. All these choices influence the premium paid by farmers.⁷² As opposed to the US, no revenue protection is included in Crop Insurance.

Table 13. *Commodities covered by Crop Insurance sorted by their type of plan (Groupe de Travail sur l'Évaluation et l'Adaptation de l'Assurance Récolte, 2019)*

Individual plans based on yields	Individual plans not based on yields	Collective plans based on yields	Collective plans not based on yields
Apples (Plan B)	Apple trees (Plan A)	Barley	Hay (acreage)
Beekeeping (honey)	Beekeeping (bees)	Corn	Hay (feeding needs)
Cranberries	Day-neutral strawberries	Forage corn	New field crops (flax, rye, hemp, fava bean, dried broad beans)
Field crops		Oat	
Field crops (seeds)	Haskap berries	Wheat	
Maple Syrup	Small-scale diversified vegetables		
Perennial vegetables	Strawberries		
Potatoes	Vegetables		
Processing vegetables			
Raspberries			
Semi-cultivated lowbush blueberries			

The cost of premiums is shared between the farmers, the federal and the provincial governments (*Ibid.*; CAPERN, 2019).⁷³ Oppositely, administrative costs are totally covered by the federal and provincial governments through equal shares (CAPA, 1990c; Groupe de Travail sur l'Évaluation et l'Adaptation de l'Assurance Récolte, 2019).

⁷² The premiums also vary based on the 20-year moving average of annual losses of the insured commodity, the status (i.e., profit or losses) of the compensation fund, and individual factors such as the number of years enrolled and the frequency of compensation given to the farmer.

⁷³ On average, the shares are: 40% for farmers, 36% for the federal government and 24% for the provincial government.

In the following subsections, we present the important changes that affected Crop Insurance from 1990 to 2020. For each change, we identified the variables that were at play following our research model. Since Crop Insurance is a program regrouping almost 70 individual plans, we avoid changes that only affect some sectors and instead concentrate on the changes that affected most farmers enrolled.⁷⁴ Each of these changes represents a data point for our research model. Figure 21 presents a visual summary of these data points and the value of each explanatory variable.

⁷⁴ We also omitted procedural changes such as the adjustment of the premiums which only resulted from the application of mechanical formulas.

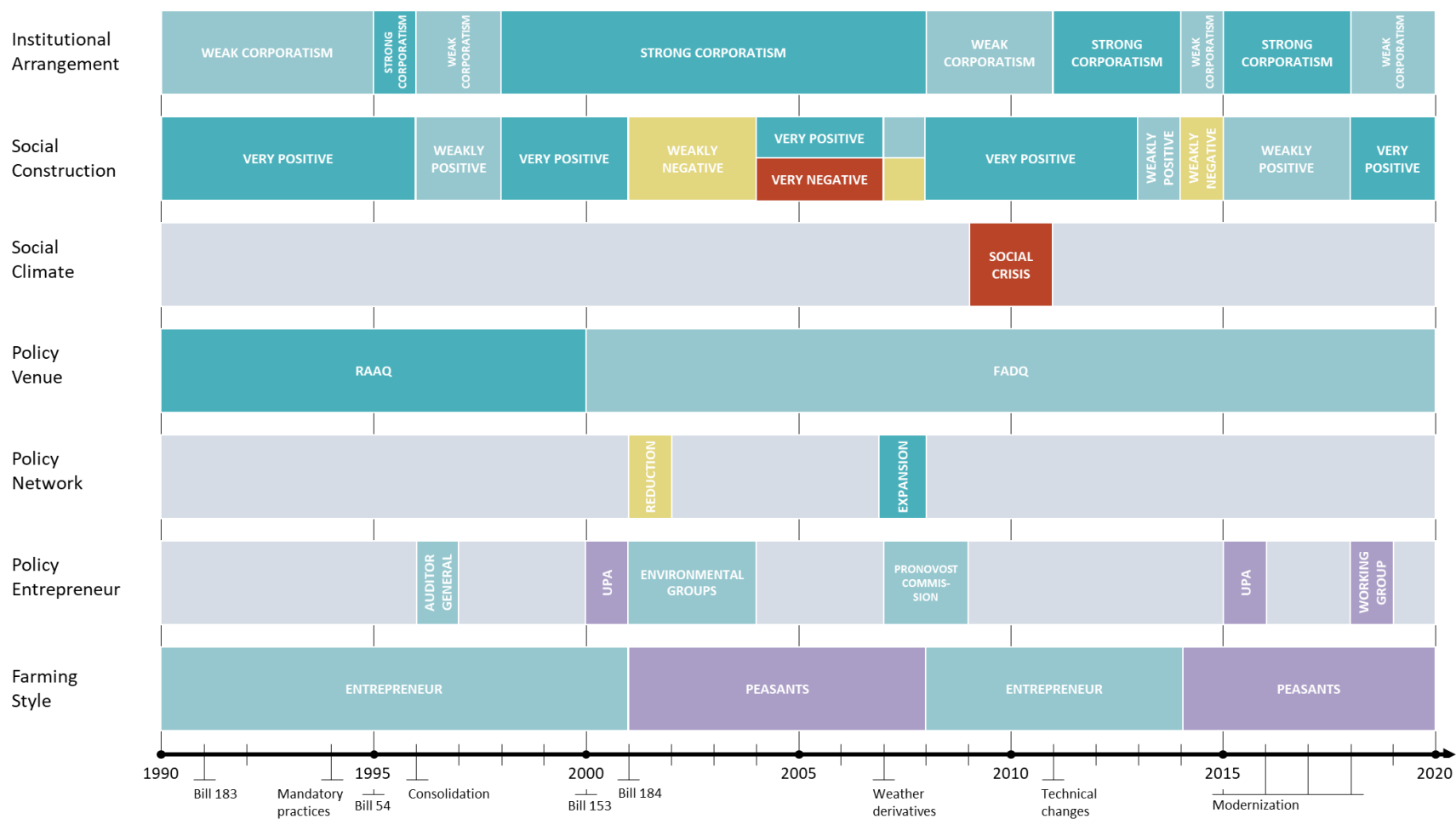


Figure 21. Crop Insurance's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

From the Implementation to 1990

Crop Insurance is the result of both a corporatist pressure and federalism's influence. During the 1950s and 1960s, the UPA⁷⁵ repeatedly requested for Crop Insurance to be implemented and subsidized by the state as it was in other provinces (Blanchet, 1998). The provincial government waited until 1967 to proceed, following the recommendations of two reports (Massicotte and April). It then created an agency, the Régie de l'assurance-récolte du Québec that would later become the RAAQ with, at its head, five stewards coming from the bureaucracy and from farmers' representatives (*Ibid.*). One of the first major tasks of the Régie was to constitute an army of specialists that would be able to assess the damages on each enrolled farm. Individual programs were the first to be offered, while a legal framework for the collective — though mandatory — framework was developed. Following the work of Blanchet (*Ibid.*), we can consider that by 1977, most of the 1990 program version was in place with the exception of the visits conducted on each farm requesting a compensation (1982) and the addition of collective plans not based on yields in 1985.

Bill 183: Increasing the Flexibility of Crop Insurance (1991)

In 1991, the Minister Picotte introduced Bill 183 to modify both the Crop Insurance and the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (FISI), following demands from the federal government. For the Crop Insurance, renewed federal financial resources were linked with a

⁷⁵ Prior to 1972 the UPA was named Union Catholique des Cultivateurs. To facilitate reading, we maintained the use of 'UPA'.

requirement for Québec to build the historic production dataset for each farmer and thus allow for a better targeting of each participant (CAPA, 1991d).⁷⁶

Québec government used this bill to also introduce different adjustments to coverage options and offer more flexibility to the RAAQ. Changes included a new coverage option at 90%,⁷⁷ the introduction of individual options and compensations for farmers covered by collective plans, the possibility for farmers to enroll in plans that do not include all risks, and the consideration of individual historic compensation in the determination of individual premiums (CAPA, 1991e; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991a; 1991b; 1991c). In terms of flexibility, the RAAQ obtained the power to modify Crop Insurance's plan by regulations, thus alleviating them from the longer and more burdensome processes of legislative changes (CAPA, 1991e; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991b; 1991c).⁷⁸ This new independence increased the influence of commodity groups since they were represented on RAAQ's board and were given a specific place in the consultation process about program changes (CAPA, 1991e). The increased level of corporatism was however criticized (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991d).

Also, in the following months of Bill 183, an agreement was reached between the federal and the provincial government to implement a specific plan for losses resulting from waterfowl's actions that brought new money into the insurance scheme. Under this specific plan, the federal government covered 40% of the losses, two Québec Ministries each covered 33% of the losses, the Québec Wildlife Foundation covered 17%, and farmers had a 20% deductible (CAPA, 1992a). This then shows how farmers were able to use their social construction to attract new

⁷⁶ See the FISI's section for more detail on the impacts of Bill 183 on the FISI.

⁷⁷ Previous maximum was 80%.

⁷⁸ An exemption was also given to these new regulations regarding their publication in Québec's official Gazette to speed the process (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991c).

financial resources from actors — such as the Wildlife Foundation — that do not usually address agricultural issues.

Addition of Mandatory Practices (1994)

In order to ensure that all farmers planted crops to harvest them and not only benefit from the Crop Insurance, the government added, in 1994, a requirement for enrolled farmers to follow production guidelines (CAPA, 1999b). This requirement also sends a signal to farmers that specific methods of production are needed and that they must conform to the norm. However, the Auditor General of Québec (1996) mentioned that such requirements are not systematically verified which points toward a positive social construction as farmers manage to avoid facing program requirements.⁷⁹ They also added later that self-reported data by farmers were not systematically reviewed by the RAAQ which led to millions given in overcompensations (Auditor General of Québec, 1995; 1998; CAPA, 1996e).

Bill 54: Increasing (Again) the Flexibility of Crop Insurance (1995-1996)

The government decided, in 1995, to increase the flexibility of the RAAQ in its management of the Crop Insurance. Through Bill 54, the RAAQ obtained the capacity to adopt regulations defining the payments of premiums and the publication of program information (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1994; 1995).

The increased regulation power of the RAAQ raised similar criticisms in 1995 that were present in 1991, including regarding the capacity of RAAQ to change the program without

⁷⁹ We could also add that the FADQ allows for farmers to derogate from this requirement if they have a specific plan signed by a certified agronomist (CAPA, 1996e).

notification to farmers (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1995). However, as noted in the previous subsection, RAAQ's actions were considered by the Auditor General of Québec as leaning toward the benefit of farmers (e.g., delay of premium adjustments) (CAPA, 1996e).

A year later, the Québec government consolidated all the 16 different Crop Insurance regulations in only two: one for individual plans, and one for collective plans (*Ibid.*; CAPA, 1998a; 1999b). This further extended the flexibility for farmers since they could now decide on a variety of options for their insurance including the size of deductible or the range of risks covered (CAPA, 1997a; 1997c; RAAQ, 1999). Other changes were also attempted following the federal orientation aiming at improving the coverage across the country (CAPA, 1997a).⁸⁰ Commodity groups affiliated to the UPA were strongly involved on these proposals either through existing mechanisms or the newly created official consultative committee⁸¹ that addresses questions related to the Crop Insurance (CAPA, 1997a; RAAQ, 1999; 2000).

In parallel, the RAAQ responded to Auditor General of Québec's concerns regarding the lack of enforcement and verification of the Crop Insurance requirements by adding new control mechanisms (CAPA, 1997a). This could be seen as an expression of the change in social construction as the Auditor General of Québec represented farmers as greedy regarding this program.

⁸⁰ This included an increase in the contribution of the conservation organization regarding the waterfowl's special production and an attempt to implement livestock insurance against diseases failed to be implemented (CAPA, 1997a; 1998a). This attempt to implement a livestock insurance is repeated over time without much success. For instance, FADQ's board adopted a favorable position in 2003 and 2004 but the discussions with the federal government made the program impossible to implement (FADQ, 2003; 2004; 2008).

⁸¹ The composition of this committee was as follows: two UPA representatives, two RAAQ's stewards, two Ministry's representatives, one RAAQ employee and one representative from financial institutions.

Bill 153 and FADQ's Creation (2000)

As presented in the discussions about the FISI, the year 2000 saw a major change in the policy venue in charge of Québec risk management program with the creation of the FADQ. This new organization provided a specific place to the UPA in the decision-making process, thus consecrating the corporatist institutional arrangement. Moreover, FADQ's creation came with a long-term financial commitment by the government in order to offer some stability to farmers.

As the parliament created the FADQ, it also modified the Crop Insurance Act through Bill 153 to further increase the flexibility for participants (CAPA, 1999b).⁸² Specifically, it allowed farmers to enroll only part of their crops or have different plans covering different crops on the same farm (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000g).⁸³ This responded to a recurring request from farmers, and especially vegetable growers, who were looking for options to manage their weather risks in a different way for different crops (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000g).

Following Bill 153 and FADQ's administration of the Crop Insurance, many other changes were implemented in line with farmers' requests. Since most of them are commodity specific, we left out their presentation.⁸⁴ What we can observe from these changes is that they seem to represent the positive social construction of farmers. For instance, transition measures were included to avoid any important premium changes that would hurt farmers (FADQ Board,

⁸² Both Bills were adopted under the same closure. Bill 144 that created the FADQ also repealed the Crop Insurance Act (CAPA, 2000h). However, since the Act was reinstituted through a governmental decree to align it with the new institution, it created no actual impact on the program.

⁸³ This introduced a variation in the premium paid by farmers. In particular, the RAAQ proposed a basic plan subsidized at 80% of the premium with any additional coverage elicited by farmers subsidized at 20% (RAAQ, 2001). As such, based on farmers' choices, the premium's repartition varied (Ibid.; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d; 2000g).

⁸⁴ e.g., increased protection for apple trees attacked by animals, an additional option for hay coverage to reduce the deductible to 10%, and specific bee protections (RAAQ, 2001; FADQ Board, 2003, November 26*).

2002, February 14*) and many one-time payments were given to farmers due to extreme weather conditions (e.g., ice storm of 1998, flood of 2003) (CAPA, 2000a; FADQ, 2004). Moreover, the renewal of participation in the Crop Insurance became automatic which reduced barriers of participation (RAAQ, 2001); a typical characteristic of programs designed for those deemed as deserving.

Finally, this period saw the establishment of guidelines to introduce coverage for new crops that were not present in Québec in the past (e.g., mesclun, celeriac, shallot, bok choy) (*Ibid.*; FADQ Board, 2003, December 18*). The expansion to new crops may show some inclination toward a peasant vision of agriculture.⁸⁵

Bill 184: Environmental Cross-compliance (2001–2004)

The end of the 1990s was marked by a multiplication of conflict between farmers — mostly hog producers — and urban individuals about odor and water pollution. To alleviate the conflict and avoid local governments to hinder agricultural activities, the provincial government adopted a Bill in 1996 to guarantee the right to farm (CAPA, 2011b). The idea of this Bill was to limit the powers of local governments to constrain agriculture and thus ensure that farmers could continue to produce (CAPA, 2001c).

Bill 184 introduced in 2001 continued in this direction through the adaptation of existing restrictions to farmers and to local government to assess some gray areas (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000h; CAPA, 2001b). In particular, regarding Crop Insurance, Bill 184 added the

⁸⁵ Similarly, the additional coverage for small-scale organic vegetable crops introduced in 2014 echoes this change (FADQ, 2011; 2013b; 2014; FADQ Board, 2013, December 18*).

possibility for the FADQ to implement environmental cross-compliance in all risk management programs (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000h).

This new concept for Québec institutions brought many comments and criticisms on the actual text inside the Bill since it left unclear mentions about which requirements would be added to cross-compliance, nor any indications about when and how it would be done (CAPA, 2001b; 2001c; 2001d). It also came after several reports and political pressure made by environmental activists and special commissioners (e.g., Brière report, Auditor General of Québec report of 1999-2000, Water Management Commission report) who repeatedly mentioned that existing measures were insufficient (CAPA, 2001b; 2001d). We can then observe a certain discourse that carries peasant-like ideas, though we mostly find it in actors indirectly involved in agriculture. It also echoes a representation of agriculture under a negative social construction as it attributed damageable characteristics to agriculture (e.g., concentration, pollution) (CAPA, 2001b; 2001c; 2001d).⁸⁶ Moreover, the UPA was the sole actor involved in the definition of cross-compliance, a situation that brought many actors to question its alignment with actual environmental benefits (*Ibid.*; 2001b; 2001c).

Oppositely, elected officials and UPA representatives presented agriculture as being considered unequally regarding their contribution to the environment (CAPA, 2001b). For instance, member of parliament and future Minister of agriculture Pierre Paradis accused the government of giving more money to local governments than to farmers to support an environmental transition. Similarly, UPA conditioned their support to typical positive social

⁸⁶ Moreover, on at least one occasion, activists presented farmers as the victims of policies and thus disempowered them from their actions (CAPA, 2001b).

construction's program design (e.g., long-term transition measures, simple regulations, alignment with the competitors) (CAPA, 2001d).

In the end, cross-compliance only appeared in 2004, and were considered as transition measures until 2011. The corporatist institutional arrangement was then mobilized to maintain farmers' influence over the decisions from the government. Minister Trudel echoes this idea when he mentioned: "We could also add that, when a decision results from consensus with the professionals and those that occupy the territory, it might be better — maybe — in terms of social order, to [listen to them]." (CAPA, 2001b our translation).⁸⁷

Weather Derivatives (2007)

An important change was implemented for the collective hay coverage in 2007 with the replacement of field observation by weather derivative mechanisms (CAPERN, 2010a; FADQ, 2006; 2008; 2009). This reduced the involvement of the sample of farms⁸⁸ that collected data, to instead have a theoretical model predicts yield. It also allowed for the FADQ to reduce its costs by relying on a mathematical model rather than workers to collect the data (FADQ, 2005). The UPA was strongly opposed to this new version of a program and attempted to have it blocked by the federal government (FADQ Board, 2010, April 22*). They argued that such a model did not adequately represent what was observed in the fields and would, as such, send a mixed signal to farmers. From our experience,⁸⁹ we observed that the use of predictive models also limited

⁸⁷ "On pourrait aussi ajouter que, lorsqu'une décision fait l'objet de consensus avec ceux et celles dont c'est la profession et qui vivent de cette profession sur le territoire, c'est peut-être mieux ? peut-être ? au niveau de la paix sociale [de les écouter]" (CAPA, 2001b).

⁸⁸ They still collected weather indicators.

⁸⁹ It should be noted that the author has been personally involved with the UPA regarding the replacement of weather derivative by the current mechanisms.

UPA's influence when they tried to negotiate for increased compensation. We could then consider this change as reducing the corporatist influence.

In parallel, the governance of the FADQ was revised to reduce UPA's influence and increase the number of independent board members. As it is presented in more detail when we discuss the FISI, the changes of governance reduced — but maintained — the corporatist institutional arrangement. UPA's influence thus became partially weakened and we can observe more occurrences of opposing discourses between the FADQ and the UPA starting with that change.

Technical Changes (2011)

An internal report produced by the FADQ in 2010 showed that Québec's administrative costs for the Crop Insurance were higher than other provinces (FADQ Board, 2011, February 17*). Knowing that the FADQ had accumulated a large deficit prior to 2010, any options were sought by FADQ's board to reduce its expenses. They thus adopted changes to reduce those expenses, such as limiting options for enrolled farmers that are choosing a deductible superior to 20% under individual plans, additional elements in premium's calculation to represent the cumulated deficit prior to 2010, and increased minimal acreage to be able to enroll in certain coverage options (*Ibid.*; Auditor General of Québec, 2011). These changes can illustrate the limited social construction of farmers that were unable to maintain their previous gains.

Modernization of Crop Insurance (2015–2018)

Following the 2011 changes, the FADQ developed a modernization plan in 2014–2015 that lasted until 2018. The objectives of the modernization plan were to assess the range of

coverage options offered, update existing coverage, increase the number of plans, and assess administrative processes to simplify them (FADQ, 2015b; 2017b). It also included the stimulation of a diversified agriculture (FADQ, 2019a). Proposed under the senior Minister Pierre Paradis, this modernization plan included changes to the program setting reflecting a positive social construction under a peasant vision of agriculture.

In practice, over 20 different program changes were implemented following the modernization plan, with most of them addressing commodity-specific issues (Groupe de Travail sur l'Évaluation et l'Adaptation de l'Assurance Récolte, 2019). The most important of them displayed a strong positive social construction. For instance, weather derivatives for hay coverage were replaced by climate grids (FADQ, 2015b; 2016c; FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*). This change responded to a recurring complaint of farmers that considers they should have received a payment due to weather conditions, but the weather derivatives decided otherwise (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*). Similarly, reporting yields became mandatory in 2017 (FADQ, 2017b; 2018; FADQ Board, 2016, November 11*).⁹⁰ This aimed at forcing farmers to report yields even in their good years to increase their coverage (FADQ Board, 2016, November 11*). Additional protections against the volatility of premiums were also added (FADQ Board, 2017, February 9*), while a new mechanism reduced premiums when insurance funds have important surpluses (FADQ Board, 2017, September 14*). Moreover, small claims process got facilitated (FADQ, 2017b; 2018).

Finally, some of these changes also pointed toward a Peasant vision of agriculture. In 2015, the FADQ started to offer increased price coverage options for organic and other

⁹⁰ In 2017, mandatory yield reports were implemented for cereals and it was further extended to other crops in 2018.

differentiated products (FADQ, 2016c; 2017b; 2019a; FADQ Board, 2015, September 18*; 2015, December 14 and 15*).⁹¹ These options were accompanied, in 2018, by a new individual coverage plan for emerging crops⁹² (FADQ, 2018). This offered a protection for crops that are too recently produced in Québec to have historic information on yields and market conditions, though they are sufficiently important and organized to be covered by risk management programs (*Ibid.*; FADQ Board, 2017, September 14*).

Planning Ahead (2018–2022)

As the 2015–2018 plan came to its end, the FADQ created the Working Group on Crop Insurance’s Evaluation and Adaptation with representatives from the Ministry, the FADQ and farmers’ groups (FADQ, 2018; Groupe de Travail sur l’Évaluation et l’Adaptation de l’Assurance Récolte, 2019). The working group suggested a series of 24 recommendations in early 2019 (FADQ Board, 2019, February 15*; Groupe de Travail sur l’Évaluation et l’Adaptation de l’Assurance Récolte, 2019). Most of the recommendations were still not adopted by early 2020 which limit our capacity to analyze the impact of the working group. Still, we can find in the report some elements that highlight the positive social construction of farmers as the recommendations aims to increase the coverage offered, to update compensation calculation methods to represent the new reality of farmers, to assess the share of risks faced by farmers, to better inform farmers and to document climate change impacts (*Ibid.*; FADQ Board, 2019, June 14*). These ideas were also present in FADQ’s strategic plan 2018–2022 with a special

⁹¹ Organic crops were presented through terms such as ‘socially and environmentally responsible crops’ in FADQ’s official documents (FADQ, 2019a; Groupe de Travail sur l’Évaluation et l’Adaptation de l’Assurance Récolte, 2019).

⁹² Flax, hemp, rye, Vicia faba minor and dry Vicia faba major.

emphasis on the support offered for agronomic and technological changes, the adaptation to climate change and the development of new crops (FADQ, 2019a; Groupe de Travail sur l'Évaluation et l'Adaptation de l'Assurance Récolte, 2019). We can then find some element associated with Entrepreneurial and peasants' discourses.⁹³

Summary

The Crop Insurance evolution shows the adaptation of a long-standing risk management program in Québec. In particular, we can observe the succession of different variables that played a key role regarding this program. The role of the federal government appeared quite important in the Crop insurance as they share the cost of the program.

However, once the characteristics sought by the federal government were implemented, flexibility became the focus. Increased flexibility was given to the RAAQ in order to provide them with greater independence and give back control of the program to the corporatist setting. It was also given to program participants in their coverage options to have them adjust the protection to their need. This then highlights the positive social construction associated to farmers.

This program evolution is also about the evolution of farming style discourses. For instance, we can find Entrepreneurial elements in the discourse over the years, but challenged by an emerging Peasant vision. In particular, the cross-compliance implementation is an interesting case as non-traditional interest groups were trying to gain a place into the policy network while blaming the agriculture of carrying environmentally deficient influence. Oppositely, traditional actors considered that environmental impacts were only coming from specific farmers that did

⁹³ The Peasant discourse is also present through a discount of premiums for beginning farmers (FADQ, 2018; FADQ Board, 2017, June 16*).

not represent the majority. The different policy images and perceived social constructions forced the government to find a middle ground between the two positions.

A few years later, Peasant farming style's ideas had a hard time to generate sufficient interest and it is only through the involvement of a senior minister — Pierre Paradis — that it managed to find some support. As also presented as we discuss Agri-Québec, it is only through the actions of additional external actors and through the leadership of a senior minister that the discourse defining agriculture brought some program changes.

Farm Income Stabilization Insurance

The Farm Income Stabilization Insurance⁹⁴ (FISI) is a risk management program offered in Québec since 1975 and managed by the Financière Agricole du Québec (FADQ) since its creation in 2001. Prior to that, the FISI was under the purview of the Régie des Assurances Agricoles du Québec (RAAQ).⁹⁵

The FISI acts as an insurance against low market prices for eligible commodities. Enrollment contracts cover a five-year period. Annually, participants must report their number of production units (e.g., heads or hectares) that is then used to determine the insurance premium.⁹⁶ For most farmers enrolled and during most of the period we cover, premiums were subsidized by the Québec government at 66.67%; the rest being paid by participants.

⁹⁴ Assurance stabilization des revenus agricoles

⁹⁵ During its first six years, the FISI was managed by the Commission administrative des régimes d'assurance-stabilisation des revenus agricoles which merged in the RAAQ in 1981.

⁹⁶ Premiums varied annually and between commodities based on different factors that were modified across the year. Such factors included the frequency of compensations, the level of the compensation fund, as well as prior deficits accumulated in the compensation fund (CAPERN, 2011f).

Compensations are determined for each eligible commodity based on the difference between market prices and the stabilized income. If the market price is below the stabilized income, then a compensation corresponding to the difference between the two is given to participants. Otherwise, no compensation is given. Stabilized income aims to represent the cost of production of a representative farm specialized in each commodity. To achieve that, a highly detailed cost of production⁹⁷ study is realized on a sample of farms that roughly employ one-person, full time (Auditor General of Québec, 1995). These cost of production studies have generally been updated every five years, with some exceptions in the earlier years. To reflect annual variations, price indexes as well as other data sources have been used since 2008 to adjust the costs. Also, 90%⁹⁸ of the wage of a skilled worker is added to the cost of production in order to represent expected farmers' income.

Commodities covered varied across time with an expansion at the end of the 1970–1980s and a reduction in the 2010s. Table 14 summarizes the implementation and repealing dates for each commodity that is (or used to be) covered by FISL.

⁹⁷ In 1995, the Auditor General estimated that approximately 2000 information was noted for every participating farm. These included assets' information, financial information, technical data, working schedule and others.

⁹⁸ For hogs and apples, they use 70% of the wage of a skilled worker since the market has historically been able to cover for much more than 100% when market price is superior to the stabilized income (Groupe de Travail sur la Révision des Paramètres d'Application de l'ASRA, 2007*).

Table 14. *Years of implementation and repealing of the Farm Income Stabilization Insurance (FISI)*

Commodity	Year	Commodity	Year	Commodity	Year
Cow-calf	1976-present	Potatoes	1977–2016	Piglets	1978-present
Corn	1979–2016	Steers	1979-present	Cereals	1980-present
Grain-fed calf	1980-present	Sugar beets	1981–1986	Hog	1981-present
Lamb	1981-present	Milk-fed calf	1987–2015	Soybeans	1989–2016
Milling-quality wheat	1989-present	Apples	1994–2020	Canola	2002-present

We present in the next subsections how FISI evolved across the years. Based on our research model and the variables it contains, we identified the main program changes⁹⁹ and the factors pertaining to these changes as it impacted the participation of farmers or the state. With each of these changes representing a data point for our research model, their collection provides a portrait of FISI’s evolution. Figure 22 presents a visual summary of all changes covered as well as the evolution of all explanatory variables.

⁹⁹ However, due to the large number of small changes that are routinely made by the agency overseeing the FISI, changes listed below are not exhaustive. We had to omit marginal changes that were either solely affecting program administration, corresponded to routine changes, were the result of indexation or did not affect the participation (e.g., investment strategies of the compensation funds, annual premium fixation, modification of price index, concordance measures).

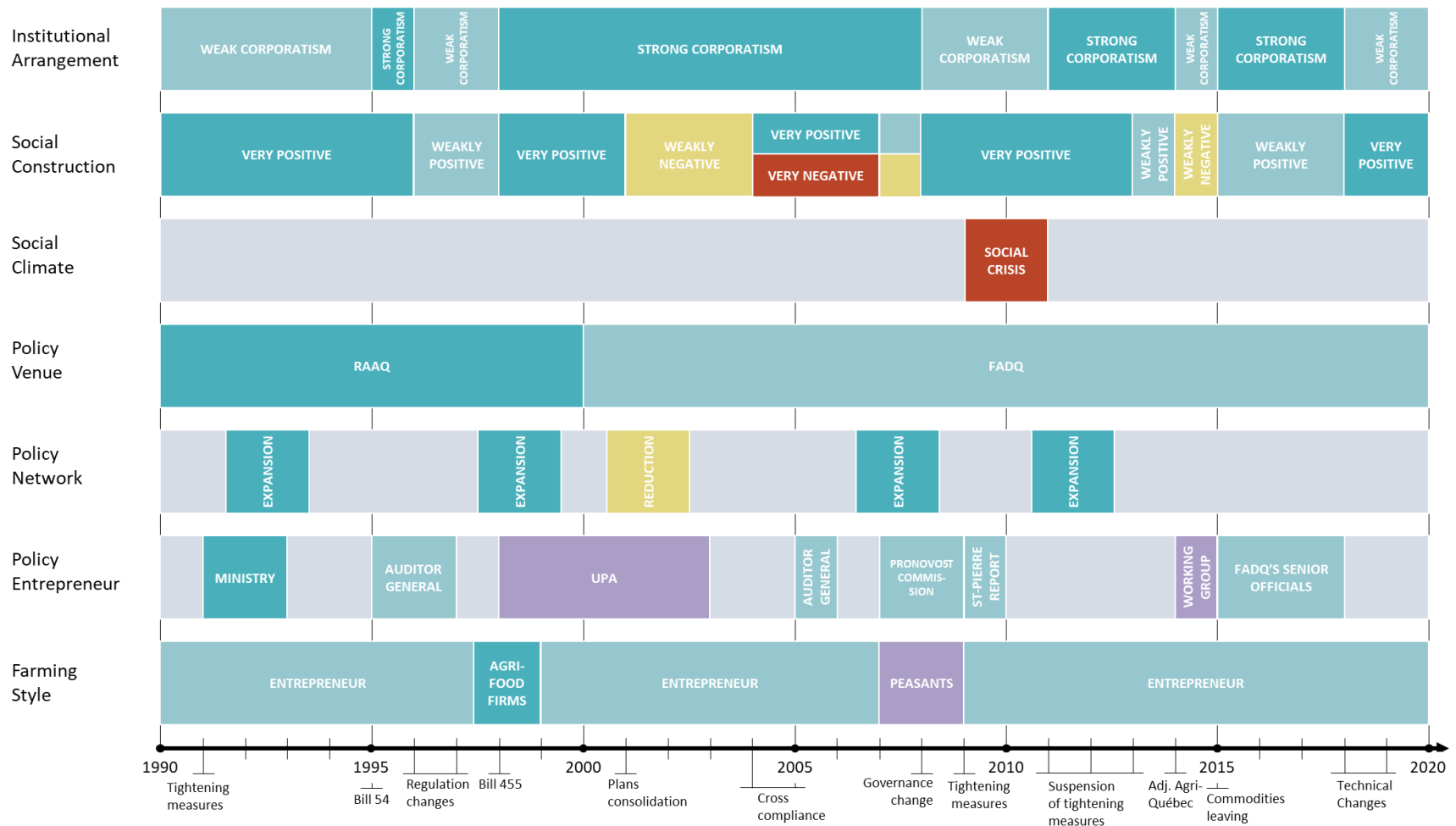


Figure 22. Farm Income Stabilization Insurance's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

From the Implementation to 1990

FISI was implemented in 1975 following a lasting low-price crisis in the beef industry. Marching over the Parliament, farmers pressured Bourassa's government to adopt a new program allowing them to benefit from an income similar to non-farmers (Lachapelle, 2007). Discussions between the UPA and elected officials then led to the creation of the FISI in the cow-calf industry.

FISI's implementation mobilized a vision of Entrepreneurial agriculture (CAPA, 1996) as its goals included stabilizing the variability of farmers' income, guaranteeing a positive income for farmers that had a certain size and were respecting the commonly recognized production practices, allowing for a price determination through market mechanisms, providing an incentive to farmers to increase their productivity, avoiding having farmers joining and quitting the program based on speculative strategies, and stabilizing production volumes and prices (Saint-Pierre, 2009). Peasants' references were later added whether it was about maintaining farms all over the territory or developing food-quality field crops (CAPA, 1990c; 1990d).

In parallel, elements in the programs also point toward a positive social construction leading to an 'advantaged' position on Schneider and Ingram's diagram. For instance, amounts dedicated to farmers' direct transfer — from which the FISI represents the biggest share — strongly increased from CA\$99 M in 1976 to CA\$470 M in 1992 with no indication provided throughout these years pointing toward an attempt to reduce these amounts (CAPA, 1990b; 1990d).¹⁰⁰ Also, the program directly references to comparisons between farm owners and wages

¹⁰⁰ This is also echoed by Minister Yvon Picotte in 1991 in a long statement where he compares the amount received per production unit for most commodities with what is offered in the rest of Canada (CAPA, 1991a).

offered to skill workers (e.g., mechanics, construction workers) as a way to justify its intervention.

Another variable we can see emerging from FISI's first years is RAAQ's culture of operation. The RAAQ was built as an independent agency with its own board in which farmers representatives chosen by the UPA occupy 2 of the 7 seats (Blanchet, 1998). The other members were chosen by the State amongst Ministry or RAAQ's senior executives. We can then see the presence of the corporatist setting from FISI's beginning. Still, political decisions related to the program and accountability in front of the Parliament were the purview of the Minister. Thus, the powers of the RAAQ remained mostly administrative during these first years (CAPA, 1996e).

Bill 183: Tightening Measures of 1991

In 1991, Minister of Agriculture Yvon Picotte proposed Bill 183 to adjust the FISI in regard to the creation of a new federal program – the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA)¹⁰¹ – and reduce FISI's budget since it had accumulated a large deficit over the years. This Bill then added an element to the stabilized income as crop insurance payments started to be considered as an income (CAPA, 1991d; 1991e; 1992a; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991b). This was a mandatory request from the federal government in exchange to have part of NISA's funds diverted to FISI's budget.

The Bill also attempted, unsuccessfully, to base the cost of production on 80% of the most efficient farmers instead of 100% of farmers. This was supposed to lower the cost of production used in FISI's computation so it would reduce the financial involvement of the

¹⁰¹ The NISA allowed farmers to deposit part of their sales into a savings' account and the government matched these funds.

government and thus the burden of the deficit (CAPA, 1991a). This idea pushes further the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture as it hopes that farmers would make adjustments to continue the cycle of innovation, reduce their costs, or quit the production (CAPA, 1990d).

The UPA successfully opposed to this abandoned adjustment measure, arguing that it would alienate the idea behind the FISI.¹⁰² Instead, the RAAQ obtained the authorization to use price indexes to annually modify some values in the cost of production studies and market prices (CAPA, 1991e; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991b), as well as deliver interim payments (CAPA, 1991e). As such, the UPA proved how strong they were on the political scheme and how they were able to use the corporatist setting to their advantage. In particular, they seem to have benefited from a positive social construction associated with agriculture. Even in the discussions about how and where to cut FISI's funding, the contribution of farmers and the need to support them was regularly brought on the table by the opposition or the minister.¹⁰³

“So, in the end, Mr. President, when we look at that, it is not only the ministers nor Québec government or any previous government, but the whole of Québec's society, through its government, that decided to put pennies and dollars in our programs in order to secure our agriculture; to make sure that our farmers, in Québec, are facing bad weather and economic crisis more easily than others.” (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991b our translation).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² For instance, the UPA quitted the committee that has been created by Minister Picotte to find solutions to resorb the deficit (CAPA, 1991a).

¹⁰³ In another setting, Minister Picotte also displayed the positive social construction of farmers as he opposed the regulation proposed by his colleague Minister of the Environment, arguing that farmers are not polluters and discrediting those that would say otherwise (CAPA, 1991c).

¹⁰⁴ “Alors, finalement, M. le Président, quand on regarde ça, ce n'est pas uniquement les ministres, ce n'est pas uniquement le gouvernement du Québec ou tous les gouvernements qui sont passés, mais c'est la société québécoise tout entière, par l'entremise de son gouvernement, qui a décidé de mettre des cents et des piastres dans des programmes pour sécuriser davantage notre agriculture, pour faire en sorte que nos agriculteurs, nos agricultrices, au Québec, passent

Still, UPA's relation with Minister Picotte got weakened significantly. On several occasions, the Minister discredited the information brought to him by the UPA, accusing their elected officials to not represent the farming community (CAPA, 1991a; 1991d; 1992a). Minister Picotte, a junior minister, even mentioned: "[...] I could also tell things about the UPA, but we need to live with it. What can we do? It is a necessary pain" (CAPA, 1991b our translation).¹⁰⁵

Agricultural Summit of 1992 and Bill 18

Following Bill 183, Québec government announced a new vision for agriculture, focused around 'markets to conquer' – a theme suggested by the UPA (CAPA, 1992a).¹⁰⁶ Influenced by economic development strategies in other industries and the ongoing negotiation of international trade agreements,¹⁰⁷ the capacity of Québec farmers to reach international markets became the core focus of agricultural policies. Even though the concept of international trade is generally associated with Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture, the way it was developed supported an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. For instance, many references were present in discourses about the necessity of state intervention, and the capacity of farmers to adopt new technologies and improve their own competitiveness (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1992). An example would be: "Québec government must also act as a leader in this. It must provide enterprises

plus facilement que d'autres à travers les intempéries, à travers les difficultés et à travers, bien sûr, les crises économiques." (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1991b)

¹⁰⁵ "[...] moi aussi, j'ai des choses à dire que je pourrais dire sur l'UPA, mais il faut vivre avec ça. Qu'est-ce que vous voulez? c'est un mal nécessaire." (CAPA, 1991b).

¹⁰⁶ In later years, a redefinition of the theme would be proposed by Minister Marcel Landry to refocus first on Québec's market and environmental issues. However, Minister Landry will be largely criticized for this by the UPA and other politicians, including his own Chef (CAPA, 1995b; 1995c). It is then not surprising to see that 'markets to conquer' was used again in 1998, in the continuation of 1992's Summit.

¹⁰⁷ General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and North American Free Trade Agreement.

incentives toward modernization, to have them focus on products requested by consumers, to conduct research that would improve their methods of production, processing, in order to compete on the market.” (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1992 our translation).¹⁰⁸

To ensure that such a concept received support by the industry, the government organized the Agricultural Summit of 1992.¹⁰⁹ This was an occasion to expand the policy network by involving up to 26 different organizations in policy decisions (e.g., farming, input supplying, processing, consumers). This increased diversity in actors complicated the adoption of some orientations that we could align with the Peasant farming style. It was notably the case for an orientation regarding the protection of farmland who did not manage to gain consensus (CAPA, 1993). On the other hand, more generalized support was given to programs distributing funds to farmers adopting voluntary beneficial management practices.

Around the same time, the government also repeated its attempt to reduce the financial burden associated with the FISI. Three working groups overseen by the RAAQ were created to review risk management programs. These groups included bureaucrats, UPA representatives and representatives from the biggest farming cooperative (i.e., Coop Fédérée).¹¹⁰ The working groups focused on FISI’s adaptation to adequately reflect the productive activities of farmers,¹¹¹ improve the sharing of information between collective marketing mechanisms managed by

¹⁰⁸ “Le gouvernement du Québec doit agir aussi là-dedans comme leader. Il doit inciter les entreprises à se moderniser, à s'orienter vers des secteurs où ce sont des produits en demande, faire de la recherche pour trouver de nouvelles méthodes de production, de transformation, pour être capable de compétitionner les marchés.” (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1992).

¹⁰⁹ According to the Minister of Agriculture at the time, the Summit was qualified as the ‘Beginning of the Third Green Revolution’ by the UPA (CAPA, 1993).

¹¹⁰ The Coop Fédérée, now Groupe Sollio Coopérative, is a federation of cooperatives distributing farm inputs and processing different products (Saint-Pierre, 1997).

¹¹¹ For instance, it included reviewing mechanisms to capture actual rather than theoretical yields and updating the cost of production studies. Evidence presented by elected officials showed that the adoption of such measures was quite high in the bovine sector, for instance (CAPA, 1999b).

UPA's affiliated groups and the RAAQ, and assess how the FISI would be considered under the soon-to-be created World Trade Organization and North American Free Trade Agreement (CAPA, 1993). As such, these groups were centered around a vision of agriculture close to Entrepreneurial and Agri-food firms. In particular, the government tried to modify the eligibility criteria to the FISI — as well as for other programs — to exclude part-time and very small farmers. In this case, it seems that the UPA supported claims associated with the peasant farming style as they opposed these changes. This support might be linked to the potential impact a change in farmer's definition would have on UPA's membership and, thus, their source of income (CAPA, 1995b).

Another factor explaining the opposition to the change was Minister Picotte's hopeful wish in 1993 about extending the protection granted by the FISI to all commodities in order to avoid differentiated treatments between commodities. Asking the UPA to work on this project as he mandated that no additional funds were invested, he publicly criticized them for not behaving well regarding this objective (*Ibid.*). Such a project never came to life and Minister Picotte found himself unable to cut CA\$25 to CA\$50 M of FISI's yearly budget (CAPA, 1993). The repeated failure to reform the FISI¹¹² then reminds us of a positive social construction with farmers being able to maintain the budget directed to them against the preferences of the Minister: "[The government] modified [FISI's Act and regulations] to give less and, even with that, managed to give even more. This is hard to understand or justify from governmental support to agriculture.

¹¹² RAAQ's president, Guy Blanchet, mentioned his objectives of replacing the FISI by a program that would consider the entire farm's income as a basis for compensation, rather than commodity-based support (CAPA, 1993).

We add productivity criteria, we use these criteria to give less and we give more.” (CAPA, 1990d our translation).¹¹³

In the end, some changes were actually implemented. Update mechanisms to track production units and adjust the cost of production studies following changes in productivity were made through changes in regulations (CAPA, 1993; 1994). Also, the government abandoned a specific measure that was implemented in the hog’s coverage to limit the admissibility of bigger farmers. Seeing that these farmers responded by splitting their companies in smaller administrative units in order to remain eligible, the RAAQ ended this pilot project in 1992 (Auditor General of Québec, 1995; Lachapelle, 2007). This latter change shows how Agri-food firms can use administrative mechanisms to avoid restrictions in program participation, which is a characteristic displayed by ‘contenders’ (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

Bill 54, criticisms from the Auditor General of Québec and the Conference on Québec’s Agriculture and Agri-food (1995-1998)

The year 1995 was marked by two separate events that influenced FISI. First, Bill 54 was adopted by the parliament. This very short Bill aimed at allowing farmers’ associations that are managing a marketing board to have the RAAQ retains their levies on FISI’s payments (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1994).¹¹⁴ This was a long-time request coming from the UPA (Québec

¹¹³ “[Le gouvernement] ont modifiés [la loi sur la stabilisation et les règlements] pour en donner moins et malgré ça, ils en donnent encore plus. C’est ça qui est difficile à comprendre ou à justifier de la part du gouvernement de dire qu’il aide l’agriculture. On ajoute des critères de productivité, on se sert davantage de ces critères pour donner moins d’argent et on en donne plus.” (CAPA, 1990d).

¹¹⁴ It also included other administrative marginal changes such as the documents that the RAAQ had to send to participants, and the date of RAAQ’s annual report deposit (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1995).

Assemblée Nationale, 1995) and such a corporatism display was criticized by the opposition in Parliament (*Ibid.*; CAPA, 1995a). Even though this Bill only impacted the collection of the levies and not their existence, we can still consider that they reinforced the corporatism aspect of the institutional framework.

The second element is the 1995 annual report of the Auditor General of Québec. In one chapter of this report, they summarize the evaluation of the risk management programs' administration. In particular, they targeted the implementation of the FISI and the absence of control mechanisms on many factors influencing the compensations. They also highlighted a year later that regulations made by the Ministry of Environment were not taken in consideration in the risk management programs. For instance, they mentioned that units that are produced without environmental conformity were enrolled in the FISI without penalties (Auditor General of Québec, 1996). From the issues identified in the report, we can see many characteristics that are pointing toward a positive social construction such as an absence of verification of the number of units enrolled, absence of fines for false declarations, and the exclusion of the larger farms from the samples even if they have lower costs of production (Auditor General of Québec, 1995).¹¹⁵

In response to all these criticisms, many changes were adopted in the following years, mostly through internal regulations and methods of conducting the cost of production studies. These included an increased frequency of cost of production studies, the reliance on new technologies to count units enrolled, and adjustment to premium calculations (Auditor General of

¹¹⁵ Additional elements would include: no regular review of cost of production studies which prevent from capturing technical improvements, no assessment on the efficiency of the farms participating in the cost of production study, no enforcement of the data and documents required to participate, and an absence of mechanisms in the premium's calculation to ensure that there is no deficit that would accumulate (Auditor General of Québec, 1995).

Québec, 1998; CAPA, 1997a; RAAQ, 1999).¹¹⁶ Taken all together, these measures are indicating that the social construction of farmers carried through the FISI was potentially too positive for the society's perception of farmers. Still, FISI's budget was mostly maintained in 1997–1998 while Ministry's budget decreased of 17% (CAPA, 1996b; 1997c), thus showing no sign of a negative social construction.¹¹⁷ Members of parliaments also successively reiterated their support for risk management programs (CAPA, 1996a; 1996b; 1996e) and defended farmers against what they considered to be false accusations from the media on the polluting aspect of farming (CAPA, 1996a; 1996b; 1996c):

“I would like to know from the Minister, against those complaining, these individuals that constantly attack farmers' reputation, this false reputation, this bad reputation that is made to farming activities, if the ministry, or himself, are prepared to go on the offensive against everything that is heard, everything that, very strongly, is directed toward changing the negative public opinion against farmers” (CAPA, 1996c our translation).¹¹⁸

In parallel to all the turmoil surrounding the FISI, a discussion emerged on a replacement for the FISI called the Farm Income Stabilization Account (FISA)¹¹⁹ that would cover all commodities (see FISA's section for more information on the program) (CAPA, 1996a). The

¹¹⁶ Other changes included: regrouping all of FISI's insurance plans in a single one, new rules to determine which participant is to be inspected, new techniques to measure prices, and discussions to start implementing environmental cross-compliance (Auditor General of Québec, 1998; CAPA, 1997a; RAAQ, 1999).

¹¹⁷ The FISI reached 50% of the budgets of the transfers of the Ministry in 1997 (CAPA, 1997c).

¹¹⁸ « Je voudrais savoir du ministre, face à ces détracteurs, ces gens qui alimentent continuellement cette réputation, cette fausse réputation, cette mauvaise réputation qui est faite à la production agricole, si son ministère, ou lui-même, prévoit une offensive qui permettrait de faire contrepoids à tout ce qu'on entend, tout ce qui, de façon très volontaire, vise à sensibiliser de façon négative l'opinion publique à l'endroit des producteurs agricoles. » (CAPA, 1996c).

¹¹⁹ Compte de stabilisation du revenu agricole

UPA organized strongly to oppose these changes (CAPA, 1996d). In particular, the reduced participation of farmers in the process of determining the hog cost of production was considered problematic as it significantly reduced the compensation given to hog farmers as was any suggestions to terminate FISI (*Ibid.*). It thus led to a protest regrouping about 11,000 farmers in front of the parliament as well as barriers erected on the main highway between Montréal and Québec City for a few days. Such a tactic aligns with the corporatist theory that predicts force display in case of a weakened position of the corporatist group.

In order to alleviate the tension, Prime Minister Bouchard himself got involved. Since it was impossible to rule between the Ministry's cost of production study and the one proposed by the commodity group, he requested the services of independent experts in the assessment of the methodology and the realization of the cost of production study (CAPA, 1998a).¹²⁰ It also came with two declarations of the Prime Minister announcing a cash advance from FISI's compensation of CA\$5 per hog (*Ibid.*). This was intended to give some air to breathe to hog farmers that were stuck in a difficult price crisis.

Once the crisis was over, the Québec government organized a new agricultural summit in 1998 called: the Conference on Québec's Agriculture and Agri-food.¹²¹ A particularity of this Conference was the wide public it reached. Just in its design, it showed an extended policy

¹²⁰ When this process ended, the insurance enrollment period was closed for hog coverage for 1999–2000, so the RAAQ could not legally change the stabilized income to reflect the new cost of production study. Bill 96 was then introduced to allow for the change in the hog coverage (CAPA, 1999c; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1999a).

¹²¹ It should be noted that the government also adopted Bill 455 in 1998 that modified both the FISI and Crop Insurances (CAPA, 1999b; RAAQ, 1999). Since the changes were only meant to clarify the duties and responsibilities of the farmers and of the government regarding the compensation funds — not affecting the mechanisms of the FISI in itself — this change was omitted here. Moreover, mentions in the documents covered regarding this Bill were almost inexistent.

network with participants coming from all sectors of agriculture, processing, counseling and input supplying, in addition to the traditional actors that are the bureaucrats and the UPA (CAPA, 1999a). Again, Prime Minister Bouchard – this time accompanied by eight members of his Cabinet – led the discussions (*Ibid.*; CAPA, 1998a). The Conference ended up with a big announcement of a secured budget for risk management programs at CA\$305 M per year plus 3% per year over 8 years¹²² and the maintain of all existing programs in support of agriculture (CAPA, 1999a; 2000d; 2005b; 2009; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d). Such an investment was facilitated by the federal government which channeled more than CA\$300 M to FISI between 1997 and 2001 (CAPA, 1998a; 1999a; 1999b; RAAQ 1999; 2000; 2001). It also came with the creation of the FADQ (see next section) and the creation of the FISA in addition to FISI (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d; 2000g). These changes were expected to facilitate the decision-making process of farmers in the long-run and to ease the rummage against the leadership of the Ministry (*Ibid.*). This period certainly displays the strength of the UPA and of its affiliated commodity groups who managed to bypass the Minister of Agriculture to obtain compensations.¹²³

The conclusions of the Conference were also an occasion to raise the Agri-food firms' ideas at the front of the policies for the first time in Québec's history (Morisset 2010b). The discourse was clearly a reformulation of the 1992's idea of 'Conquest of the Markets' with the

¹²² Formally, the agreement covered 7 years + 1 option year, an option that was lifted by the government.

¹²³ We can also find in the discourse of some members of parliament excerpts praising the quality of the UPA as a contributor to the development of agriculture in general and of the Conference in particular (CAPA, 1999a).

stated goal of doubling the exports between 1998 and 2005 (CAPA, 1998a).¹²⁴ The words of the new Minister of Agriculture Rémy Trudel during the discussions that followed the final works of the Conference were unequivocal:

“It is quite an important turn, Mr. President, that Québec agri-food industry focuses on economic growth and job creation, because from what anyone could have seen, historically, our production models and our methods to secure the big investments needed in the agri-food industry were aiming in a direction that did not focus on growth, because we were looking more toward stability, an income security, and that did not bring any entrepreneurship, development ideas and growth of the industry.” (CAPA, 1999a our translation)¹²⁵

Still, this vision was not totally embraced, and many questions were raised by the opposition in the parliament regarding the place of family farms in this new vision of Québec’s agriculture (CAPA, 1999a). Minister Trudel then defended the network of family farms that exist in Québec, while also arguing that economies of scale should be sought and thus aligning himself with an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture (CAPA, 1998a).¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Other objectives included creating 15,000 jobs and adding CA\$7.5 G in investments (CAPA, 1998a).

¹²⁵ « C'est un virage assez important, marquant, M. le Président, que le secteur de l'agroalimentaire québécois prenne la piste de la croissance et de la création d'emplois, parce que d'aucuns ont pu observer qu'historiquement nos modes de production et nos modes de sécurisation au niveau des énormes investissements qui sont nécessaires dans le domaine de l'agroalimentaire tendaient à déterminer une direction qui ne favorisait pas directement la croissance, puisque nous cherchions d'abord une stabilité, une sécurité au niveau des revenus, et que cela n'amenait pas un esprit d'entrepreneurship, un esprit de développement et de croissance du secteur. » (CAPA, 1999a).

¹²⁶ As for the Peasant’s ideas, they appeared to only be marginally addressed during the Conference, a finding also documented in the work of Benoit (2015). The Auditor General (2000) was again the one discussing one aspect of the Peasant’s ideas — the environment — in the 2000 annual report. Basically, the conclusions were that the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment were slowly making progress toward a solution.

Creation of the Financière Agricole du Québec (2000–2001)

Following the work of the 1998 Conference on Québec's Agriculture and Agri-food, the Québec government created the FADQ through Bill 144 in 2000 (CAPA, 2000d; 2000g; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000c; 2000g).¹²⁷ The FADQ was to become an independent agency with its own board in charge of defining and implementing programs related to risk management, beginning farmers, and access to credit (CAPA, 2005b). Its mission was: « supporting and promoting, under a sustainability perspective, Québec's agriculture and agri-food industries» (RAAQ, 2001 our translation).^{128,129} The relationship between the Ministry and the FADQ was to be limited to an agreement negotiated between the two actors (CAPA, 2000e; 2000g; 2005b).

The FADQ's creation expressed five of our explanatory variables. First and as it can be implicitly observed, the policy venue switched from the RAAQ to the FADQ. The other variables at play are corporatism, social construction and, on a smaller scheme, the seniority level of the minister and farming styles.

We consider that the FADQ reinforces corporatism since it consecrated UPA's position in the decision-making process. Coming from a repeated demand by the UPA (CAPA, 2000c), the government established that the FADQ was to be a co-management between the state and the UPA with half of the board members being chosen amongst UPA's recommendations (*Ibid.*;

¹²⁷ Other changes that closely followed the FADQ's creation included FISI regulations' consolidation and the — never applicable — reduction of stabilized income by FISA's payments (CAPA, 1999b; RAAQ, 2001).

¹²⁸ “soutenir et de promouvoir, dans une perspective de développement durable, le développement du secteur agricole et agroalimentaire québécois” (RAAQ, 2001, p. 9).

¹²⁹ It is interesting to note that the first published version of FADQ's mission was more directed toward Entrepreneurial agriculture with elements of protection against market and climate risks as well as fostering economic growth (CAPA, 1999b).

CAPA, 2000b; 2000e; 2005b; FADQ, 2005; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000c; 2000d).¹³⁰ Moreover, the chairman was chosen amongst UPA's designated board members (which in practice brought UPA's president to act as the FADQ's chairman). The rationale behind such a decision by the government was that farmers, through insurance premiums and participation fees, were financing approximately one third of the FADQ's budget. As such, they were asked to represent 'their money' on the board (CAPA, 2000a; 2000g; CAPERN, 2011d; FADQ, 2005; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d). The increased corporatism can also be observed through actions taken by the actors such as public mentions by elected officials of consultation with UPA (CAPA, 1996c; 2000b; FADQ, 2002), 73 special consultations held by the duo UPA-Ministry in farmers' local assemblies,¹³¹ and the creation of numerous FADQ consultation groups including UPA representatives to address programs' implementation, follow trends in agriculture, and simplify programs (CAPA, 1999b; FADQ Board, 2001, December 14*; 2001, June 20*; 2002, August 23*; 2002, September 20*).

In parallel, the creation of an agency to oversee risk management programs increased the independence regarding elected officials (CAPA, 2000d). In the past, program changes had to follow the legislative process. Under the new organizational form, Bills defining the programs ceased to be regularly modified as FADQ's regulations — under the purview of FADQ's board — gained the authority of such changes (CAPA, 2000b).¹³² This increased opaqueness brought

¹³⁰ When it was proposed, other groups such as bankers and cooperatives requested seats on FADQ's board. Their demand was denied.

¹³¹ As a comparison, only nine non-UPA affiliated groups were invited in consultations from a list of 77 organizations submitted by the government's opposition (CAPA, 2000d; 2000f; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000e; 2000g).

¹³² This led to a strange moment as elected officials were asked to vote on Bill 144 that created the FADQ and abrogated the FISI and Crop Insurance's, prior to have seen the FISI and Crop Insurance regulations that would re-enable the programs (CAPA, 2000c; 2000e; Québec

some questions in in Parliament, especially to clarify the independence of the FADQ regarding the Auditor General of Québec (CAPA, 2000e; 2000g; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000e; 2000f).

Another variable highlighted by the creation of the FADQ is the positive social construction of agriculture. Securing a budget for eight years is something that is, in itself, quite rare in Québec politics (CAPA, 2000d; 2001a; CAPERN, 2011j; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000g). As Minister Trudel mentioned: “This is a financial engagement that had never been done in Québec’s history” (CAPA, 2000a our translation).¹³³ Still, for member of parliament and future minister of Agriculture Pierre Paradis, the financial envelope was largely insufficient based on the budget demands of the previous years and the expected inflation.¹³⁴ Elected officials were eager to further increase the FADQ’s budget. To alleviate the risk of lacking funds, the FADQ receives the authority to keep any surpluses it generates, which is a practice usually not allowed for para-governmental entities (CAPA, 2000g; 2005b).

These peculiar authorities were also made possible through the influence of a senior Minister (Rémy Trudel) who followed an unappreciated junior Minister of agriculture (Guy Julien) (CAPA, 2000d; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 1999b). Still, Minister Trudel found himself in a difficult position regarding the adoption of Bill 144. The multiple discussions held

Assemblée Nationale, 2000g). In the end, programs prior and after to the creation of the FADQ were similar, though they had to be ‘readopted’ (FADQ Board, 2001, July 6*).

¹³³ “il s'agit là d'un engagement financier sans précédent dans l'histoire de l'État québécois” (CAPA, 2000a).

¹³⁴ It even led Pierre Paradis to submit an amendment to rename the organization the sous-Financière Agricole du Québec which is a pun that could be translated as underfunding agriculture in Québec.

related to the latitude of FADQ's management regarding the administration of the programs¹³⁵ forced him to change his plan of forcing farmers to fund 50% of all risk management programs. After a complete rebuttal of the UPA and cooperatives that forced the intervention of the Prime minister, the 33% share was maintained (CAPA, 2000d; 2000e; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000g).

Finally, we found a domination of the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture¹³⁶ in the elected officials' discourse surrounding the changes (CAPA, 2000b; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000e our translation). For instance: "We need to start from what is a farm in Québec, [...] an outdoors's small and medium-size enterprises. There is no better idiom to describe what a farm is in Québec." (CAPA, 2000b our translation).¹³⁷ This excerpt, as well as others, showed the attachment of elected officials to family farms (CAPA, 2000f; 2001a; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d; 2000e). It was also supported by strong criticisms against vertical integration and processors or input suppliers that would benefit from existing programs even when limitations were in place (CAPA, 1999b; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000f).

¹³⁵ For instance, Minister Trudel had to clarify the FADQ's powers when Canadian Bankers, Promutuel Group and Desjardins strongly opposed Bill 144 by fear of adding a new player in the money-lending environment (CAPA, 2000b; 2000c; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000g).

¹³⁶ Peasant considerations were still mostly absent when decision-makers were talking about risk management program. When mentions were present, it compared the level of support for environmental actions between sectors, in order to ask for more support in agriculture (CAPA, 2000b; 2000f).

¹³⁷ "Parce qu'il faut partir de ce que c'est qu'une entreprise agricole au Québec [...] c'est une petite et moyenne entreprise à ciel ouvert. Il n'y a pas de plus belle expression pour décrire ce que c'est qu'une entreprise agricole au Québec." (CAPA, 2000b)

New Organization in Charge of the Cost of Production Studies (2002)

Following the FADQ's creation, questions regarding the realization of cost of production studies emerged again. As such, the three partners: the UPA, the FADQ and the Ministry created in 2002 a nonprofit organization to be in charge of conducting these studies: the Centre d'Études sur les Coûts de Production en Agriculture (CECPA) (FADQ, 2003; FADQ Board, 2001, December 14*). To ensure that the mandate is achieved, the three partners decided that CECPA's board would be composed of two representatives from each organization (FADQ Board, 2001, December 14*; 2001, December 21*).

Such a structure then reinforced the corporatist aspect of the FISi by reducing the transparency of its process to the public. Prior to 1998, the cost of production studies were directly realized by the ministry which then guaranteed a form of accountability to the public. Oppositely, the creation of the CECPA led to a multiplication of committees and working groups combining different representatives from the three partners, with only those from the ministry being accountable in front of the public (FADQ Board, 2001, December 21*; 2004, February 13*; 2004, September 3*).¹³⁸

Implementation of Environmental Cross-compliance Measures (2004–2007)

The end of the 1990 and beginning of the 2000s were also a moment of tensions between environmental activists and farmers, especially hog farmers. The idea of environmental constraints applied to agriculture was slowly gaining ground which led to a divergence of perspectives between interest groups, but also the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of

¹³⁸ At least one committee per commodity (or group of commodities) was created (FADQ Board, 2001, December 21*).

Agriculture (Benoit, 2015). On one side, the Ministry of Environment kept working on additional requirements for agriculture, while Parliament institutions overseeing agriculture praised farmers for their good behaviors regarding the environment (CAPA, 2002; 2004; 2005b; 2006), supported by Minister of Agriculture Françoise Gauthier who qualified environmental criticisms of agriculture as ‘social psychosis’ (CAPA, 2002; 2004).¹³⁹

Still, under the pressure from environmental groups, the government introduced Bill 184 in 2002 which included the possibility for the FADQ and the Ministry of Agriculture to have environmental cross-compliance requirements in their programs (CAPA, 2002).¹⁴⁰ This cross-compliance got implemented in 2004 for the hog industry and in 2005 for all other FISI commodities (CAPA, 2002; 2004; FADQ, 2004; 2005; FADQ, 2015a; FADQ Board, 2004, October 7*). However, from 2004 to 2010, cross-compliance was applied as a transition measure following environmental regulations (CAPA, 2005b; FADQ, 2011; 2015a; FADQ Board, 2010, October 8*). It means that farmers were only required to have 50% of the capacities to dispose of the phosphorus produced on the farm (FADQ Board, 2004, October 7*). This was later accompanied by permanent coherence measures that took away some areas from eligible lands when these areas did not have proper authorization to be cropped (e.g., mandatory buffer strips) (FADQ, 2008; 2015a).

¹³⁹ Other elements pointing the positive social construction include an increased budget for agriculture in a context of a provincial deficit (CAPA, 2005a; FADQ, 2006; FADQ Board, 2003, June 2*), the disempowerment of farmers regarding their acts as the government had incentives for them to modernize (CAPA, 2004), and the tolerance of a lack of collaboration by the FADQ to cross its database with the one from the Ministry of Environment (CAPA, 2005b).

¹⁴⁰ In practice, such a measure was already partially present in the hog industry since 2001 as hog farmers that increased their herd needed to show an environmental authorization to enroll in the FISI (CAPA, 2001a; FADQ Board, 2001, October 12*). It resulted from the follow-up meeting of the 1998’s Conference on Québec’s Agriculture and Agri-food (FADQ, 2015a).

The whole process of environmental cross-compliance's implementation displays the political power of farmers that avoided or delayed regulations' enforcement. For instance, cross-compliance had been discussed for over twenty years prior to being enacted, including through several actors and reports – with those from the Auditor General of Québec and the Public Hearing Office on Environment and the forefront¹⁴¹ (CAPA, 2005b). Also, a transition period was granted to farmers which is not always the case when new regulations are implemented. Moreover, once the transition measures were transformed into permanent ones, the consequences for not respecting the requirements were lowered at multiple times to avoid lasting consequences on farms (FADQ, 2015a; FADQ Board, 2010, October 8*). Finally, cross-compliance was mostly implemented as coherence measure since it only asks the respect of existing regulations (CAPA, 2005b). Oppositely, cross-compliance in the European Union, for instance, asks for actions that are superior to what is required in the regulations.

It is also possible that the low enforcement of environmental measures is due to its association with peasant-like ideas and that these ideas receive less support from existing institutions. When discussing about environmental issues, they tend to appear as subjugated to economic considerations (CAPA, 2002) or operationalized under an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. Examples supporting this latter point include the vision of technology as the solution to environmental problems (CAPA, 2004) and the use of environmental characteristics as a differentiation argument (CAPA, 2005b; CAPERN, 2012c; 2012f). Oppositely, a pilot program providing a payment to farmers maintaining part of their land in buffer strips was created in

¹⁴¹ Bureau Publique d'Audience sur l'Environnement.

2005. However, only 44 farmers participated between 2005 and 2008 and the pilot program was quickly canceled (CAPA, 2005b; FADQ, 2005; 2006; 2008).¹⁴²

Instead, the focus was put with more insistence on Entrepreneurial farms and their protection against Agri-food firms' ideas. Family-owned farms were seen as the most suitable farm model to balance economic, social and environmental aspects of farming (CAPA, 2004; FADQ, 2005). Agri-food firms were presented as a menace for agriculture, while adaptative enough to continue their participation in the FISi (CAPA, 2004; 2005b).

In parallel to the cross-compliance issue, the FADQ also saw its capacity to channel federal money into FISi slightly modified. The 2002 Agricultural Policy Framework allowed the FADQ to use the newly implemented Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program (CAIS)¹⁴³ to fund the FISi up to what should have been distributed to farmers through CAIS (CAPA, 2005a; 200b; 2006; FADQ, 2005).¹⁴⁴ When the FISi payments were superior, FISi's budget was used for the balance; when the CAIS payments were superior, only the CAIS budget was used (CAPA, 2005b; FADQ Board, 2003, December 18*). As such, the federal government found itself paying approximately 24% of FISi's budget over the years (CAPA, 2005b).

Special Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food of Québec¹⁴⁵ (2007)

The middle of the 2000s was the occasion for the federal government to change its risk management program as it renewed the Agricultural Policy Framework in 2007. Thus, the CAIS

¹⁴² The low level of funding for programs supporting Peasant ideas was also a regular topic of consideration in parliament (CAPERN, 2011h; 2011i).

¹⁴³ Through this program, farmers received a compensation when their margin fell under a certain threshold.

¹⁴⁴ Transition payments from the federal were also added to FISi's budget until 2005–2006 (CAPA, 2005b).

¹⁴⁵ Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire québécois.

became AgriStability¹⁴⁶ and a new program, AgriInvest¹⁴⁷ was added. Taken together, both programs increased the protection offered to farmers, including those enrolled in the FISI (CAPA, 2008b). For AgriStability, FISI participants did not face any changes since mechanisms remained nested in FISI's intervention. Oppositely, AgriInvest remained independent from the FISI. Simply put, AgriInvest theoretical payments are considered as an income in the stabilized income's computation.

However, the most important agricultural policy event that happened during those years was the beginning, in 2006, of a new consultation process to redefine the state support for agriculture in Québec, the Special Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Agri-Food of Québec also known as the Pronovost Commission. As opposed to 1992 and 1998 exercises, the Pronovost Commission was not conducted through an industry-led forum. Instead, a team of special commissioners was mandated to report on the demands from policy actors. As a result, it expanded the policy network, with more than 750 organizations that participated in public hearings (Benoit, 2010; CAAAQ, 2008; Décary-Gilardau, 2011).

Amongst the main recommendations that can be found in the report from the Pronovost Commission (i.e., the Pronovost report) are calls for reforms of the corporatist system and the FISI program (*Ibid.*). On the former, the Pronovost report suggests terminating the monopolistic representation power of the UPA and giving the possibility for a plurality of groups to represent farmers. On the latter, the changes proposed led to the creation of Agri-Québec (see Agri-Québec

¹⁴⁶ AgriStability is a reform of the CAIS in which enrolled farmers receive a compensation when their margin falls under a certain threshold.

¹⁴⁷ AgriInvest is close to the NISA in which farmers can put up to 1.5% of their sales in a savings account and the amount is matched by the government.

section). By this report, its authors acted as policy entrepreneurs who carried a whole different perspective on agriculture.

First, the Pronovost report carries a change in the social construction of agriculture. It presents some farmers — and especially those covered by the FISI — as benefiting from the state more than they deserve:

“The Commission remarks how the conception and management of existing farming support programs lead to a stalemate that may hinder the whole farming and agri-food industry. The Commission concludes that it is urgent to fix the FISI program to bring back its focus on its original purpose” (CAAAQ, 2008, p. 63 our translation).¹⁴⁸

In particular, the Pronovost report follows up with observations that were made in the previous decades on FISI’s parameters that are leading to overcompensation (CAAAQ, 2008). In a nutshell, it considers that the FISI is closer to a direct payment program rather than an insurance plan for producers that have a lower cost of production and for commodities that receive compensation almost every year (*Ibid.*; CAPA, 2007; 2008a). For the Pronovost Commission, farmers did not deserve such support if they did not respond to consumers’ concerns related to health and environment (CAAAQ, 2008). However, elected officials did not align with the negative social construction attributed to farmers. Following the report, the

¹⁴⁸ « La Commission constate cependant que la conception et la gestion des programmes actuels d’aide aux producteurs agricoles conduisent à une impasse qui risque d’être préjudiciable à l’ensemble du secteur agricole et agroalimentaire. La Commission juge urgent de corriger les dérives du régime de l’ASRA de manière à le recentrer sur ses objectifs fondamentaux d’origine.” (CAAAQ, 2008, p.63).

Québec government announced some additional budget to the FADQ as well as an increased debt capacity to cope with FISI's payments (CAPA, 2007).¹⁴⁹

Second, the Pronovost report carried a Peasant vision of agriculture as it advocated for a more differentiated and small-scale agriculture (CAAAQ, 2008). Environmental goods' production and local food systems also regularly appear in the recommendations (*Ibid.*; CAPA, 2007). Basically, the Pronovost report calls for a review of existing programs, in line with structural changes observed in agriculture (CAPA, 2008a).

“Systems implemented by [the agriculture and agri-food sectors] erect barriers preventing new farming styles, thus limiting the development of new products and commercial avenues. These systems are based on a single, dominating, farming style where each component is encompassed by a state-protective vision [...] It would be deceptive to expect the resolution of some of the [systematic problems of agriculture] by simply renewing current financial aid programs or by increasing their budget.” (CAAAQ, 2008, pp. 15 and 48 our translation)¹⁵⁰

Third, the Pronovost report criticizes UPA's influence in political decisions. In particular, it considered that Ministry's employees had lost their autonomy and their leadership in front of the UPA and its affiliated groups (CAPA, 2008a). These criticisms, however, failed to receive

¹⁴⁹ An additional CA\$218 M was directed to the FADQ by the Ministry of Agriculture, while the debt capacity went up from CA\$383 M in 2001 to CA\$922 M in 2007 in order to support the increasing costs of the FISI (CAPA, 2007; FADQ, 2007).

¹⁵⁰ “Les systèmes [que le secteur agricole et agroalimentaire] a mis en place créent des obstacles à l'émergence de nouveaux types d'agriculture, au développement de produits originaux et à l'exploration de nouvelles possibilités commerciales. Ces systèmes sont axés sur un modèle dominant de l'agriculture où tout est imbriqué dans une vision protectrice du secteur [...] Il serait illusoire d'espérer résoudre certains [des problèmes de l'agriculture qui sont causés par le système] par la simple reconduction des programmes d'aide financière actuels ou par l'accroissement des budgets qu'on y consacre.” (CAAAQ, 2008, pp. 15 and 48)

support by elected officials and the state's senior executives. Minister of Agriculture reiterated the need to negotiate policy changes with farmers, while FADQ's CEO explained that any program change would not be presented in front of parliament, but rather discussed and adopted by FADQ's board (*Ibid.*).¹⁵¹ Thus, they confirmed the opaque program's development should remain the norm for the future.

In the end, the Pronovost report brought new ideas for discussions by the policy network. Not all suggestions were embraced by decision makers, but it still had some echo in Québec's agriculture (see the next two sections and Agri-Québec presentation for examples of the consequences of the Pronovost report) (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008b).¹⁵² To deepen the recommendations coming from the Pronovost commission, the government mandated Michel R. Saint-Pierre — a former government senior official — to propose a reform of the risk management programs. In his report, he advocated replacing the FISI by a program supporting farmers that place money in a savings account and through multifunctionality contracts (see the Agri-Québec section for more details) (CAPERN, 2011h; 2011i; 2012f; Saint-Pierre, 2009). He suggested that the FISI was not relevant anymore since the income of farming families were higher than the one from non-farming families. However, the government did not embrace his idea of terminating FISI and instead focused on adjustments that could be made to the program in order to maintain its financial viability.

¹⁵¹ This is also in line with over 200 meetings that were conducted between the UPA and the FADQ during the 2006–2007 fiscal year (FADQ, 2007). The year 2006–2007 is the last year for which the FADQ published the number of meetings with the UPA and its affiliated groups.

¹⁵² The legacy of the Pronovost report is far larger than risk management programs. We however omitted these elements that felt outside of our purview.

Change in FADQ's Governance (2008)

The first change resulting from Pronovost report that affected FISI was a modification of FADQ board's composition to increase the number of independent board members and decrease the influence of the UPA on the board. The consequence was then a reduced level of corporatism.

More precisely, the government amended the Act Respecting La Financière Agricole du Québec to adjust it with the new requirements coming from the 2006 Act Respecting the Governance of State-owned Enterprises (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008a). This Act implemented general requirements for the 24 state-owned enterprises to ensure a governance that is transparent in the management, full of integrity and responsible in regard to citizens' expectations (Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008b). However, the Québec government decided in 2008 to alleviate the FADQ from this Act as they instead incorporate governance mechanisms in FADQ's governing Act. This action was justified by the importance of farmers' contributions to the FADQ's budget (*Ibid.*). Hence, the representation of UPA¹⁵³ declined to a third of the board members, and its representatives became ineligible to act as the chairperson (CAPA, 2008c; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008a).¹⁵⁴ In the following quote, Minister Lessard explains the rationale for exceptions being made to the Act Respecting the Governance of State-owned Enterprises. In doing so, he echoes the positive social construction of farmers as deserving exceptions from the norm.

¹⁵³ One representative coming from commodity groups, one coming from regional groups, one member of the executive committee, one member coming from supply management commodity groups, and UPA's CEO.

¹⁵⁴ UPA's influence on the board also decreased following the creation of two committees – one on governance, ethics and human resources, and one on verification – regrouping only independent board members (*Ibid.*; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008a).

“How can we derogate from the Act Respecting the Governance? By adopting a specific law. But we cannot derogate to any significant element that would not align with proper governance. We try to find space inside the law for FADQ’s specificities, and this partnership [with the UPA] is present under different forms. [...] We will see later that it is the only Act ... one of the only Acts that grants the board with the power to adopt programs to facilitate management and fast accommodation” (CAPA, 2008c our translation).¹⁵⁵

What we can also observe in the quote as well as in other discussions from members of parliament is the recognition of the partnership with the UPA (CAPA, 2008c; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008b). In this sense, the actual change in the FADQ’s governance cannot be seen as a rejection of corporatism – as it was expected by some actors (CAPERN, 2012f) – but an attempt to manage corporatism in a way that would include some good governance practices (CAPA, 2008c). In particular, Minister Lessard and others repeatedly praised UPA’s representatives for their knowledge and the expertise on agriculture they are bringing to the FADQ (*Ibid.*; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008b).

Budget Increase and Tightening Measures (2009–2013)

The end of the 2000s were also years of large FISFI payments that created a CA\$1 billion debt for the FADQ. Since it coincided with a need for a renewed financial commitment by the

¹⁵⁵ “Comment on peut déroger à la Loi sur la gouvernance? En passant une loi particulière. Mais on ne peut pas faire un accroc à ce point substantiel qui n'irait pas dans le principe de la gouvernance. On essaie de trouver de l'espace pour la particularité que nous offre La Financière agricole, et ce partenariat [avec l'UPA], il se traduit sous différentes formes. [...] On va voir tantôt que c'est la seule loi... une des seules lois qui prévoit que les programmes sont approuvés par le conseil d'administration pour leur donner le pouvoir de gestion puis d'accommodement assez rapide” (CAPA, 2008c).

government to the FADQ, it opened the door for changes to programs. To address this issue, the government created a working group involving the Ministry of Finance, Treasury Board, Ministry of Agriculture and the UPA (CAPA, 2009; CAPERN, 2010a FADQ Board, 2010b, June 22*). They considered both Pronovost and Saint-Pierre recommendations as well as their own preferences to suggest a series of changes (CAPA, 2009). Their conclusions brought FADQ's senior officials,¹⁵⁶ validated by FADQ's board, to adopt over a dozen of changes, that we identify under the term 'tightening measures'. These changes are presented in Table 15 along with a short description of their effects.

Table 15. *Summary of the tightening measures adopted during the 2009–2013 period (Auditor General of Québec, 2011; BDO Canada, 2017; CAPERN, 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011e; 2011j; 2011k; 2012d; 2013; FADQ, 2009; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; FADQ Board, 2008, October 17*; 2009, December 22 and 23*; 2010, January 29*; 2010, March 19 and 31*; 2010b, June 22*; 2011, February 17*; 2011, March 3*; 2011, March 21*; 2011, September 28*; 2013, September 13*; 2013, November 28*)*

Change	Description	Implementation year	Variable
Exclusion of very low prices	Prices that are below 1.65 standard deviations from the average price are excluded to avoid a possibility for integrators to lower the calculated market price and thus increase the compensation	2008–2009	Against Agri-food firms
Compensation based on weight slaughtered	Prior to this change, veal and lamb farmers were compensated based on their number of reproductive females. To reduce incentives to keep unproductive animals, the FISI was modified to compensate based on the weight of animals arriving at the slaughterhouse.	2009–2014	Social construction
Increase in the minimum number of units	The minimal number of units enrolled in FISI was raised.	2009	Against peasant
25% measure	Exclusion of the 25% least efficient farms in the sample used to compute the cost of production study. This would then decrease the stabilized income and, thus, compensations.	2010–2013 Ended in 2013	Entrepreneur

¹⁵⁶ With the new governance in place, the FADQ's leadership developed a broader autonomy. Hence, they justified numerous of their decisions following professional advice from an actuary rather than on political grounds (CAPERN, 2011a; 2011e)

Table 15 (Cont.)

Change	Description	Implementation year	Variable
Collective maximum units enrolled	To avoid further cost increase, a maximum number of units that can be enrolled in the FISI was implemented. Up to this day, the maximum has never been reached.	2010	Social construction
Maximum individual units enrolled	To avoid further cost increase, a maximum number of units that can be enrolled by a farmer in the FISI was suggested.	Never	Against Agri-food firms
Collective maximum compensation distributed	To avoid further cost increase, a maximum amount of compensation distributed through the FISI was implemented. Up to this day, the maximum has never been reached.	2010	Social construction
Annual adjustment of productivity factors	To reflect the technical and technological changes between two cost of production studies, annual adjustments were added.	2010	Entrepreneur
Differentiated premiums	Premium costs are shared between farmers and the state at respectively 1/3 and 2/3. Farmers that produce over three times the farm model instead share premium costs 50-50 with the state for each unit over three times the farm model.	2010 Reviewed in 2018	Against Agri-food firms
End of FISI's admissibility for hogs born in other provinces	Hogs that were born outside of Québec but raised in Québec used to be eligible.	2010	Against Agri-food firms
Mandatory participation in the cost of production studies	To ensure more representative results in the cost of production studies, participation in those became mandatory.	2010	Social construction
Modification of premium's calculation	Following the recommendations of actuaries: addition of new factors in the premium's calculation to reimburse FISI's deficit prior to 2010, increasing of the reactivity of premiums to the market and to avoid further large deficits (abolished in 2011). For the latter, it included specific increases (or decreases) if the indemnity fund's deficit (surplus) was over the expected compensation for one year.	2010	Social construction
Revision of the definition of farm owners	Consideration of more than one farm owner in the computation of the cost of production studies, eliminating the requirement of working a certain number of hours per year on the farm to be recognized as the owner.	2011	Against Entrepreneur
Coverage of the wage of a skilled worker	In the hog industry, the coverage of the wage of a skilled worker for the farm owner was raised from 70% to 90% to compensate for the incapacity by the market to offer proper remuneration.	2012	Entrepreneur

The leadership displayed by the FADQ on these tightening measures however led members of parliament to become concerned with FADQ's independence. They then decided to launch a surveillance process in 2011, with subpoenas being emitted to board members to testify in front of the Parliament (CAPERN, 2011d).¹⁵⁷ Members of parliament were trying to understand FADQ's choice of pressuring farmers while there was an ongoing income crisis in the hog industry that led to massive FISi payments (CAPERN, 2011e; 2011k). Members of parliament from all parties — including the one forming the government — became harsh critics of FADQ's actions as they urged the board to either introduce new changes favoring farmers or revoke some of the changes that were previously made. Their position aligned with UPA's concerns (Brière, 2011, March 29; CAPERN, 2012b; Lacasse, 2011, April 8; Overbeek, 2011, April 5) as presented in this excerpt from a letter sent by a president of a UPA chapter to the FADQ chairman:

“The first cause of what is happening for FISi commodities is the FADQ senior officials' attitude. They act in total autocracy. THE [in capital in the text] collaboration from partners is not the main factor anymore considered to implement change or adopt new regulations.” (Guimond, 2011, June 14 our translation).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ In the FADQ's history, this only happened twice. The previous time, in 2005, it was simply to follow up with the creation of the FADQ and discussions were cordial and supportive of the FADQ's actions (CAPERN, 2011c). Subpoenas were sent after board members declined an informal invitation. Moreover, the FADQ chairman refused to comply with the subpoena and a warrant had to be emitted to force him to come in front of the committee (CAPERN, 2011f).

¹⁵⁸ “L'attitude des hauts dirigeants de La Financière agricole s'avère la première cause de tout ce qui se passe dans les productions sous ASRA. Ceux-ci agissent en toute autocratie. LA collaboration des partenaires n'est plus un facteur déterminant à la mise en place de changements ou à l'adoption de nouvelles règles.” (Guimond, 2011, June 14).

Seeing the lack of interest from the FADQ to revoke these measures, the UPA mobilized most of their resources to increase the political pressure. In particular, the UPA considered that they had made sufficient concessions in the negotiated process and that some measures put undue pressure on farmers (CAPERN, 2011f; 2013). UPA's president at the time, Christian Lacasse, summarizes their position regarding these changes:

“So, I consider that the UPA had shown consideration over the past two years. I am telling you that only once, truly, we opposed a tightening measure or cuts coming from the Ministry and the Financière. I am not telling you that the other measures were easy to accept, you know, because we all know that they present a major challenge to our members. [...] over the last two years, we, you know, we accepted a lot as we hoped to use a return of favor such as: Look, the 25% measure, look, can we put it aside for some time? [...] Look, I can show some openness in negotiations, but at some point, now, we need to be able to set some limits. And we have reached those limits now.” (CAPERN, 2011d our translation).¹⁵⁹

To support this opposition, the UPA organized public protests, managed to get about half of Québec farmers to sign a petition against the 25% measure, chained the doors of the FADQ,

¹⁵⁹ “Puis, moi, je considère que l'UPA a démontré beaucoup d'ouverture depuis les deux dernières années. Quand je vous disais qu'à travers toutes les mesures de resserrement qui ont été avancées à la fois par le ministère mais ensuite par La Financière, toutes les coupures, il y a une seule qu'on a dénoncée, il y a une seule mesure qu'on a dénoncée, là, véritablement, là. Les autres, là, je ne vous dis pas que c'est facile à accepter, là, parce qu'on sait très bien que c'est un défi majeur pour nos producteurs, nos productrices. [...] au fil de ces deux années-là, nous autres, là, tu sais, on en a mis sur la table dans l'espoir qu'on ait un petit retour d'ascenseur, qu'on nous dise: Regarde, la mesure du 25 %, là, regarde, on peut-u la mettre de côté, là, pour quelque temps, là? [...] Regarde, moi, là, de l'ouverture, là, je peux en faire, on peut en faire, là, mais, à un moment donné, là, il faut être capables de mettre nos limites. Puis là, là, elles sont rédues, les limites, là.” (CAPERN, 2011d).

and closed snowmobile trails¹⁶⁰ during the winter of 2010 (CAPERN, 2010b). This uprising by the UPA is a representation of their decreased influence in FADQ governance as they had just lost the control of the board.¹⁶¹ Instead of relying on their corporatist power, they used political opposition and members' mobilization. The media attention it created was strong enough for our social climate variable to consider that a social crisis was present with 46 mentions in 2009 and 117 mentions in 2010 in the four most important generalist media in Québec.

All the pressure eventually led the Minister of Agriculture Pierre Corbeil to sign an agreement with the UPA, forcing the FADQ to suspend the 25% measure if the FADQ generated a profit – which happened every year between the implementation of the 25% measure in 2010 and its repealing in 2013 (CAPERN, 2011c). Moreover, the government announced the creation of Agri-Québec in 2010 to provide additional support to farmers (see Agri-Québec section). If this new program came from suggestions found in Pronovost and Saint-Pierre reports, the recommendation was to replace FISI by Agri-Québec. This new program offers the possibility for farmers to deposit up to a certain percentage of their monetary income in a savings account where the state matches the amount deposited. However, as seen few years ago with the FISA, both FISI and Agri-Québec were kept in parallel and additional budget helped to fund the new program. In fact, the government had announced with the tightening measures that they more than doubled FADQ's budget as well as absorbed the accumulated debt (Auditor General, 2011;

¹⁶⁰ Snowmobile trails represent a touristic attraction during the winter in regions that are partly dependent on the tourism industry. Since most of the territory is not covered by public snowmobile trails, farmers share or lend some of their properties to create a provincial snowmobile trail system.

¹⁶¹ One should not conclude that it represents the end of corporatism. We can still observe many occurrences of comments related to corporatism, as well as structures and institutions that grant a specific — though reduced — place to the UPA (CAPERN, 2011f; 2011k; FADQ Board, 2010, May 28*; 2010, June 22*). For instance, the state is still described as lacking leadership and vision while they rely on the UPA (CAPA, 2008c; CAPERN, 2010b; 2012b).

BDO Canada, 2017; CAPERN, 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2011e; 2011j). The government considered that the debt was not caused by farmers, but instead was the consequences of the market, political decisions, and the actions of other governments and, as such, farmers should not be the one penalized for the consequences (CAPERN, 2010b; 2011a; 2011g; 2011i; 2011j; 2011k; 2011j; 2012c; 2012d; 2012f; 2012g; FADQ, 2012; 2014; FADQ Board, 2010, June 22*; 2011, September 28*; 2012, March 23; 2013, September 13*; 2013, November 28*; Lachapelle, 2007; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2008b).¹⁶² These successful revendications from UPA display a recognition by the government of a needed support to agriculture, thus a positive social construction (CAPERN, 2010b; 2013; FADQ, 2009; 2013b; FADQ Board, 2006, June 1*; 2006, September 1*; 2007, February 19*; 2008, February 5*; 2008, March 17*; 2009, July 9*; 2010, December 16*). Minister François Gendron illustrates the idea of deservingness of support by farmers in the following quote:

“So, I would want to state that as soon as we formed the government, we abolished the 25% measure because we thought it was irresponsible for the state to strangle farmers [...] it created unthinkable damages in terms of loss of confidence and, in fact, as [income] losses too. Then, I quickly canceled it to infuse some hope.” (CAPERN, 2013 our translation).¹⁶³

¹⁶² Another example is accusations made against the government for not having informed farmers early enough for them to adjust (CAPERN, 2011g; 2012f), even if many delays in change and in application of measures were made (CAPERN, 2011h).

¹⁶³ “Alors, je voudrais, en plus de la mesure du 25 %, que, dès qu'on a été aux commandes de l'État, on l'a abolie parce qu'on trouvait que c'était irresponsable d'étouffer davantage les producteurs agricoles [...] c'est des dommages invraisemblables que cette mesure avait causés en termes de perte de confiance aux producteurs agricoles et, concrètement, ce qu'elle représentait comme pertes [monétaires] pour eux. Donc, moi, j'ai aboli ça rapidement pour redonner de l'espoir.” (CAPERN, 2013).

Also, most changes and discussions around the tightening measure mobilized an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, thus rejecting what the Pronovost Commission tried to put forward (CAPERN, 2010b; 2011a; 2011c; 2011d; 2011e; 2011g; 2011h).¹⁶⁴ For instance, the changes proposed by the FADQ called for productivity improvements (e.g., annual adjustments to the productivity factors, the 25% measure), while the government also announced a CA\$100 M envelope directed toward counseling services and facilitated access to loans for farms facing economic hardship (CAPA, 2008a; CAPERN, 2010b; 2011a; 2011f; 2011j; 2012b; 2012c; 2012f; 2013; FADQ Board, 2011, November 9*; 2011, November 18*).

This vision of agriculture was shared by UPA that asked for collective interventions that would consider all farms as similar and pushing forward incentives for productivity to maintain the capacity of farms to adequately remunerate farmers when compared to the rest of the population (CAPERN, 2011b; 2011j; 2011k). Oppositely, they dismissed both Peasant and Agri-food firms' ideas.¹⁶⁵ As an example, many UPA affiliated groups repeatedly argued that small and differentiated agriculture cannot represent the solution for the future of agriculture as they would be unable to feed the world (CAPERN, 2011g; 2011h; 2011i; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012e; 2012f; 2012g; 2012h).¹⁶⁶ As for Agri-food firms, they were perceived as a threat against agriculture due to their capacity to grasp all of the margins and shape the market and state intervention to their needs (CAPA, 2009; CAPERN, 2010a; 2011d; 2011h; 2012a; 2013).

¹⁶⁴ Member of parliament Daniel Bernard is an exception as he questioned, at least twice, why farmers who are facing economic hardship stay in activity (CAPERN, 2011f; 2011k).

¹⁶⁵ Some scarce references to the benefits of Agri-food firms can be found in parliamentary debates (CAPERN, 2011e; 2012d) and the opposite as smaller farms helps to create new markets (CAPERN, 2012g).

¹⁶⁶ It should however be noted that in 2011, during consultations on the Green Paper for a bio-food policy as a basis for a bio-food policy, several non-traditional actors expressed their support for Peasant ideas such as local-food movement, multifunctionality, organic and small-scale production (CAPERN, 2011g; 2011h; 2011i; 2012b; 2012f; 2012g; 2012h).

Adjustment with Agri-Québec and Decreased Budget (2014)

An unexpected consequence of the creation of Agri-Québec was that any support received from this program became considered as an income in reduction of FISI's stabilized income, thus impacting FISI's level of payments (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*).¹⁶⁷ Since Agri-Québec is not a countercyclical or insurance program and thus pays every year, these amounts quickly accumulated. For some commodities, it reduced so much the stabilized income that it became unlikely that FISI would provide any payment in the near future (FADQ Board, 2013, October 18*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014).

As such, the state decided to suspend Agri-Québec's eligibility to commodity eligible to the FISI (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014). This decision came from a recommendation of the Working Group on Farm Income¹⁶⁸ on which participated representatives from the FADQ (2), the UPA (2), academia (1), a rural development group (1)¹⁶⁹ and from the Ministry (1). Since this working group mostly replicated the corporatist institutional framework present on FADQ's board, we can consider that the corporatist setting remained. The decision also echoes the positive — though limited — social construction of agriculture.¹⁷⁰ On one side, farmers

¹⁶⁷ As for AgriInvest, the amount used is the theoretical amount and not what was actually saved in the special account by farmers.

¹⁶⁸ Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec.

¹⁶⁹ Solidarité Rurale du Québec. During the lifespan of the Working Group on Farm Income, UPA's chairman became Solidarité Rurale du Québec's chairman.

¹⁷⁰ Other elements also pointed out toward the limited social construction such as an increase in the consequences for farmers that refuse to participate in the mandatory cost of production studies (FADQ Board, 2014, December 15*). Another example is the exclusion of farms or prices that represent extreme values in the cost of production studies (FADQ Board, 2014, May 23*).

benefited from a new program with additional resources devoted to it. On the other side, the government was reluctant to consider an option that would have excluded Agri-Québec's compensations from the calculation of stabilized incomes¹⁷¹ as presented in the following quote from the Minister:

“So, if [excluding the Agri-Québec compensations costs] about 8 million, I will fight. If it is closer to 400 to 500 million, I will swoop in and get knocked out by the Treasury or Finances. At some point, if it is around 400 or 500 million, we will ask farmers to choose [between Agri-Québec and the FISI]. Though if it is 8 million and I can keep both, I will fight.” (CAPERN, 2016 our translation).¹⁷²

In addition, the state reduced the FADQ's annual budget from CA\$630 to CA\$439 M in 2014 (BDO Canada, 2017). This budget reduction was justified by the government to contribute to the general effort of the state's debt reduction (CAPERN, 2015). In 2015, an additional CA\$37 M was removed from the FADQ's budget. Agriculture was then presented as doing its appropriate part in the more global scheme of fiscal constraints (*Ibid.*). However, these budget cuts were accompanied by a special reserve fund of CA\$317 M (BDO Canada, 2017), financed by 2014 and 2015 FADQ's surpluses. This new reserve fund became available to the FADQ if

¹⁷¹ On exceptional grounds, the exclusions of payments from other programs in the stabilized income had been granted (FADQ Board, 2014, December 15*).

¹⁷² “Puis, si [les coûts relatifs à l'exclusion des revenus provenant d'Agri-Québec sont] autour de 8 millions, je vais me battre. Si c'est autour de 400 à 500 millions, je vais sauter dans l'arène puis je vais me faire mettre K.-O. au Trésor puis aux Finances, là. À un moment donné, si c'est le cas puis ça finit à 400, 500 millions, on va demander aux producteurs de choisir [entre Agri-Québec et l'ASRA]. Si c'est 8 millions puis je peux garder les deux, je vais me battre.” (CAPERN, 2016).

needed, with the intended goal to reinforce farmers' confidence in existing institutions and in the commodities covered by the FISI (CAPERN, 2015; 2016).

Commodities Leaving FISI: The Choice Between Agri-Québec and FISI (2015–2019)

With the suspension of Agri-Québec's eligibility for FISI commodities, farmers found themselves in a position where they had to envision the best program for them. As such, the FADQ submitted every FISI commodity group to the choice between the two programs. For most commodities, the choice was easy, and they decided to maintain access to FISI (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*). But for four commodities — potatoes, corn, soybeans, and apples — commodity groups decided to rely on a referendum for their members to decide between the two programs (FADQ, 2017b; FADQ Board, 2016, June 29*). In 2015, potatoes, corn and soybean farmers decided to opt for Agri-Québec while apple growers instead opted for FISI (CAPERN, 2018). It would take four more years for apple growers to hold a new referendum and then choose Agri-Québec (FADQ Board, 2019, March 29*; 2019, June 14*). Most commodity groups strongly opposed the choice that was given to them by the FADQ, arguing that they should be able to benefit from both programs (FADQ, 2017b). They perceived it as an inequity in regard to the benefits they provide to the province. We can then observe how they perceived a stronger social construction than what they actually benefited.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ The same situation happened regarding the use of accumulated surpluses in the indemnity funds of former FISI commodities, as commodity groups were unable to channel these funds into an additional support program (CAPERN, 2018; FADQ Board, 2016, June 29*; 2017, May 11*). Instead, the FADQ retrieved its share of indemnity funds and farmers received their share to be invested in specific initiatives.

During the same period, another commodity left the FISI, but for very different reasons: milk-fed calves. In order to avoid mixing the two situations, we singled out the milk-fed calves' situation in the following subsection.¹⁷⁴

Milk-fed calves losing FISI's eligibility

In Québec the milk-fed calf industry has been the apanage of two integrators that produce the specific feeding required for this production. As early as in the late 1980s, the state was aware of the potential influence of these actors on the market with their capacity to shape the cost of production study through the fixing of market prices for the feeding (CAPA, 1999b). As such, when the state terminated the individual cap of units of all commodities throughout 1992 to 1994, it maintained it in the milk-fed calf at 1,000 units¹⁷⁵ (*Ibid.*). According to RAAQ's personnel, this contributed to shaping the industry with the two integrators using contracts with individual farmers to maintain the benefits of FISI (*Ibid.*). After several inquiries (CAPERN, 2010b) and to save the commodity eligibility to FISI, the industry, in collaboration with the FADQ and the Ministry, worked on a strategy to help develop the sector through technical improvements (CAPA, 2009; FADQ Board, 2006, December 14*; 2007, May 31*; 2007, September 14*; 2017, December 19*).

¹⁷⁴ These years also saw some changes in the determination of the premium, though they were qualified as minor by the FADQ's board and are thus excluded from our analysis (FADQ Board, 2016, June 17*). They included a change in the interaction variable between the deficit prior to 2010 and the 5-year deficit, as well as a minimum premium fixed at 1% of the stabilized income plus the depreciation of the deficit prior to 2010 (*Ibid.*). These changes were made following a report from the actuary (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*). Moreover, with commodities leaving the FISI, the collective maximum of hectares that can be enrolled for field crops was mechanically reduced. On the other side, the minimum cropping acreage to remain eligible to the FISI was reduced to avoid the mechanical ejection of farmers from the program (FADQ Board, 2016, October 14*; 2017, March 30*).

¹⁷⁵ Increased at 1,500 units in 2004 (FADQ Board, 2003, November 26*).

Following this situation, the CECPA was asked in 2013 to assess the influence of the two integrators on the cost of production and evaluate its capacity to conduct a cost of production study (FADQ, 2015b; FADQ Board, 2013, June 20*; 2014, November 7*). The conclusions pointed at the market influence of these two agri-food firms and that such a study would have been impossible (FADQ Board, 2015, June 12*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014). Hence, the FADQ decided to terminate milk-fed calves' eligibility to the FISI for the 2016 production year (FADQ Board, 2015, June 12*; 2015, September 18*). The capacity of control of agri-food firms then led the entire sector to lose its eligibility to the FISI. Oppositely, programs supporting the restructuring of enterprises were offered to independent milk-fed calves' farmers as a transition measure from the FISI to Agri-Québec (*Ibid.*; FADQ Board, 2015, July 22*; 2016, November 11*).

Adjusting FISI's Parameters: Deductible for Large Farms, Increased Recognition of Management Skills in the Wage of a Skilled Worker, and Including Promotion Mechanisms (2018–2019)

Following the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group on Farm Income of 2014, the FADQ's board continued its attempt to modernize the FISI (FADQ, 2019b; FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*; 2017, November 3*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014).¹⁷⁶ Ideas from an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture seemed to drive these changes, while some Peasant ideas were also present in the discourses. The

¹⁷⁶ Some of these measures were already recommended by the FADQ's board prior to the Working Group's report (FADQ Board, 2016, November 11*).

following quotes from different members of parliament show the Entrepreneurial ideas at the core of FISI's discussions:

“Mr. President, I must say that between *the sky is the limit* and *small is beautiful*¹⁷⁷, there is something, alright, something in between Mr. President, that we can call human-size agriculture. It is quite like what we have here, farms often still owned by families.” (CAPERN, 2016 our translation, emphasis added).¹⁷⁸

“And I don't want us to become like the US where you can see eight consecutive roads where ... all you can see is beef. Well, we don't want an industrial Québec, we don't want that big of a show” (CAPERN, 2017 our translation).¹⁷⁹

The first of these changes targeted the influence of Agri-food firms. In 2015 and 2017, the CECPA conducted studies to assess Agri-food firms influence on markets for each commodity eligible to the FISI (CAPERN, 2018; FADQ, 2017b; 2018; FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*; 2017, December 15*). As a result, the hog larger farms¹⁸⁰ saw a deductible being introduced regarding their FISI payments (FADQ, 2019b; FADQ Board, 2018, May 11*). In exchange, for all commodities, the FADQ terminated the specific premium distribution that was in place since 2010 for farms that were three times the model. Instead,

¹⁷⁷ In English in the text.

¹⁷⁸ “Mais, M. le Président, je dois vous dire qu'entre «the sky is the limit and the small is beautiful», il y a quelque chose entre les deux, O.K., quelque chose entre les deux, M. le Président, qui s'appelle, je vous dirai, de l'agriculture à l'échelle humaine. Et c'est un petit peu l'agriculture que l'on a ici, véritablement, souvent de l'agriculture qui est tenue par des familles.” (CAPERN, 2016).

¹⁷⁹ “Puis moi, je ne veux pas qu'on devienne les États-Unis, où est-ce qu'il peut y avoir huit rangs consécutifs où... rien que des têtes à boeuf. Bien, on ne veut pas un Québec industriel, on ne veut pas à grand déploiement” (CAPERN, 2017).

¹⁸⁰ At least three times the size of the model from the cost of production studies.

starting in 2018, all farms returned to the pre-2010 situation where the state paid two thirds of the premium (FADQ, 2019b; FADQ Board, 2018, May 11*). This had an unexpected consequence as some bigger farms started to question their participation in the FISi (FADQ Board, 2019, October 4*).¹⁸¹ Since the premiums still included fees to reimburse the deficit prior to 2010, when farms left the FISi, it increased the weight of the deficit on the remaining participants and thus penalized them (*Ibid.*). As such, the FADQ had to review its penalties for farms voluntarily quitting the FISi to reduce this unintended effect (*Ibid.*).

The second change inspired by an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture recognized the increased managerial duties for farmers as farms are getting bigger and workers are getting hired. In 2019, the FADQ, the Ministry and the UPA started to work on an updated method to compute the wage of a skilled worker to increase part of the wage in a recognition of those more skilled-driven decisions (FADQ Board, 2019, December 12 and 13*).¹⁸² By the end of the period we cover in this dissertation, the Minister had not yet announced his decisions regarding this issue.

Finally, the last change¹⁸³ was the enhancement of the beginning farmers' premium reduction from the first 2 to the first 3 years, up to CA\$50,000 per year (CAPERN, 2018; FADQ, 2018; FADQ Board, 2017, November 3*). This measure displays a support for Peasant ideas of beginning farmers, though they were partially presented as a protection of agriculture against

¹⁸¹ One integrator (duBreton) announced that all of its hogs would stop their enrollment in the FISi since the market signals and possibilities of compensation were not in line with its market specialization (Parent, 2019).

¹⁸² This work was forced the discontinuation of 2 of the 12 indicators used in the index of the wage of a skilled worker (FADQ Board, 2019, December 12 and 13*).

¹⁸³ We omitted the cancellation of the consideration of AgriStability payment in the stabilized income when a disease hit a hoard or flock of animals since this measure was adopted in 2019 but implemented in 2020 (FADQ Board, 2019, December 12 and 13*). We also omitted the recognition of specific levies of collective marketing organization directed toward promotion and marketing in the computation of the stabilized income (FADQ, 2019b; FADQ Board, 2018, October 5*).

integrators that would otherwise take control of Québec's agriculture (CAPERN, 2019). We can then find some elements of Entrepreneurial farming style in this program adjustment.

Summary

FISI's evolution over the years was, by far, the most detailed and documented of all programs we studied. Certainly, its lasting presence over the past 45 years as well as its important share of Québec Ministry of Agriculture's budget can explain the information available. At the core of FISI's evolution is the capacity of farmers to maintain such a massive program in support of Entrepreneurial agriculture. Its attachment to this farming style's vision has followed the FISI over the years even when under pressures from different visions of agriculture. As opposed to the other programs, it appears that the FISI has not been modified to answer demands from the new farming styles.¹⁸⁴ Both in the determination of the mechanisms and in the discourses of decision-makers, Entrepreneurial agriculture has remained central.

The FISI has also shown the strong positive social construction of farmers with changes that tended to benefit them even when financial cuts were the objectives. In the early 1990s, farmers successfully fought budget restrictions and managed to avoid the enforcement of environmental restrictions. Another example is when the Prime Minister sided with farmers at the end of the 1990s and in the early 2000s when environmental groups were questioning the state rationale to maintain the FISI. Instead, farmers obtained FADQ's creation with a secured budget for eight years and avoided to face constraining environmental cross-compliance regulations. One last example would be the 2009–2013 reforms that were trying to tighten FISI's

¹⁸⁴ If not for the milk-fed calf production.

intervention. Most of the reforms were later abandoned, while the doubling of the budget lasted longer.

Finally, corporatism has been a key factor in all of FISI's evolution. From its beginning, the UPA obtained a specific place in the agency overseeing it (i.e., the RAAQ and the FADQ). Even when the UPA's place was questioned or policy network expanded, the UPA has been able to convince the state to renew its financial engagement. 1998 and 2009–2010 are great examples as the UPA convinced the government to stop the ongoing reforms and instead implement an additional program in support of farmers. Both attempts were also started by wide consultations. Every time, the UPA showed its political strength through protests and managed to oppose to government's actions.

Farm Income Stabilization Account

The Farm Income Stabilization Account (FISA)¹⁸⁵ program was in place from 2001 to 2003. It offered the possibility for farmers to place up to 6% of their net sales into a savings account, an amount matched by the FADQ (CAPA, 2002; Lachapelle, 2007; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d; RAAQ, 2001). It then acted as a similar program to the Net Income Stabilization Account, AgriInvest and Agri-Québec. The FISA aimed at covering all commodities, though it was dismantled prior to that. As such, we can consider that participation was restrained to commodities not covered by supply management nor the FISI (FADQ, 2002; 2003).¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Compte de stabilisation du revenu agricole

¹⁸⁶ Some exceptions existed regarding soybeans, canola, apples and potatoes that were covered by both FISI and FISA.

The next subsections present the implementation and repeal processes behind the FISA. Building on our research model, we present the variables that influenced each of these changes (see Figure 23 for a summary of these changes). We then summarize the evolution of the FISA.

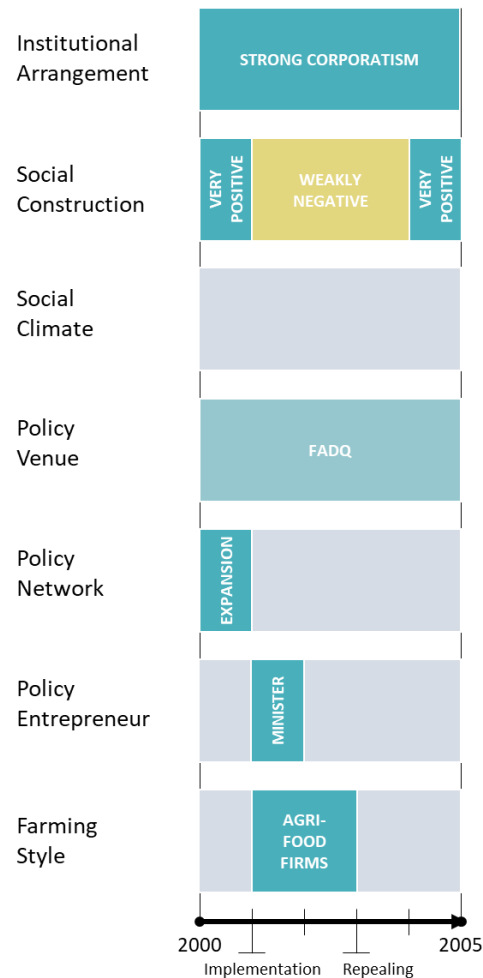


Figure 23. Farm Income Stabilization Account’s visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Pre-implementation

As a spin-off work of the agricultural summits of 1998 and 1999, specific working groups were implemented in 1998 and 1999 to redefine Québec risk management programs and environment (Lachapelle, 2007). Each of these groups included actors outside of the corporatist setting, as well as the traditional ones (CAPA, 1998a; 1998b; 1999a; Québec Assemblée

Nationale, 2000d). These working groups were looking for a replacement for the FISI that would not be limited to some commodities (CAPA, 2000a; FADQ, 2002; Lachapelle, 2007; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d), while being aligned with the newly negotiated North American Free Trade Agreement and World Trade Organization's creation (Auditor General of Québec, 1995; CAPA, 1996a; 1996c; 1996e; 1997c; 1998b; 1999c; 2000a; FADQ, 2002; Lachapelle, 2007; Québec Assemblée Nationale, 2000d). In addition, the Québec government showed its interest to support agriculture in its development under a long-term budget engagement and transition measures, but also asked to have reforms made under the existing budget (CAPA, 1998b; 1999a; 2002; Lachapelle, 2007). It then depicts the maximum level of social construction that was obtained by farmers at the time.

The new program had to align with new objectives from the Minister: support offered to all farms and all commodities produced on a farm needed to be considered in the determination of support (CAPA, 1997c). Coming from 1996's orientations closer to the Peasant vision of agriculture (e.g., sustainable use of resources, regional development), they were changed in 1997 to reflect an increased focus on an Entrepreneurial agriculture (e.g., improved competitiveness, protection against market fluctuation) (CAPA, 1996a; 1996b; 1997b). This then calls back to the Auditor General of Québec's comments on the placation reliance of non-entrepreneurial concepts and their lack of operationalization.

Implementation (2001)

The creation of the FISA was one of the first actions of the new policy venue for risk management programs in Québec that was the FADQ (CAPA, 2002; FADQ, 2001).¹⁸⁷ Aiming at offering a protection for non-FISI commodities (CAPA, 2002), the FADQ had to consider the reduced federal money directed toward risk management in the verge of the new Canadian Agricultural Policy Framework (CAPA, 1998b; 2002; 2004).¹⁸⁸ To support its work regarding the new program, the FADQ created a special committee to manage any issues coming from this new program (FADQ, 2003).

Repealing of FISA (2003)

However, the Agricultural Policy Framework of 2003 refocused all the federal money for risk management programs toward the new Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program (CAIS) (CAPA, 20,002; 20,004).¹⁸⁹ The provincial — nationalist — government tried to fight the federal, but even the refusal from Québec to sign the Policy Framework did not suffice to avoid the CAIS (FADQ, 2003).

Due to the reduced funding, the FADQ started by postponing the eligibility of FISI's commodities from 2002 to 2004, but were later found in a position where funds were insufficient to maintain both the FISA and the FISI (FADQ, 2003; 2004; Lachappelle, 2007). As such, the FADQ repealed the FISA in 2003 (FADQ, 2004).

¹⁸⁷ See FISI's section for more details on the creation of the FADQ.

¹⁸⁸ In practice, the FISA replaced and extended the coverage of the NISA for Québec farmers (CAPA, 2003).

¹⁸⁹ See FISI's section for more details on CAIS's implementation in Québec.

Summary

The FISA is a good example of the attempt by the provincial government to change its method of support of risk management. Emerging from an expansion of the policy network in 1998 and 1999, the new program reached consensus amongst all actors of the chain. However, farmers were seeing the FISA as a complement to the FISI, while the state was trying to repeal the latter. Hence, when the expected federal money started to be missing, the provincial government found itself in a position where one program had to be repealed. Since the FISI was supported by a more vocal — and better politically organized — commodity groups, the FADQ maintained it while it repealed the FISA. This program's evolution can then show us how corporatist influences of farmers can refrain states' actions when the social construction of farmers necessitates some fiscal restriction.

Agri-Québec

Agri-Québec is a risk management program offered in Québec since 2010 and managed by the FADQ. It is merely a replica of the FISA as farmers have a special saving's account guaranteed by the government. In both programs, farmers can make a deposit corresponding to a certain percentage of their sales, and these deposits are matched by the government. The percentage of the sales that farmers can put in their account varied across time and depending on different characteristics of the farm (see Table 16 for a summary of the evolution of maximum shares of sale over the years) Admissibility to the program also varied across time, but it currently encompasses commodities that are not covered by supply management nor the FISI.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ The other commodities namely excluded are cannabis, race horses, peat moss and wild animals.

Table 16. *Share of the allowable sales for Agri-Québec that are matched by the government over the time (adapted from annual summaries of Agri-Québec published by FADQ)*

	2010–2013	2013–2015	2015–2017	2017–2020
Only if total sales are less than CA\$100,000	3.0%	3.0%	4.2%	4.2%
If in transition to organic				8.2%
If total sales are over CA\$100,000, for the first CA\$0–100,000 sales			3.2%	3.2%
If in transition to organic				7.2%
CA\$100,000–1.5 M sales				3.2%
If in transition to organic				5.2%
CA\$1.5–2.5 M sales	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
CA\$2.5–5 M sales		1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
> CA\$5 M sales		1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

The next subsections present the evolution of Agri-Québec across the years. Following our research model, we present the main factors that brought important changes to the program as it impacted the participation of farmers or the state. They are also summarized in Figure 24. It should be noted that the changes listed below are not exhaustive. During a single year, many decisions are made by FADQ's board that impact its programs marginally. As such, when changes were marginal, they were omitted from a thorough description.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Changes were considered marginal if they did not affect the mechanisms of support for farmers or if they consisted of annual adjustment to participation fees (e.g., change in the administrative fees, change in administrative calendar, investment decisions on the funds).

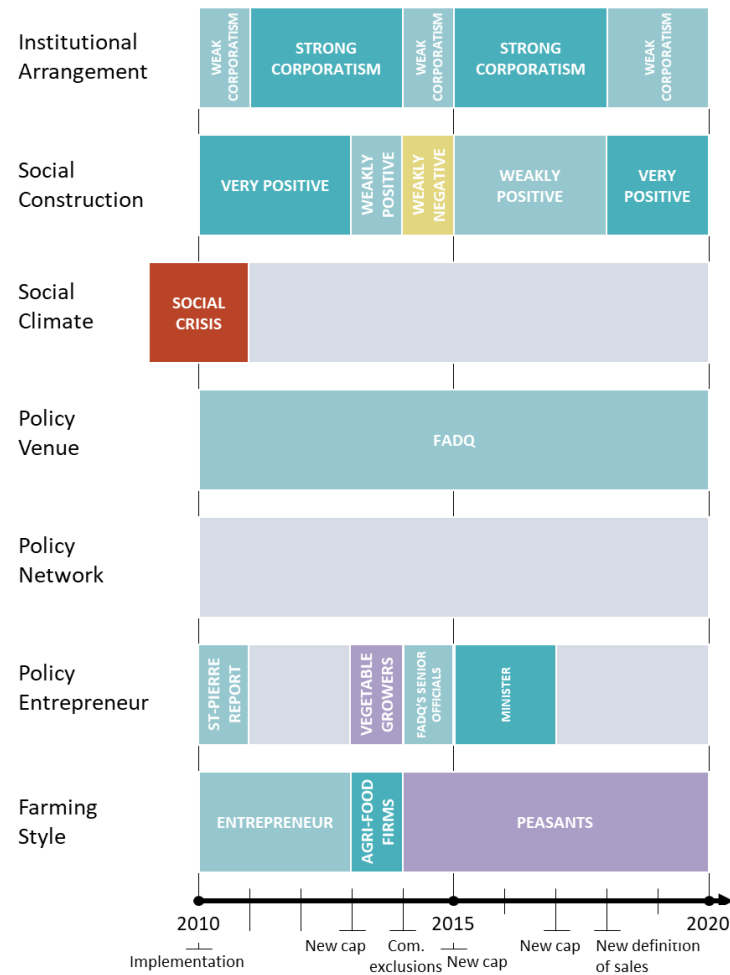


Figure 24. Agri-Québec's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Pre-implementation (2007-2009)

The creation of Agri-Québec results from the combined suggestions from the Pronovost Report and the Saint-Pierre Report. Both of these reports suggested the replacement of the FISI by a new program that would be less restrictive in terms of commodities covered. Even though they concluded with similar recommendations of a program where farmers' savings would be matched by the government, their rationale diverge (CAAAQ, 2008; Saint-Pierre, 2009). For Pronovost, the focus of the new program had to offer support for the difficult climate conditions — such as a cold winter — in which Québec farmers are evolving and provide incentives to adopt good environmental practices (CAAAQ, 2008). These ideas were supported by a vision

leaning toward Peasant agriculture: multifunctionality, locally oriented rather than export-oriented, diversified, and sustainable.¹⁹² Oppositely, Saint-Pierre (2009) suggested that the new program should improve the equity between farms and commodities since everyone would be eligible to participate in the program — as opposed to the FISI — while being budget-neutral to the state. Moreover, it should also increase the links between farmers and the market since it helps them to invest in order to improve their profitability (*Ibid.*; CAPERN, 2011i).¹⁹³ He thus strongly echoed the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture.

One potential cause for the divergence between the visions of agriculture purported is the policy network involved in both reports. The Pronovost Report conducted a consultation of over 750 organizations that came from a wide variety of background, a sign that the policy network got extended. This is different from Saint-Pierre, who did not conduct public consultations, but relied on professional expertise. It also reflects in the scope of the work of both reports as Pronovost addressed a wide variety of topics, while Saint-Pierre's only focus was risk management programs.

Still, both proposals closely aligned with the Agri-Québec program that was implemented in 2010. As such, we can consider the policy entrepreneur role of Michel R. Saint-Pierre and Jean Pronovost in their reports. Their importance was also highlighted by members of parliament and high-ranking officials. This is notably the case of Robert Dutil, acting Minister of Agriculture, as he highlighted the role of both reports: “In terms of risk management, there was a

¹⁹² Other visions were also present, though at a lower level. For instance, the report emphasized the utility of carrying an entrepreneurial mindset while adopting new techniques and innovation. It also highlights the future potential of an agriculture that would answer consumers' expectations (CAAAQ, 2008).

¹⁹³ However, Saint-Pierre (2009) still recognized the support needed for farmers that adopt good environmental practices, but suggested its recognition through an additional program, which was never implemented.

consensus on a redefinition of state intervention. Reports from Mrs. Pronovost and Saint-Pierre invited us in this direction.” (CAPERN, 2011f our translation)¹⁹⁴

Program Implementation (2010)

However, when the government announced the creation of Agri-Québec in 2010, they mostly mobilized Saint-Pierre rationale. Many comments were made about the way farmers can adjust their production to align with market incentives, a need for equity between sectors, and for support for new farmers (CAPERN, 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2001b; FADQ, 2010). Thus, a predominance of an Entrepreneurial vision can be observed in their discourses, with a hint of Peasant vision.

“So, what we implemented since the beginning, it mostly targets small enterprises, because we know that bigger ones have the capacities to hire accountants, lawyers, maybe even actuaries, I do not know. These enterprises have the capacity to get the best out of all our programs. [...] To this sense, Agri-Québec and AgriInvest have a maximum amount, over which the government does not provide more money anymore, so it favors smaller enterprises.” (CAPERN, 2011f our translation).¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ “En matière de gestion des risques, le consensus est à l'effet qu'il fallait revoir notre intervention. Les rapports de MM. Pronovost et Saint-Pierre nous y avaient conviés.” (CAPERN, 2011f).

¹⁹⁵ “Alors, ce qu'on a mis en place depuis le début, ça vise principalement les petites entreprises, parce qu'on sait que les grandes entreprises ont le moyen de se payer des comptables, des avocats, peut-être même des actuaires, je ne sais pas. Et ces entreprises-là sont capables d'aller chercher le meilleur de tous nos programmes. [...] À cet égard, le programme Agri-Québec, ou Agri-investissement, est plafonné, donc, passé un certain seuil, il n'y a plus d'intervention possible, donc il favorise les plus petites entreprises.” (CAPERN, 2011f).

Moreover, the creation of the new program, as well as the budget increased that was announced few months prior, echo a positive social construction. As minister Corbeil mentioned, the budget of the FADQ was doubled in 2010, in part to avoid further FADQ's deficit, while the governing party was trying to reduce the expenses in most of the other ministries (CAPERN, 2011a). Moreover, while both reports suggested to replace FISI by this new program, Agri-Québec was instead added to FISI. To achieve such a budget rise in a period of budget cutbacks, it must mean that the government was seeing farmers as deserving more support.

Increasing the Maximum Contribution for Large Farms (2013)

From 2010 to 2013, the share of sales that farmers would see matched up when they deposit them in their saving accounts was 3% for their sales from CA\$0 to 1.5 million.¹⁹⁶ For their sales of over 1.5 million, farmers' deposits were not matched by the government.

However, in 2013, the FADQ extended its criteria for determining the maximal deposits by farmers to increase the participation incentive for larger farms. Farmers with sales coming from non-FISI commodities that went over CA\$1.5 million could then deposit part of their sales, but up to a lower share (FADQ, 2013a). According to official reports from the FADQ and parliamentary transcripts, the main factor justifying the program modification was the presence of a similar program in Ontario that provided benefits to vegetable growers that compete on markets with Québec producers (FADQ, 2014).

This idea of competitiveness against other regions of production, the scope of farms targeted (i.e., farms that generate more than CA\$1.5 million of sales annually), and the choice of

¹⁹⁶ As a matter of simplification, we omitted the specificities of Agri-Québec regarding aquaculture. Basically, since aquaculture is not eligible to AgriInvest, these farmers have their funds matched up to 3.6% of their sales.

a program aiming to facilitate investments is in line with the Agri-food firms' characteristics. These are also elements that can be found in the discourses of two unions affiliated to the UPA: the Québec Vegetable Farmers Association and the Québec Union of Greenhouse Producers¹⁹⁷ who presented their requests to the state respectively in 2011 and 2012 (CAPERN, 2011i; 2012h). As such, it is interesting to note that farmers' unions integrated the Agri-food firms vision of agriculture. Moreover, through the program evolution, we can note that the state adopted justifications following Agri-food firms that were mostly absent at the time when the program was implemented.

Finally, on a lower level, budget cuts by the federal government on AgriInvest and AgriStability could also justify the change in Agri-Québec as it was highlighted ex-post by the Working Group on Farm Income of 2014. Still, in its official documents, the FADQ mostly identify the creation Agri-Québec Plus as a response to the federal actions.

Eligibility Change: Excluding FISI's Commodities (2014)

As previously mentioned, the 2013 changes in the maximal deposit by bigger farms excluded FISI's commodities, but only for sales over CA\$1.5 M. In 2014,¹⁹⁸ the exclusion of FISI's commodities from Agri-Québec became complete which led the FADQ to ask groups of farmers to collectively decide if they preferred to keep access to the FISI or to Agri-Québec (for additional details, see FISI section). This then led four commodities to prefer Agri-Québec's eligibility.

¹⁹⁷ Fédération des producteurs maraîchers du Québec et Syndicat des producteurs de serres du Québec.

¹⁹⁸ For 2014 and 2015, the exclusion was temporary, but by 2016 it became permanent.

Officially, this change was supported by the conclusions of the Working Group on Farm Income of 2014, a corporatist institutional arrangement (see FISI section). The recommendations of the Working Group were guided by great principles that mostly align with a Peasant vision of agriculture: support provided to every commodity, specific attention provided to farms transitioning to new models (e.g., organic, diversification, new owners), exclusion of firms that can influence the market, not masking market signals, and rewarding multifunctionality of agriculture (Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014). In addition, the report identified changes in the federal intervention in 2013 as a factor to be taken into account, as well as the international context that can limit state intervention (*Ibid.*).

Hence, building on these principles, the Working Group recommended — amongst other recommendations — that FISI commodities' eligibility to Agri-Québec be revoked. Such decisions followed the observation of the impacts on FISI's payments from the amounts distributed in Agri-Québec (FADQ, 2015b).

Since the recommendation came from a corporatist institutional arrangement, it facilitated the acceptance by farmers. The UPA has systematically been part of the decision-making process with opportunities to voice their concerns and solutions.¹⁹⁹ However, even if they opposed the solution, they were tied to it and managed to force the decision to all of its members. Inside the UPA's ranks, protests were important — especially by the Grain Farmers of Québec — and the UPA faced strong criticisms from its own members. This was also helped by the strength demonstrated by Minister Paradis who refused to bend down in front of UPA's requests, while

¹⁹⁹ In particular, the Minister of Agriculture at the time, Pierre Paradis, mentioned how UPA was opposed to the decision during the process and fought back with economic studies presenting how it would not cost much to the state to maintain the eligibility (CAPERN, 2016).

multiplied the initiatives threatening UPA's status through other agricultural support programs. This change then highlights the limits of the positive social construction of agriculture.

Increasing the Maximum Contribution for Smaller Farms and in Transition Toward Organic Farms (2015-2017)

The recommendations from the Working Group also brought the FADQ to increase the share of sales that smaller farmers (2015) and farmers transitioning toward organic production (2017) could deposit in Agri-Québec (FADQ, 2017c). At first sight, these changes seem to result from the corporatist institutional arrangement that was the Working Group, where farmers could negotiate the recommendations with the state. However, the Minister at the time, Pierre Paradis, used his influence to push these changes to the FADQ. By doing so, he circumvented the institutional arrangement and forced his ideas in the program. To do so, he nominated new FADQ's board members and chairperson, sent letters to the chairperson, and publicly stated his expectations. He also acknowledged how, in the past, the government — including when he was a member of the government — lacked leadership in imposing their will to the FADQ:

“And I understand, and I will say it as I think of it, here, in the past, [the FADQ] failed to react fast enough, especially regarding the hog price crisis. We managed, as the [Agriculture, Fisheries, Energy, and Natural Resources Commission], here, all together, to force them to intervene, and this is a situation that I do not want to see again.” (CAPERN, 2014 our translation)²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ “Puis je le comprends, puis je vais le dire comme je le pense, là, dans le passé La Financière agricole n'avait pas réagi assez promptement, entre autres dans la crise de stabilisation des producteurs porcins. On avait réussi, avec la commission de la [Commission de l'agriculture, des pêcheries, de l'énergie et des ressources naturelles], là, tout le monde ensemble, de leur forcer la

He also put forward a renewed vision of agriculture leaning toward Peasant agriculture as both the size of the farms targeted as well as the organic approach to agriculture align with the Peasant vision. Still, the way organic was presented by the Minister in all the announcements around the organic industry also relied on concepts of Agri-food firms since he saw the organic industry as an opportunity of development and differentiation of Québec's agriculture. Hence, the support for organic does not seem to be attached with ideas of multifunctionality, but rather to reach markets that can offer a good return to farmers (CAPERN, 2015). A mix of vision might then have been at play.

Including Farm Products Processed on the Farm (2018)

Finally, the last change to Agri-Québec happened in 2018 with the eligibility of farm products that are processed on the farm.²⁰¹ Similar to the small farm support and transition toward organic, this change resulted from a recommendation from the Working Group in 2014 and echoed some Peasant agriculture and Agri-food firms' ideas.

The main difference with the previous changes, is that the recognition of farm processed products happened in the midst of an important consultation and the proposition of the first bio-food policy for Québec.²⁰² Overseen directly by the ministers that held the position during 2017 and 2018, these consultations mobilized actors from the processing, farming and fisheries

main pour intervenir, puis c'est une situation que je ne souhaite plus qui se reproduise.” (CAPERN, 2014).

²⁰¹ Through this adjustment, the value for which the products processed on the farm can be sold is fully considered until the total sales on a farm reach CA\$1.5 M. Above that, only the value of the product prior to being processed is considered as a sale. For some groups such as the potato growers, this represents a specific support for bigger farmers that are doing a first processing at the farm (CAPERN, 2012e).

²⁰² The term of bio-food refers to agriculture, agri-food and fisheries' industries. It appeared for the first time through the Green Paper for a bio-food policy in 2011.

industries, as well as representatives of consumers. If the policy statement did not bring specific changes to existing programs, it reassessed their existence and established a rationale for their future evolution. In this sense, the preliminary remarks of the Prime Minister Couillard in the policy are setting the tone on the Entrepreneurial vision behind these industries: “We encourage the bio-food industry to focus on innovation, embrace the digital revolution and follow the ongoing changes of good practices.” (MAPAQ, 2018, p.3 our translation)²⁰³ Thus, if both Peasant and Agri-food visions remained present, the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture made its comeback during these years.²⁰⁴

Summary

The Agri-Québec evolution shows how an opening of the policy network and the actions of the Commission Pronovost as a policy entrepreneur led to bring concepts associated with the Peasant agriculture inside the discussions. In particular, it pushed the idea of financial help for every sector, and not only those traditionally covered by the FISI and supply management since the 1970s. Moreover, since a similar program to Agri-Québec was already existing at the federal level, the research for innovation was likely facilitated by it.

However, when we analyze the rationale behind the implementation of the policy, many of the justifications from the Saint-Pierre report and corporatist actors were inspired by an

²⁰³ “Nous encourageons le secteur bioalimentaire à se tourner vers l’innovation, à emprunter le virage numérique et à suivre l’évolution constante des pratiques.” (MAPAQ, 2018, p.3)

²⁰⁴ Part of the first orientation, as well as the third and fourth are calling toward peasantry concepts such as local movements, sustainability, best management practices, new farmers, and territorial occupation. The other part of the first orientation aims at Agri-food firms’ ideas toward market reciprocity conditions and responding to consumers’ requests. Finally, Entrepreneurial agriculture is represented in the second orientation that promotes the existing support mechanisms that have been present since the 1970s, the focus on innovation, and increasing investments in farms and farm owners (MAPAQ, 2018).

Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. This twist of rationale can remind us of Cashore & Howlett's (2007) idea of a thermostatic policy of evolution when a policy is renewed, but under different justifications or objectives. In our case, since Entrepreneurial ideas were dominating the discourse of corporatist actors prior to the Pronovost Commission, justifying program change through the dominating ideas might have been a smart political play led by Michel R. Saint-Pierre (2009) to ease the acceptance of his proposal.

Only later, after the program was implemented, the government brought back Peasant considerations under the influence of a senior minister that repeatedly asked the corporatist actors to adopt increased coverage for farmers displaying Peasant characteristics. At that time, farmers appeared to be on board with the changes — as opposed to previous changes associated with Agri-food firms' ideas — and likely fostered the pace of changes through FADQ's board where corporatism is formally expressed.

As such, we can consider, in this case, that new farming styles needed the help of external actors — a policy entrepreneur and a senior minister — to get accepted by corporatist actors, but once they were, they saw a multiplication of small measures adopted.

Agri-Québec Plus

Agri-Québec Plus was implemented in 2014 by the FADQ as a replacement for the decreased coverage of the federal program AgriStability. As such, it acts as a complement to AgriStability. Farmers enrolled then receive subsidies when their individual margin decreases at least 15% based on their Olympic average²⁰⁵ margin of the past five years. Farmers are then compensated for their losses between 15% and 30% of their margin. The portion below 70% of

²⁰⁵ A five-year average for which the best and the worst years are taken away.

the Olympic average margin is covered under AgriStability (FADQ, 2016a). In both programs a 30% copay is applied. Admissibility to the program also varied across time, but it currently encompasses almost all commodities that are not covered by either supply management or the FISI.²⁰⁶

The next subsections present the implementation of Agri-Québec Plus and the single change that was made to the program in 2015. For these two changes, we develop on the variables of our research model that are at play (cf. Figure 25). We then summarize the evolution of Agri-Québec Plus.

²⁰⁶ The other commodities namely excluded are cannabis, race horses, peat moss and wild animals.

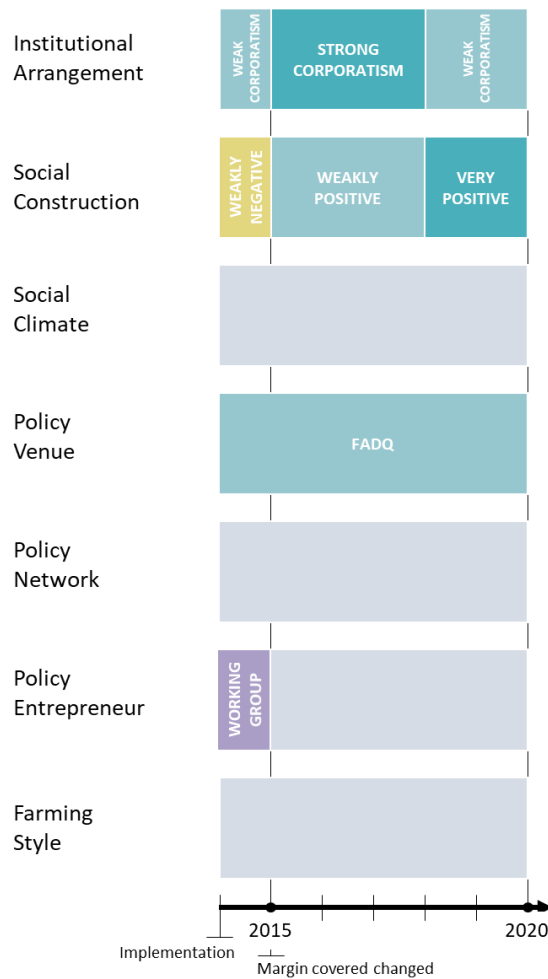


Figure 25. Agri-Québec Plus's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Implementation (2014)

The implementation of Agri-Québec Plus resulted from the federal change in AgriStability when they decided to move its coverage from 85% to 70% of the margin (FADQ, 2014). Observing the impact that it could have on farmers that are not covered by the FISI nor supply management, the Québec government decided to cover most of this impact (FADQ, 2014; FADQ Board, 2013, November 28*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014). The implementation of the Agri-Québec Plus program then displayed the positive social construction of farmers that convinced the government of their deservingness of

the existing support. To ensure this deservingness, Agri-Québec Plus offered compensations only for farmers that generated a net benefit less than CA\$10,000 (FADQ, 2014).

Increase of Agri-Québec Plus Coverage (2015)

In 2015, the Québec government increased the coverage of Agri-Québec Plus by allowing farmers that generated a net benefit less than CA\$50,000 to receive compensation and by increasing the coverage of the margin (FADQ, 2016c; FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*). In this, they followed the recommendation from the Working Group on Farm Income of 2014, a corporatist institutional arrangement, that was concerned about the decreased coverage of AgriStability by the federal government (FADQ Board, 2015, December 14 and 15*; Groupe de Travail sur la Sécurité du Revenu en Agriculture au Québec, 2014). As such, this situation also displayed the capacity of farmers to direct more resources in their direction, thus pointing toward a positive social construction.

Summary

The evolution of Agri-Québec Plus mostly depicts the capacity and willingness of the provincial government to offer support to farmers that align with its perception of their deservingness. At first, when the federal government decided to reduce its intervention, the provincial government implemented the new program to compensate part of the potential losses. A year later, the mechanisms of intervention were readjusted to increase the coverage and to include a broader array of farms. This program evolution thus shows the strength of social construction under a federalist pressure.

Production Insurance

Production Insurance²⁰⁷ is Ontario's equivalent of Québec Crop Insurance. As such it offers since 1966²⁰⁸ an insurance protection for crops against weather impacts, diseases and pest invasions (Agricorp, 2004; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; 2017). Farmers can enroll their eligible crops under production insurance and choose the type of risk and the coverage level then want to insure (Table 17 summarizes the commodities covered by Production Insurance). Production insurance payments are based on the assessment of damages in the fields either if yields are lower than usual, or if the conditions do not allow for efficient harvesting (Agricorp, 2021).²⁰⁹ In such plans, farmers can enroll in protection covering lower yields, the coverage of emergency costs to avoid increasing losses, coverage of costs when there is no harvest due to low yield, and a loss of quality (Government of Canada et al., 2010*; 2011*). The only exception is the rain coverage plan offered for hay and pasture which is based on the quantity of rain fallen during the production season (Agricorp, 2000; 2001; 2002; 2015; 2016; 2021). For plans based on yields, compensations are distributed when observed yields are lower than reference yields. For other plans, payments are linked to other criteria such as a comparison with provincial references (Agricorp, 2021). All payments also follow the level of deductible chosen by farmers which can vary from 10 to 40% depending on plans (Government of Canada et al. 2010*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017).

²⁰⁷ Until 2015, the program was called Crop Insurance. To reduce confusion with Québec's program and facilitate reading, the term Production Insurance is used in the whole section.

²⁰⁸ As for Québec, the implementation of Production Insurance by the provincial government followed the federal adoption of the enabling legislation Crop Insurance Act in 1959 (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b).

²⁰⁹ Observed yields below 70% or over 130% of covered yields are buffered to, respectively, 70% and 130% of the average in the covered yields calculation to reduce yields volatility (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b).

Table 17. *Commodities covered by Production Insurance sorted by their type of plan (Agricorp, 2021)*

Individual plans based on yields	Individual plans not based on yields	Collective plans based on yields	Collective plans not based on yields
Beekeeping (honey)	Beekeeping (bees)	None	Hay and pasture
Field crops	Forage (new seeding)		
Field crops (seeds)	Fresh vegetables		
Fresh vegetables	Fruit trees		
Fruits from fruit trees	Ginseng (until 2022)		
Grapes	Grape vines		
Potatoes			
Processing vegetables			
Strawberries			
Tobacco			

Same as for Québec's Crop Insurance, Ontario Production Insurance is a partnership between the federal and provincial governments. Since 2004, the former covers 60%, while the latter covers 40% of the administrative costs for the program (Agricorp, 2004), as well as, for most plans, respectively 36% and 24% of the insurance premiums. Hence, farmers generally only pay 40% of the premium to enroll their crops in Production Insurance (*Ibid.*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015g).²¹⁰ The federal participation also means that changes to the program must be accepted by the federal government

²¹⁰ Prior to 2004, farmers paid 50% of the premium (Agricorp, 1998; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1997; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

and are impacted by changes in the Agricultural Policy Frameworks.²¹¹ Negotiations usually regroup Agricorp, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and farmers' representatives (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015g).

Until the creation of Agricorp in 1997, the program was administered directly by the Ministry through the Crop Insurance Commission (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). Since that time, Agricorp has been the organization overseeing the administration and management of the program. Amongst Agricorp's responsibilities is the determination of the premium. These are determined through an actuarial analysis (Agricorp, 2016; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b) and based on each farmer's history of past claims, commodities produced, and parameters chosen by each farmer (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017). Another duty of Agricorp is the assessment of losses observed by farmers to validate their insurance claims (*Ibid.*).

²¹¹ As a reminder, Agricultural Policy Frameworks are the Canadian agricultural policies and involve a negotiation led by the federal government, but requiring the support from provincial governments as well.

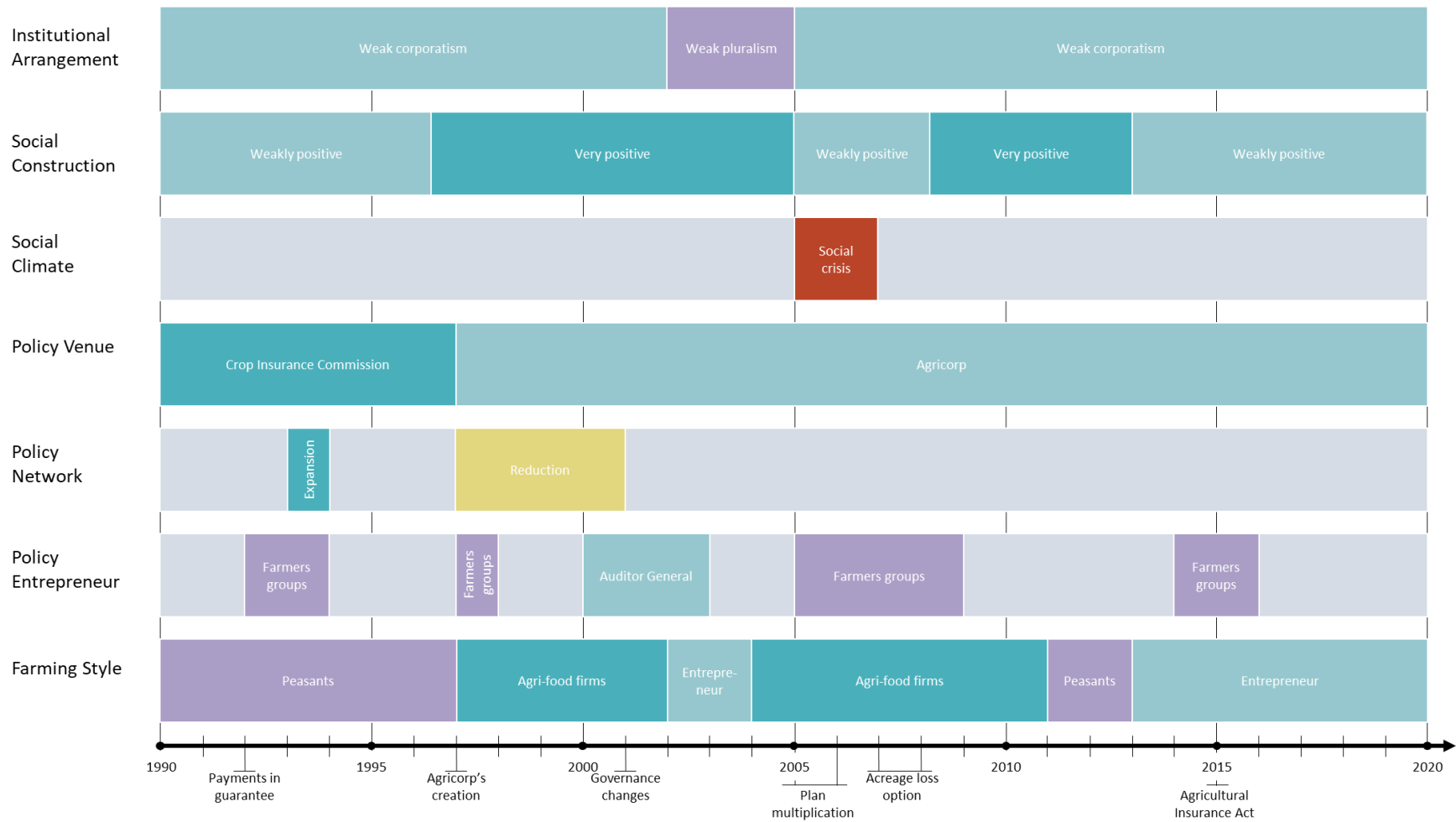


Figure 26. Production Insurance's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

The following subsections list and analyze the main changes that impacted Production Insurance from 1990 to 2020. Each change listed is accompanied by the variables that were observed. Figure 26 also represents graphically the change and variables observed. Not all changes are, however, listed since Production Insurance is a program that offers over 50 different plans that followed their own evolutionary path. For instance, only in 2002–2003, 30 program changes have been implemented (Agricorp, 2003). Hence, to simplify the analysis and avoid specific focus on the reality of only some commodities, only the most important changes affecting a number of plans are analyzed below.

Stability of the 1990s

For most of the 1990s, Production Insurance slightly evolved to improve the flexibility of participating farmers. For instance, grains and oilseeds coverage benefited from some adjustments — including an improvement — of the mechanism of price determination for grains covered (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). Another change allowed farmers to use their expected crop insurance payouts as a guarantee to secure loans, starting in 1992 (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; 1993a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1992).

These two changes were associated, in the discourse of elected officials, with repeated adverse weather justifying additional support granted to farmers (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993a).²¹² They were also obtained in a period of budget restriction for the

²¹² Though one farmers' group suggested maintaining barriers or limits to the distribution of additional help (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b).

Ministry as well as in most of the other areas of action from the government (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1997). This could then display a somewhat limited positive social construction of farmers that at least maintained their existing program in a period of budget constraints. Moreover, all these changes were discussed with farmers' representatives, either through specific commodity groups or general farmers' groups such as the OFA (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1992; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). Only in a single occasion, in 1993 for the Vision 2020 summit, the policy network has been opened to discuss with actors from all the agri-food industry. However, this discussion was not limited to Production Insurance and aside from the creation of Agricorp, impacts on crop insurance were minimal (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993a).

Creation of Agricorp (1997)

After more than a decade of discussions involving farmers' groups and food processors (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b),²¹³ Agricorp was born in January 1997. As documented in the Market Revenue Insurance section, the newly created Crown corporation replaced the Ministry in several of its duties. Amongst others, it took charge of Production Insurance and other risk management programs.²¹⁴ Still, the Ministry maintained some powers regarding the risk management programs as defined in the memorandum of understanding between Agricorp and the Ministry (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario,

²¹³ Including a formal proposal to parliament in 1992 (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b).

²¹⁴ It also started to offer consulting service when requested by farmers' groups (e.g., crop grading, inspections, audits) (Agricorp, 1998; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). For instance, the Ministry remained in charge of any strategic orientations, while the day-to-day activities, reporting, program implementation and controls became Agricorp's responsibilities (*Ibid.*).

Even though a thorough revision of many insurance products (forage, grains and oilseeds, processing tomatoes, apple) (Agricorp, 1998) was instigated by Agricorp, the program in itself remained similar. This was facilitated by the transfer of several senior officials from the Ministry to Agricorp (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). One major change, however, affected the lower-level bureaucrats since Agricorp did not hire back crop insurance vendors across the province, but implemented a network of risk management program specialists that could better respond to farmers' requests (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1993b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1994).

It was expected that the presence of farmers' representatives on Agricorp's board²¹⁵ would improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the organization to facilitate change and stimulate enrollment (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). Moreover, Agricorp created a Crop Insurance Commission as part of its structure where farmers could oversee more directly Production Insurance (Agricorp, 1998; 1999; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). The words of Minister Noble Villeneuve are eloquent on the expectations regarding farmers' position on Agricorp board: "I want the honorable member to know that [Production Insurance] will be administered by the Crop Insurance Commission initially, which is farmers working for farmers,

²¹⁵ Each commodity group suggests two or three names to the Minister and the latter chooses amongst the suggested names and submit them to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for their nomination (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

and who better can administer something like Agricorp?” (Noble Villeneuve) (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1996c).

This light form of corporatism was seen as the solution to reorient state support on the verge of the new millennium and adopt a market-driven approach centered on program adjustment to align risk management programs with the rapid pace of change in the agri-food industry (Agricorp, 1998).

Agricorp’s creation also brought some adjustments to Production Insurance. For instance, its Crown corporation structure allowed the introduction of reinsurance to protect the funds and stabilize premiums for farmers (*Ibid.*; Agricorp, 2000 in Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). This mostly technical change was self-financed, but eventually led to inquiries regarding Agricorp’s management and capabilities (see the following section). Another change, the creation of the Optional Unit Coverage as a pilot project for the biggest grains farmers eventually led to further debates on its rationale. The idea of this option was to allow farmers that own several farming plots over long distances to enroll different units separately under Production Insurance (Agricorp, 1999). This offered the possibility to avoid the requirement of enrolling all production units under the same contract intended to limit selection bias (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993b). It thus recognized a specific status for bigger farmers which then echoes Agri-food firm ideas.

All these changes²¹⁶ were aimed at increasing the robustness and competitiveness of the agriculture and food industry (Agricorp, 1998), and elected officials strongly expected that

²¹⁶ Other less important changes included a pilot project for Winter Wheat producers to self-report their yields and reduced paperwork complexity for program renewal and yield reporting (Agricorp, 1999).

participation level of farmers would be improved through these changes (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1990).

Troubles at Agricorp (2000–2003)

In 2000, the Auditor General of Ontario conducted an audit on Agricorp to discover some governance issues and potential improper use of funds (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000a; 2000b). More specifically, the Auditor identified that the Board and its two main committees — Executive Committee and Crop Insurance Committee — lacked some serious support from the management (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). The delegations of authority were unclear, responsibilities were not specified, insufficient or misleading information was brought to the board, and conflicts were present in the structure in part due to specific interests being represented on the board (*Ibid.*). The Auditor General documented improper maneuvers as well as potential illegal activities which led the Ministry to revisit its relationship with Agricorp (Agricorp, 2001). Members of the opposition strongly challenged the government on this scandal and asked the Auditor General to appear in Commission to discuss its report (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000f; 2000h; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000a; 2000b). The future Premier Dalton McGuinty even compared the Agricorp situation with Walkerton's water crisis that led to several deaths due to E. Coli in 2000 (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000f).

Through a new Memorandum of Understanding between Agricorp and the Ministry, Agricorp developed a three-year business plan and performance measures to facilitate proper governance (Agricorp, 2001; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2002). Moreover, a new vision statement was adopted in 2001, the seventh since Agricorp's creation 4 years before

(Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000h). Additionally, the size of the board decreased to 12 members and the Executive Committee and Crop Insurance Committee merged formally into the board (Agricorp, 2000; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2002).

Aside from these governance issues at Agricorp, the policy entrepreneur work of the Auditor General questioned some practices and programs implemented by Agricorp over the years. Without going into details of the more than 40 changes that were implemented following the report (Agricorp, 2001; 2003), some appear to display variables from our model. These changes were discussed with commodity groups overseeing the commodities concerned (Agricorp, 2001) and larger discussions about the future of Production Insurance were held with all commodity groups, general farm organizations and unspecified potential partners (Agricorp, 2003).

First, the Optional Unit Coverage offered to grains and oilseeds farmers was criticized for its lack of actuarially sound analysis which led to additional costs for the state and inequity between farmers (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000a). Corn Growers strongly disagreed with these criticisms as they argued that the Optional Unit Coverage was a matter of equity and fairness inside rural communities (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b). Instead, they asked for premium discounts for bigger farmers that assume more of the risk due to the offsetting capacities of their numerous fields to generate yields (*Ibid.*). Far from agreeing with this vision, Agricorp revisited the option to make it actuarially sound and imposed additional deductibles to participants (Agricorp, 2001; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2002).

Second, the Auditor General observed that preferential treatment was offered to some farmers. For instance, some commodity growers (e.g., green beans, sweet corn, flue-cured tobacco) were allowed to pay their premium post-harvest. Others (i.e., forage producers) were personally contacted by Agricorp staff to re-enroll past deadlines (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). Agricorp terminated the latter case, but justified the former through specific agreements they have with commodity groups and processors that document yield for Agricorp, thus saving costs to the government (Agricorp, 2000 in Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000).

Last, Agricorp targeted acreage and yield declarations as problematic. They observed that forage farmers self-reported the total acreage affected by damages and that grains and oilseeds yields reporting was quite expensive for the state (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). Agricorp then expanded the yield self-report pilot project to more grains and oilseeds farmers (Agricorp, 2000; 2001; 2002), even though Agricorp had data showing that self-identification systemically led to higher compensations (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). In addition, Agricorp developed the rainfall coverage plan for forage (Agricorp, 2000 in Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Agricorp, 2001; 2003; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2002) that determines the compensation level based on rainfall observed on a specific region and apply the conclusion to all fields of the region.²¹⁷ It became the pan-Ontario forage coverage option in 2005 and was improved a year later to increase flexibility (e.g., reduced daily cap of precipitations, monthly adjustments of rainfall impacts) (Agricorp, 2004; 2005; 2006). It thus recognized a recurring request made by farmers (Agricorp, 2005).

²¹⁷ Until 2011, only drought conditions were covered under this plan. Starting in 2011, flood conditions were added (Agricorp, 2011; 2012).

Expansion Toward Horticulture Crops (2004–2009)

In 2003, federal and provincial governments adopted a new Agricultural Policy Framework which expanded the possibilities for Production Insurance (Agricorp, 2004). In particular, high-value crops — such as fresh and processing vegetables — benefited from these new options. As a result, several new plans started to be offered between 2005 and 2007 to cover horticulture products (Agricorp, 2005; 2007). To these yield-based traditional plans were added a non-yield option for acreage losses in 2008 (Agricorp, 2007; 2008a).²¹⁸ These specific plans compensate farmers when fields show too bad conditions to be worth harvesting. As it got fully implemented over a two-year period, 109 crops got covered (Agricorp, 2009).

The surge in plans was made possible by the collaborative work between Agricorp, the Ministry and horticulture farmers' groups through the Horticulture Production Insurance Working Group in 2005 (Agricorp, 2005). Together, they established the specific issues and necessary conditions for horticultural plans to meet farmers' interests. Further work for plans enhancements also involved farmers' groups, this time on a regular basis with commodity-specific discussions as they develop a three-year plan for each commodity (Agricorp, 2007; 2008a; 2009; 2010; 2012). Moreover, as part of these new plans, individual farmers were granted at least two visits per year by specialized Agricorp staff to help them understand the acreage-loss plans and also determine when it is worth of harvesting (Agricorp, 2009).

This focus on high-quality crops (Agricorp, 2007) also appeared, to a lesser extent, in grains and oilseed plans as specific coverage options for differentiated products started to be implemented in 2005 (Agricorp, 2005). At first, organic prices were developed for grains and oilseeds (soybean, then corn) based on a premium from conventional products (*Ibid.*; Agricorp,

²¹⁸ Pilot projects of these plans were offered in 2007 (Agricorp, 2007).

2006). Then, food-quality specialized products, such as IP soybeans and natto received their own coverage (Agricorp, 2007; 2012). Even if high-value crops are usually associated with Peasant ideas, other program changes instead point toward Agri-food firms' ideas. It is notably the case with specific arrangements for vertically integrated vegetable processors (Agricorp, 2004) and grains and oilseeds sharecroppers (i.e., land tenants paying with part of their harvest) (Government of Canada et al., 2010*). Thus, it is unclear if a specific vision was put forward during these years.

One last change that happened during these years and reflect the positive social construction of farmers is the increased share of the premium paid by both governments. The 2003 APF brought the federal government to increase its contribution in Production Insurance administrative costs from 50 to 60% and in premium costs from 30 to 36%. As a result, provincial governments decreased their participation to 40% of administrative costs (i.e., -10 points of the percentage) and 24% of premium costs (i.e., -1 point of percentage) (Agricorp, 2004). Since the positive social construction of this change appears to be driven by the federal government and do not involve any additional recognition by the provincial government, this change fell out of the scope of our model.

From Crop Insurance to Production Insurance (2014–2017)

The 2003 Agricultural Policy Framework introduced another possibility for provinces that, voluntarily, wanted to expand their insurance program (Farm Finance Branch, 2010b*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b; 2015f; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b). Even though Ontario waited 11 years before properly acting in this manner (Agricorp, 2004; 2011; Farm Finance Branch, 2010b*; Ontario Legislative Assembly,

2014c), the province had the opportunity since 2004 of introducing Production Insurance plans for livestock.

In fact, the Ontario government introduced in 2014 the Agriculture Insurance Act which changed the actual name of Crop Insurance into Production Insurance and modified the definition of a product that can be covered by insurance to allow for livestock coverage (Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; 2015f). By doing so, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' goal was to respond to beekeepers, hog and beef farmers that were asking for such an insurance (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014c). However, in practice, only beekeepers received insurance coverage in 2016, following two years of ad hoc subsidies by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through Agricorp for winter kill (Agricorp, 2015; 2016; Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Government of Canada et al., 2016*). Other livestock productions were finally not offered insurance program even if they displayed some interests (Farm Finance Branch, 2010b*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015c) and, for the hog sector, developed insurance prototype to facilitate the implementation by Agricorp (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b).

One factor that could explain an additional coverage limited to beekeepers is the climate surrounding pollinator protection during these years, especially regarding the use of neonicotinoids. Since the Act came during years of budget restrain for Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs,²¹⁹ no additional budget was available for livestock insurance, though reallocation of existing Production Insurance would affect the existing coverage of other products (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014c; 2015g; Ontario Standing

²¹⁹ Reduction of 6% per year for three years (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015c).

Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015c). Hence, it might have limited budget allocation to the sectors with the most positive social construction.

The discourse surrounding the adoption of the Act appeared to largely rely on this positive social construction. For instance, elected officials tended to justify the need for such a change based on leveling the field with other provinces (Agricorp, 2016; Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014a; 2014b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b; 2015c), covering risks that are out of control of farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b; 2015c), stimulating innovation and job creation (Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014a; 2014b; 2015e; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015c), as well as supporting the ongoing evolution of the agriculture industry (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b; 2015a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015c). An argument justifying the advantages for the province to implement such a program was also used: predictable budget expenses as it reduces the potentiality of covered farmers to lobby for ad hoc programs (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014a; 2014b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015c). Moreover, elected officials and farmers' groups advocated for simplified application processes and accelerated money transfer when claims are verified (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b; 2015f; 2015g).²²⁰

²²⁰ Other claims displaying a positive social construction included a criticism of environmental regulations that are too costly, focus on red tape reduction, request for binding appeal mechanisms, and emphasis put on spreading the news of the program's existence (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013b; 2015d; 2019b). Oppositely, when the Parliamentary Assistant to the Ministry suggested that farmers should thank urban consumers for buying their production, other members of Parliament made fun of him (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015b).

The positive social construction may also reflect in the process of updating existing plans and proposing new plans that are centered on commodity groups' request and consultation processes (Agricorp, 2013; 2014; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015a). During all the discussions, emphasis was regularly put on the importance of consulting with stakeholders, notably commodity groups and other farmers' groups, a process reducing the possibilities of criticisms by the opposition (Agricorp, 2016; 2017; Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b; 2014c; 2015d; 2015g; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b). Instead, confronted to a very low level of participation during the formal consultation process of the Act's adoption, excuses were proposed by elected officials to justify the situation (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015d).

Finally, during the discussions, the scope of farms targeted for the new program and the characteristics attributed to them echoed the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture more than any of the others. First, a strong focus was put on profitability and innovation of farmers as mentioned previously (Farm Finance Branch, 2015*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014a; 2014b; 2015e; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015c). Second, farmers were presented as being price takers on the market and thus limited in their capacities to manage their risks – thus justifying the need for support (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015b). And third, small farmers were either accused of not respecting the state-of-the-art of agriculture or complicating program administration due to the multiplication of claim assessment (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2015c; 2015d). As such, elected officials defended the importance of setting minimum enrollment based on production units (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014b).

Summary

Production Insurance is the longest-lasting risk management program in Ontario. Stability and settings' adjustments appear to have been the norm in Production Insurance over these years. What appeared to have preoccupied decision-makers the most is the participation of farmers. Changes made — whether the addition of new plans, or new coverage options — were regularly focused on increasing the flexibility offered to farmers as they decide to participate or not. However, additional budgets did not always follow those attempts which might have limited the impacts of changes adopted. Thus, we are left ambivalent over the social construction applicable. Senior officials, elected officials involved in agricultural support, and farmers' groups requested adapted support, but the government was shy to dedicate additional budget to accompany these changes. The coverage of bees might be the best example since a new production was introduced in Production Insurance, but without additional money.

It is possible that the institutional arrangement also played a role. Some form of light corporatism is present around Production Insurance with individual groups meeting with Agricorp and the Ministry on the commodity they oversee. However, no evidence of concerted actions — except for some summits discussing elements larger than Production Insurance — from farmers' groups were observed. Hence, this might explain how isolated adjustments to existing plans or additional plans were included, but without financial commitment from the state.

Finally, in comparison to other programs, farming styles elements were scarce. We observed changes reflecting Agri-food firms' ideas (e.g., Optional Unit Coverage, protocols for vertically integrated farms, sharecropping options), but as expected through our hypotheses, these ideas were implemented through opacity and fine prints of documents.

Ad hoc programs

As opposed to Québec that built its risk management policy through long-lasting programs, Ontario's risk management policy strongly relied on ad hoc programs that were in place for a year or two in an attempt to mitigate sporadic prices or income crises. The data collection process allowed to identify over 15 ad hoc programs that were offered to farmers between 2001 and 2018, so almost one program per year.²²¹ Due to the volume of case studies it would create, the choice was made to include a dual ad hoc program: the Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program (OWFRP) and its follow-up, the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program. These choices were supported by their relative independence regarding other existing programs (i.e., we would not have mentioned these programs otherwise), the importance of the budget dedicated to these programs (CA\$230 M) (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000a), as well as the availability of data. It should be kept in mind that the capacity of the agricultural industry, or at least some commodities, to obtain ad hoc programs display a certain positive social construction. Hence, when relevant, the codification of data for each Ontarian program acknowledges these signs from existing programs.

The Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program (OWFRP) (1998–2000) offered coverage for farms of all commodities against a reduction of their net farm income below 70% of their three previous years (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998a; 1998b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*).²²² Payments were given to compensate for the lower margin and were capped at CA\$40,000 per individual or CA\$200,000 per company (Ontario Ministry of

²²¹ Some examples include Ontario Grain Stabilization Payment Program (2001–2002), Ontario Edible Horticultural Crop Program (2006–2007) and Beekeepers Financial Assistance Program (2014–2015).

²²² For entrants, the industry margin was used to represent the margins for missing years (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*).

Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*). This program was administered by Agricorp with a budget shared between the provincial and federal governments in proportions that varied across time (Agricorp, 2000; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998b; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

As presented below, the OWFRP let place to the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program (OFIDP) in 2000, following the federal leadership. The OFIDP provided support to farmers producing any commodity if their gross margin fell of more than 30% regarding their five-year average, so quite similar to the OWFRP (Agricorp, 2004; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2000*).²²³ These two programs can be seen as predecessors of AgriStability that has been offering, since 2007, a protection for participants against lower than usual margins.

The next subsections present the discussions surrounding the implementation of both programs. Only scarce information was available for both programs, but still more than what could have been achieved for other ad hoc programs. The analysis of this program then appears as limited. Figure 27 presents a visual summary of the changes and data points associated with each change, for each explanatory variable.

²²³ The 5 years average was calculated using a 3-years Olympic average which is an average excluding the highest and lowest data point (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2000*).

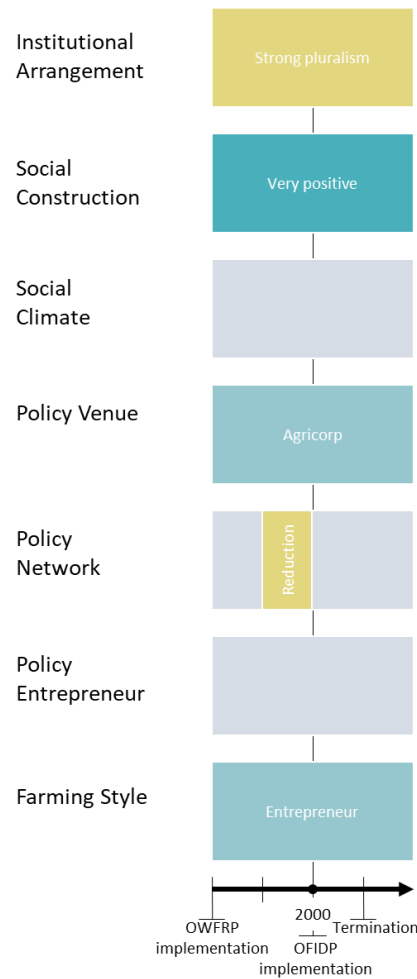


Figure 27. Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program and Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program’s visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Implementation of the Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program (1999)

At the end of the 1990s, the federal experience of the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) was already showing some hiccups in its capacity to support farmers facing economic hardship. By 1999, it was already clear that the program would not be renewed in the 2003 Canadian Agriculture Policy Framework which brought the federal and provincial governments to develop short-term, pilot programs. The idea was then to test additional support methods to prepare for the year 2003. Hence, funds were available at the federal level to be matched by provinces on a voluntary basis (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000e). In January 1999, the

provincial government announced the creation of the OWFRP as a preliminary program covering the crop year 1998–1999 and as a formal program for the year 1999–2000 (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). Farmers that suffered financial losses were then invited to enroll in both years at the same time (*Ibid.*).

The rationale proposed by elected officials to justify this new program relied strongly on the positive social construction of farmers as their situation was presented as being an “extreme-distress income situation” (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998b) caused by low prices for several commodities and isolated but important weather-related events (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). Hence, financial support (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998a) was sought to maintain farm families²²⁴ and protect Ontario’s economy (*Ibid.*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998b).

Discussions were then held with the federal government to draft a quick response to support farmers across the country (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998a). The incapacity of the federal government to react promptly brought the Ontario government to act first and issue a CA\$30 M to farmers while waiting for some federal support (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998b; 2000g; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). Months after the money was sent to farmers, the federal government announced its participation. However, formal program specifications were sent late which caused a lot of confusion around the program (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000b; 2000c; 2000d) as well as payment delays (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1998b; 1999; 2000d;

²²⁴ Highlighting the Entrepreneurial farming style.

2000g).²²⁵ For instance, according to Minister Villeneuve, the federal decreased its participation share of 10 points of percentages, to 50% (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000g). Also, considerations regarding the way to manage the inventories led to changes in the documentation late in the application processes, and thus some payments had to be modified (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000b; 2000h). Similarly, long discussions were held about how to consider the negative margins, especially since farmers' groups disagreed on their preferred process (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1999; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 1998*). Extensions were then provided to farmers, so they could enroll up to October for a program covering their annual margin (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000g; 2000h; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

Replacement of the Ontario Whole Farm Revenue Program by the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program (2000)

Influenced by the leadership of the federal government which wanted to test new program options, Prime Minister Mike Harris decided to implement the Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program in the year 2000–2001 as a replacement for OWFRP. The justifications given by the Minister regarding the necessity to implement this program call for a positive social construction. For instance, it was presented as being the fair share of farmers as they faced adverse weather and low prices (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000e; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and

²²⁵ Even after the program has been replaced, the lack of predictability and its complexity remained an issue. For instance, nine years after the program's termination, Agricorp was still trying to recover some overpayments and important changes were still made in the amounts to be paid (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000b; 2015f; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016b). In parallel, requests to reopen the calculations of previous years were left pending (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000h; 2000j).

Rural Affairs, 2001): “It has indeed been a tough summer for our farmers and we want to make sure we do all we can for those farmers in this year of bad growing conditions and poor commodity prices.” (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000e).²²⁶

The rationale also brought elements that can be associated with both an Agri-food firms and an Entrepreneurial visions of agriculture. Official documentation argued the importance of a design that would be trade neutral and comply with the World Trade Organization Agreement on Agriculture, while at the same time providing sufficient support to maintain Ontario’s agriculture interprovincial and international competitiveness (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2000*; 2001). In parallel, the government implemented a cap on payments by shareholders rather than by farm as long as the shareholders are considered farmers (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2000*).²²⁷

Ontario Farm Income Disaster Program Termination (2001)

The OFIDP termination did not create a turmoil in the political environment and, as such, debates surrounding this event remain unclear. What is, however, clear is that farmers did not see their financial support canceled with the program termination. In fact, new programs (the Ontario Grain Stabilization Payment and the Canada Ontario Grains & Oilseed and Edible Horticulture Crop Payment) appeared to maintain risk management programs when needed.

²²⁶ Inspired by the OWFRP’s experience, the opposition challenged the Minister regarding the availability of information for applicants, delays and the lack of predictability for farmers; arguing how the program design was a nuisance for agriculture (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2000a; 2001b).

²²⁷ Shareholders also had to own at least 10% of the company.

Summary

The OWFRP and the OFIDP are only two examples of ad hoc programs that were implemented in Ontario during the 2000s and 2010s. They reflect how these programs can highlight the positive social construction that surrounded Ontario agriculture at the time. In particular, it shows the influence of the federal government to implement a risk management program as well as the inclination of this program toward Agri-food firms in its rationale and Entrepreneurial agriculture in its design.

Market Revenue Insurance Program

The Market Revenue Insurance (MRI) initially started, in 1992²²⁸, as the Canadian Gross Revenue Insurance Program (GRIP). When the Canadian government phased out the GRIP in 1995, Ontario, supported by the federal government, enacted the MRI (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a). It then acted as a companion program of the federal-provincial Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA) (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b). This means that its conception, implementation and administration resulted from Ontario's leadership, but costs were shared between the federal and Ontario governments (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000). The MRI worked as a protection against low prices. From 1992 to 2005, while they were active, both the GRIP and the MRI provided compensation to grains and oilseeds farmers when the average annual price of an eligible crop fell below a certain share²²⁹ of the 15-year moving average price (Ontario Standing

²²⁸ Covering prices for the year 1991 (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000).

²²⁹ Over the years, it varied from 80 to 90%.

Committee on Estimates, 1992a).²³⁰ The difference between the average annual price and the payment threshold was given in compensation, minus a copay of one third. The program was administered by Agricorp, though the use of funds was the purview of the Ministry of Finance (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

The program was repealed in 2005, following NISA's replacement by the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) in 2003. With the new program in place, the federal government decided to not renew any funds for companion programs, letting provinces decide if they wanted to maintain programs relying on their own funds. The Ontario government instead decided to switch its intervention and created the Risk Management Program (see the Risk Management Program section for more information).

In the following subsections, we present the important changes that affected the GRIP and the MRI from 1992 to 2005. For each change, we identified the variables that were at play following our research model. These are visually represented in Figure 28. However, we omitted procedural changes such as the adjustment of the compensations which only resulted from the application of mechanical formulas and internal managerial issues of Agricorp.

²³⁰ The compensation formula is the difference between the production value and the target revenue where the production value is the market price times the probable yield times 85% of the intended acreage, and the target revenue is the 15-year average price times the probable yield times 85% of the intended acreage (Government of Canada et al., 1996).

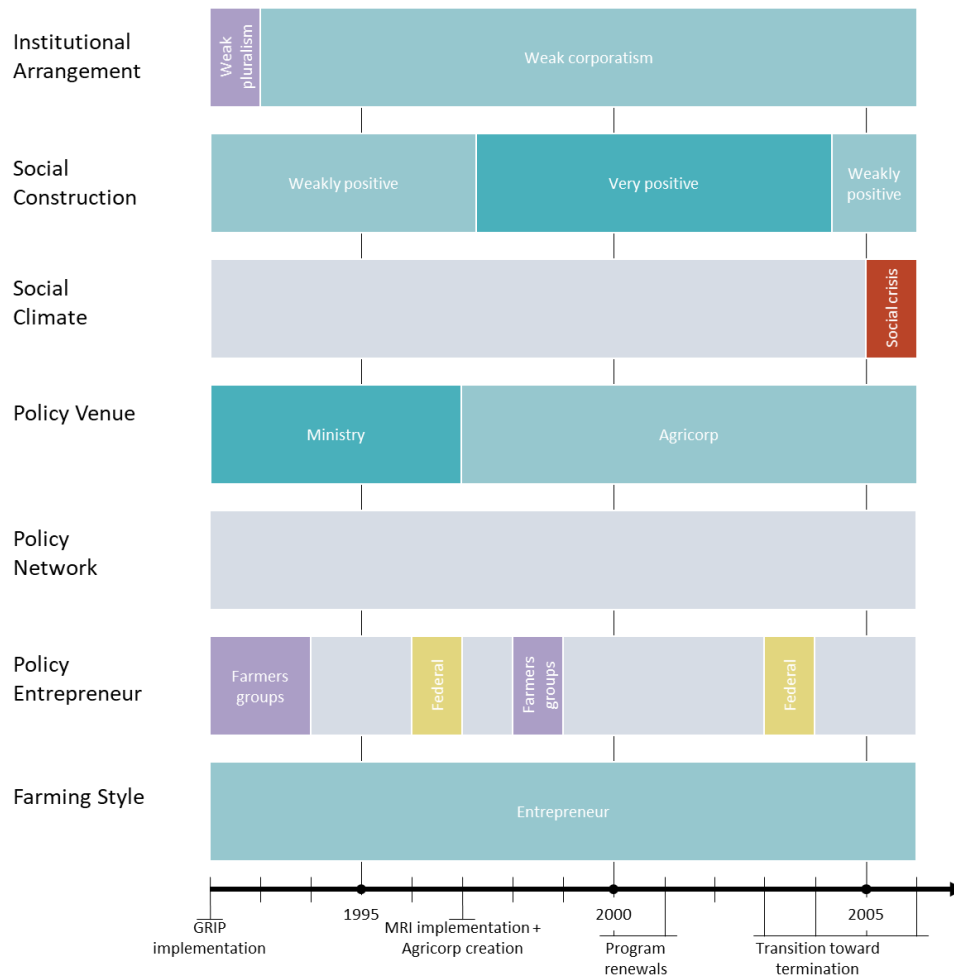


Figure 28. Market Revenue Insurance's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Gross Revenue Insurance Program Implementation (1992)

The creation of the Gross Revenue Insurance Program by the federal government involved participation from provincial governments that could decide to contribute or not into the program and hence implement it on their territory. The leadership of the federal government regarding this program highlights the strong role of the federalist variable in our model. Many of the public intervention in the Ontario Parliament praised the federal government's rapidity of action to address a farm income crisis, while the provincial government took its time to positively respond to the proposal (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs,

1991c; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a; 1991b; 1991d). For instance, Ottawa allowed GRIP's implementation in 1990, including a reduced provincial mandatory participation, but the provincial government argued the delay was too short to allocate funds.²³¹ Instead, the provincial government requested to be the leader in program making, arguing that the federal was not supporting their initiatives (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a; 1991c; 1991e).

The decision from the provincial government to participate in the GRIP initiative and an official recognition of the farm income crisis²³² also mostly displays a positive social construction surrounding farmers. Many comparisons were made between the support given to agriculture in comparison to other industries and private companies (e.g., doctors, civil services, de Havilland, TV Ontario) to justify support for farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991c; 2000b; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b; 1991d). Similarly, comparisons were regularly made with other countries or provinces, either stating that Ontario should do the same, or that these supports create issues for Ontario farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991a; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a; 1991b; 1991d; 1991e).²³³ Farmers were depicted as victims

²³¹ This aspect could also be interpreted as a lack of influence from the Minister who was unable to secure funds in a short delay (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991).

²³² The mere recognition that a crisis exists could be seen as a display of a positive social construction, especially when words such as 'social calamity' are used (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991b). For instance, the third opposition group used one of its rare opposition days where they can decide on the agenda to discuss the farm income crisis and submit a motion to implement help for farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991).

²³³ Other factors outside of farmers' control were also seldom identified (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a) while a single intervention over the period rebutted the

against the inaction of the state (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d; 1991e). This quote from member of parliament Jim Wilson is interesting:

“Unfortunately, these honest, hardworking farmers are cast in the role of victims within this tragedy. There was a time when working the land and gathering the harvest was one of the most noble and distinguished professions. We appreciated farmers because they provided something we could not live without, that is, food on our tables. But today, when the farmers need us most, some people, and some people in this Legislature, are prepared to turn their backs on them and let them fend for themselves.” (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991)

Farmers were also presented as contributing to rural and urban economies, and worthy of the citizen’s support (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991c; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991c).²³⁴ Even more, acceptance of help from the government was presented as a last resort for farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991e) that would prefer to receive their income from the market: “Certainly we, as farmers, do not like to have to take part of our income from support programs. That is just totally against what we are there for. We want those dollars to come from the marketplace.” (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d)

influence of these factors, presenting farmers as playing a certain role in the crisis (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b).

²³⁴ An example would be this quote from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: “[T]he farmers are going to do their thing, produce this affordable and safe food, then urban Ontario has to look at the farming community in rural Ontario as a lot more than a playground and a place to dump its waste” (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991a).

One last element of the positive social construction of farmers appears in the demands regarding the program design. Elected officials and interest groups asked for a program that would be simple and predictable for farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a). Additional budgets were required to cover all commodities and properly address the farm crisis (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993c; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b; 1991d; 1991e). Finally, due to delays in program development and payments (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991c), different representatives requested a transition program with additional budgets to limit the short-term effects of the farm income crisis (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b; 1991c).

The discourse surrounding the implementation of the GRIP also illustrates a division in the representation of agriculture. In particular, the oppositions in Parliament as well as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and many commodity groups suggested arguments referring to the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. As an example, the risk of deactivation was regularly brought in the discussions (*Ibid.*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991a; 1991c; 1992), as was the importance of designing programs to support family-size farms (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991d; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d) with owners working full-time on the farm (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993c;

Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991a).²³⁵ Oppositely, fears were raised against corporate actors that may influence the market and benefit from the program (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993c; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). Member of parliament Dan Waters mentioned:

“I have asked of other people and I will ask of you, how do we assist the farm community in such a way that we know the farm community is going to benefit and not someone else within the food chain before it gets to the final retail situation?” (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991c).

Other fears expressed were associated with the environmental agenda of the NDP government (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a). Many members of parliament opposed the environmental cross-compliance attempts from the minister (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991e),²³⁶ and instead argued that protecting farmers is more important than protecting farmland (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991). There were also mentions about the incapacity of organic agriculture to feed North America (*Ibid.*) and labor and environmental restrictions that hinder profitability (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991c; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b).

²³⁵ For instance, Ted Arnott, a member of Parliament, mentioned: “When you look at the family farm in rural Ontario, it is a social institution that has to be preserved, as far as I am concerned. It is an institution that is worth preserving, and we have to send out that signal at all times.” (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991).

²³⁶ An interesting exception is the request by the OFA to implement cross-compliance with the environmental farm plan (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1992).

These stances were not unanimous. Smaller farmers' groups and NDP representatives requested a recognition of environmental stewardship by farmers (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b) as well as additional environmental mandatory actions (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). Even systemic changes were suggested to move away from production agriculture and grain-based husbandry (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1994; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1991e; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991b; 1991c).

One last variable frequently appeared in the discourse, focusing on the consultation process and who was asked to contribute to the program's development. Minister Buchanan highlighted the importance of involving future beneficiaries in the program, (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a; Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a). recognizing a special place in consultations (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992a). Member of Parliament Murdock even questioned the lack of unity inside the farming community when she mentioned: "[Farmers] come all divided to government and we have that problem where we, as farmers, do not speak with a united voice for each other." (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991d). The division also came from the NDP government that relied on the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy to propose solutions for agriculture and other sectors. On this table, farmers were denied a place in the beginning and, when later granted, recommended nominations from farmers' groups were not considered (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1991). Only later did the Minister conduct a proper consultation on the risk management programs, this time inviting farmers' groups but also many actors from peripheral industries (e.g., bankers, rurality, input suppliers) (Ontario Standing Committee on Resources Development, 1991a).

Mandatory Levies to Farmers Groups (1993)

In 1993, the government adopted Bill 42, the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act, after more than 25 years of discussions surrounding the representation of farmers by interest groups (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1993a; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1994). This Act requested farmers making over CA\$7,000 to pay an annual levy to one of the three official farmers groups that are the Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario, the Ontario region of the National Farmers' Union and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (Agricorp, 2004; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1993a).²³⁷ Through this, the government secured the funds for these organizations — almost doubling what they received from a voluntary basis — which is a benefit usually obtained from corporatist settings (Agricorp, 2004; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993a; 1994). Though the minister mentioned that all farmers' groups were involved in the discussions (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1993a), it seemed that the National Farmers Union disagreed with the Act — as well as an unorganized group called Silent Majority — and threatened to challenge its constitutionality (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1993a; 1994). Yet, they did not pursue this endeavor and remained officially recognized as a farm organization. In practice, this Act defined — and thus restricted — the policy network by implementing a barrier to entry to any new group expecting to represent farmers. The impact on the GRIP is then only incidental as it only affected the representation of farmers and not the program by itself. However, it has shaped all relationships between the Ontario government and farmers' groups until today.

²³⁷ The Act allowed for a fourth organization to be recognized to represent francophone Ontarian farmers, though such an organization was never implemented (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1993a).

Creation of Agricorp (1996)

In 1996, the Ontario government enacted another long-time project as they created a Crown corporation to oversee crop insurance and income stabilization program through the Agricorp Act (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1990; 1992; 1996e; 1997b).²³⁸ In doing so, it partially changed the policy venue as Agricorp became in charge of the operations of the different programs, while the Ministry maintained the leadership in policy development (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1990; 1992). The new policy venue confirmed a light version of corporatism as farmers' groups made recommendations for part of the Agricorp board members (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2000; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1992; 1996d; 1996f; 1997b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1992b). It was then expected to increase farmers' control on programs and hence improve their condition and the acceptability of program changes.²³⁹ Minister Noble Villeneuve justified the involvement of farmers when he mentioned: "If the honorable member is unhappy with farmers looking after their business, he should put that on record, because I believe farmers can best administer what touches them" (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1996b). The Minister also justified Agricorp creation through the attempt from the federal government to replace the GRIP with a whole farm program and their preference for an administration of such a new program by a Crown corporation (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1994; 1996f).

It is possible to also observe many elements pointing toward a positive social construction of farmers in the arguments raised to justify the creation of Agricorp as well as in

²³⁸ Other powers were also granted to Agricorp as they were able to provide business and consulting services to commodity associations (e.g., grading, inspection) (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

²³⁹ Farmers were also consulted prior to the implementation of Agricorp through an advisory group and informal consultations (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1990; 1996b; 1996d; 1996f).

the design of the organization. For instance, members of parliament regularly mentioned the necessity to assist farmers that are facing economic challenges and thus to reinforce the existing programs (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1990; 1996a; 1996d; 1997a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998). Similarly, the opposition in Parliament repeatedly suggested that Agricorp could lead to new taxes and fees for farmers that were identified as not deserving more taxes (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1996a; 1996d; 1996f; 1997a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998). Finally, and echoing the creation of the FADQ in Québec, the presence of a Crown corporation increases the opacity of program making as elected officials have a reduced control over program decisions (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1996f).²⁴⁰ The lack of transparency is expected to provide more advantages for those controlling the institution. In this way, farmers might benefit from an increased flexibility of program administration and thus program adjustments (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 1996f). Hence, the creation of Agricorp brought a change in policy venue that, at least partially, reinforced the position of farmers regarding their program.

Creation of MRI (1997)

When the federal government terminated the GRIP in 1995, Ontarian farmers looked for a companion program to the NISA. They thus lobbied both federal and provincial governments so an Ontario-based solution would be implemented. They obtained the creation of the Market Revenue Insurance program in 1997 for payments to start in 1998 which covered the 1995–1998 period (Government of Canada & Government of Ontario, 1996*). The MRI acted in continuity

²⁴⁰ Instead, Agricorp is only subject to a yearly financial audit by the Auditor General and, when requested, a value-for-money audit (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

of the GRIP with a payment distributed when grains and oilseeds market price fell below 80% of the 15-year moving average price (*Ibid.*). As for the GRIP, a copy of a third of the price was present.

The new MRI illustrates again the positive social construction of farmers. First, the federal government committed to at least CA\$10 M per year with a possibility of up to an additional CA\$20 M (*Ibid.*; Agricorp, 1998).²⁴¹ Second, GRIP-enrolled farmers were automatically considered enrolled in the MRI, while those not enrolled could join the MRI with only a slight penalty (Government of Canada & Government of Ontario, 1996*). Third, interim payments were made possible if needed (*Ibid.*). And fourth, farmers that provided improper information regarding their enrollment were only at risk to have their participation terminated, without incurring penalties (*Ibid.*).

Only two aspects displayed a limit to the positive social construction of farmers. Until 1998, farmers could only receive up to 80% of the average price even if the government promised that it would be raised to 85% in 1991 (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 1994). The second element is the cap applied to the total payments following the annual budget granted to the program plus any remaining funds for previous years (Government of Canada & Government of Ontario, 1996*).

Biannual Program Renewals (1999–2002)

As the MRI agreement (1995–1998) came to a term, both farmers and Agricorp were left in the unknown in case of low prices (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2004). Farmers requested a program prolongation

²⁴¹ With administrative costs shared between the federal and provincial government.

(Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000a), but funds were not attributed until the 2000 growing season had started (Agricorp, 2000; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2001c). At this time, farmers received a confirmation that funds would cover the 1999 and 2000 crops (Agricorp, 2001; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b). A similar situation also happened the next year and funds were finally secured for the 2001 and 2002 crop years, and later on for the 2003 and 2004 crop years (Agricorp, 2002; 2003). During these years, farmers also obtained some changes following their requests. For instance, penalties for farmers that did not previously participate in the GRIP were reduced in 2000, and the share of the historic prices covered by the program was raised from 85% to 90% in 2001 (Agricorp, 2001; 2002).²⁴²

The repeated late renewals of the MRI over the years illustrate an ambiguity regarding the social construction of farmers. On one side, farmers faced instability as they did not know if a program could cover a potential loss. On the other side, farmers finally obtained the expected funds when they needed them the most. Moreover, the justifications behind the fund renewals called for the survival of an industry that benefits to all the Ontario economy (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b; 2001) and the necessity to protect farmers against risks that are out of their control (e.g., weather, impact of programs from other jurisdictions) (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2001a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b; 2001). Hence, it still seems that farmers were able to use their social construction in order to attract more money.

²⁴² These changes were requested by farmers (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2000b; 2001).

The involvement of farmers in the program decision-making and design was also praised by senior officials and elected officials (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2001c; 2002; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2002). Frank Ingratta, deputy minister, even mentioned:

“Much of the reason Agricorp has been able to distinguish itself in terms of excellent service and innovative solutions is the fact that it is run by farmers for farmers. The strong representation on the board from Ontario’s farm and commodity groups ensures the agency continues to evolve to meet the real needs of farmers.” (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b)

Changes were also made to Agricorp, though without relation to the MRI. Instead, they were caused by a report from an audit from the Auditor general that warned the minister against an improper use of funds that would have been illegal if the Auditor did not have stopped them in time (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000a).²⁴³ As a response to the lack of access to information by board members and strong independence from the Ministry (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000a), the board adopted new policies, implemented mandatory meetings between the Minister’s representative and the direction team of Agricorp, and forced additional internal audits (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b). Moreover, the Ministry’s representative obtained a formal position on the board (*Ibid.*).

²⁴³ Funds distributed to farmers were not impacted by the situation (Ontario Standing Committee on Public Accounts, 2000b).

Program Termination (2003–2005)

With the renewal of the Agricultural Policy Framework in 2002 by the federal government, it became clear that the NISA was going to be replaced by the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) and all other companion programs were going to be phased out (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004a; 2004d; 2005a). However, the CAIS proved to be insufficient in the eyes of farmers and the opposition. They both started to request additional support for farmers. As such, the provincial government announced a three-year MRI transition program of CA\$172 M to cover losses experienced by farmers during the 2003 and 2004 crop years (*Ibid.*; Agricorp, 2005; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004c; 2005b; 2005c; 2005d; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005d; 2006).²⁴⁴

This transition program shows the positive social construction that was once again the apanage of farmers. This can be observed through the additional funds channeled through the program,²⁴⁵ the automatic enrollment, and the general discourse surrounding the program (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005c). For instance, farmers were presented once again as facing a crisis that is out of their control (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005a) and that created instability hurting Ontario's competitiveness (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004d; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005b). Farmers' representatives and some elected officials then presented the program as a duty from the government to support farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005a; 2005d; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005a) even if these latter preferred not

²⁴⁴ For this renewal, the federal government declined to participate financially (Agricorp, 2005).

²⁴⁵ Though these funds were still considered as insufficient by farmers' groups and the opposition (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005a; 2005d; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005c; 2005d).

to need it (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2005a). Moreover, farmers were depicted as contributing to Ontario's economic health as seen in this quote from Minister Peters: "And it's great news for all Ontarians, because a strong and competitive provincial agriculture sector is a key factor in ensuring that all Ontarians enjoy a quality of life that is second to none." (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004d).

The program continuation can also be attributed to the collective work of farmers' groups united under the Farmers of Ontario Coalition for general organizations and the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council for commodity groups. Both actors were involved in the discussions about programs that led to the Risk Management Program (see its dedicated section for more information) and the short-term relief renewal of the MRI (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2004b; 2004c; 2004d; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2001; 2005d). Their concerted actions contributed to mobilizing farmers for different actions such as marches, highway blockades and petitions to pressure elected officials to implement new programs (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005b; 2005d). Hence, by federating farmers under an umbrella organization, they displayed a stronger political power as they requested support from the state.

Summary

The MRI evolution displayed the capacity of farmers to mobilize their troops and put pressure on the government to obtain additional support when needed. It also displayed the capacity of reaction from the government when they judge that the support of farmers might be compromised and thus may affect the voting results. The action-reaction pattern observed around the renewal of the GRIP and the MRI is similar to ad hoc programs' creation. In this, it then

aligns with Ontario's usual pattern of intervention as identified previously. It also reflects the presence of a positive social construction that allows farmers to attract resources from the state, though it may be limited due to the short-term program renewal. Similarly, the timing of the renewals — some years after the problem and past the beginning of the season — is another sign that farmers might have a limited positive social construction.

In parallel, the MRI evolution is a window on the interaction between the federal government and the provinces. First enacted by the federal government under the acronym GRIP, the program attracted provincial resources and attention. When it came to an end, the provincial government decided to take the lead and created the MRI. As opposed to the GRIP, it was then the federal government which found itself in a situation of allocating resources to a program from another level of government. It is then interesting to observe the capacity of both governments to implement fam income programs if they consider it is needed.

Hence, the changes might have been incremental, but they hid the impacts of different variables. It also indicates that changes in these variables are likely to be insufficient by themselves to create a lasting change in terms of instruments or policy goals.

Risk Management Program

The Risk Management Program (RMP) is an Ontario program managed by Agricorp and solely funded by the provincial government. This program encompasses two mechanisms of intervention depending on the commodity covered. Grains, oilseeds, cattle, veal, sheep and hog have access to a price insurance similar to Québec's FISI. As for fresh vegetables, they instead have access to more generous version of a savings program that resembles Canada's AgriInvest and Québec's Agri-Québec. Each mechanism is presented below. Presentations are followed by

the important changes of the RMP over the years, from its implementation in 2007 up until 2020. For every change, we identified the variables that were at play following our research model (see Figure 29 for a visual representation). As with the other programs, procedural changes were omitted.

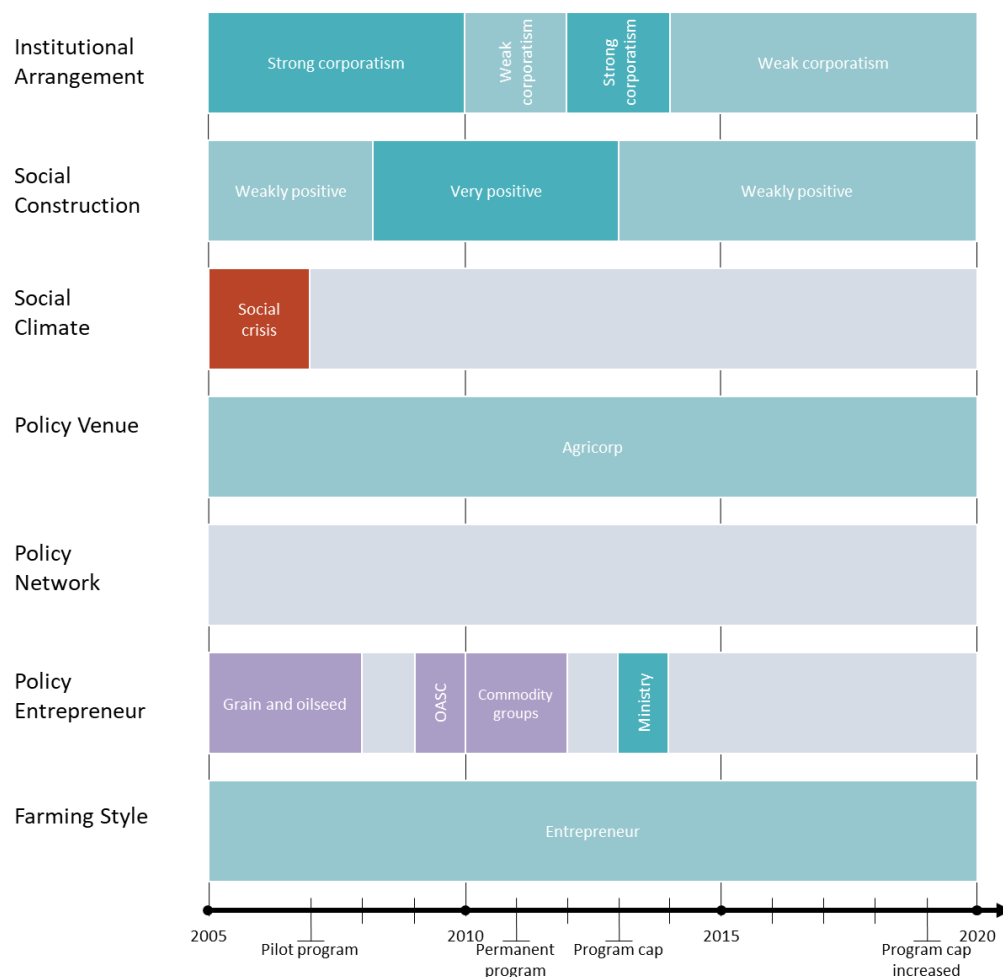


Figure 29. Risk Management Program's visual summary of dependent and explanatory variables

Most of these changes were discussed through Reference Committees that meet quarterly to assess the situation in each sector (Agricorp, 2012; 2014; 2015; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011b*; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*). On these committees are representatives from Agricorp, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and commodity groups.

They then create a form of corporatism similar to what can be observed with FISI's consultation of beneficiaries (Clerson, 2022b).

Farmers can also use a formal escalation process if they disagree with the outcome of their participation to the RMP. First, they must use internal processes of Agricorp (e.g., call-center staff, staff committee), but if they still disagree, they can reach out to the Business Risk Management Review Committee (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008). This Committee then acts as a non-binding last-resort tribunal which can make recommendations on program changes (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011a*; 2013d*; 2019a). Though it is a rarely used mechanism, it could theoretically act as a promoter of change.

Grains, Oilseeds, Cattle, Hogs, Veal and Sheep

The program version offered to grains, oilseeds,²⁴⁶ cattle, hogs, veal and sheep farmers is a price insurance that compensates farmers when the market price falls under the representative cost of production (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; 2012; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011a*; 2011b*; 2011e*; 2011f*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2008e; 2011a; 2011b; 2013a; 2016; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*). This cost of production results from a specific study conducted by Agricorp²⁴⁷ on the 70% most efficient

²⁴⁶ Grains and oilseeds include beans (adzuki, black, cranberry, faba, kidney, white, Japan and other beans), buckwheat, canola, corn (grain, farm-fed, popping, seed), field peas, flax, millet, mustard, rye, sorghum, soybeans, spring grains (barley, oats and mixed grains), spelt, sunflowers, triticale, and wheat (hard red winter, soft red winter, spring).

²⁴⁷ For some minor crops (buckwheat, faba beans, field peas, flax, millet, mustard, popping corn, rye, seed corn, sorghum, spelt, sunflowers, and triticale) proxies are used to represent the cost of

specialized farmers of a commodity and considers a family wages equivalent to 90% of the Ontario equipment operator's average earnings (Agricorp, 2008b*; Farm Finance Branch, 2011*; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011f*; 2015b*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008e). It is then used by Agricorp to define a target price that acts as the threshold for payment. Hence, low prices or high input prices can yield a payment to participating farmers per commodity (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011a*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2007f; 2008e; 2011a; 2011b; 2016). The payment varies based on the difference between the cost of production and market price per unit of production (or the participant average yield times the acreage),²⁴⁸ but also following the coverage level chosen by farmers individually. Coverage options varied across time (Agricorp, 2012; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*; 2019g; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008e) but since 2019, options offered are: 100%, 95%, 90%, and 80% (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*; 2019g*). The coverage is also adjusted to 40% of the actual price difference to represent the lack of intervention from the federal (Agricorp, 2008b*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011a*; 2011b*; 2011e*; 2011f*; 2019b*; 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*;

production since costs of production studies are limited due to low levels of specialization (Agricorp, 2008b*; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*).

²⁴⁸ An unseeded acreage benefit option also exists for acreage that was not seeded due to perils insured under Production Insurance (Agricorp, 2008b*; Farm Finance Branch, 2011*).

2019g*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2016). Annual caps also apply, but their amount varies with the commodity produced and the type of ownership.²⁴⁹

To participate in the program, farmers have to pay an insurance premium based on the provincial participation in the program (40%), farmers' participation in the program (35%), and the occurrence and importance of payments in the past for their commodities (Agricorp, 2008b*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011a*; 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*; 2019g*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011b; 2013a; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*; 2012*). The premium is then multiplied by the historic need met to account for the budget cap and its distribution in each commodity (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011a*; 2011b*; 2011e*; 2011f*; 2013a; 2013b*; 2013e*; 2013f*; 2013g*; 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*; 2019g*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2007b; 2011a; 2011b; 2013a; 2016; Risk

²⁴⁹ For Grains and oilseeds: CA\$130,000 per individual or CA\$390,000 per corporation (Agricorp, 2008b*; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*). For cattle, veal, sheep, and hog: CA\$1.2 M per category of commodity (a commodity can have more than one category) (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011a*; 2011b*; 2011e*).

Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*; 2012*).²⁵⁰ The choice of coverage levels made by farmers also impacts the premium paid.²⁵¹

Premiums paid by farmers are administered by the commodity groups that can decide to use the Premium fund to supplement unmet need (Agricorp, 2014; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2013a; 2013b*; 2013e*; 2013f*; 2013g*). Thus, as opposed to payments delivered by the state, premium funds can be rolled over for a following year or compensate for the budget cap at CA\$150 M that would limit payments.

Edible Horticulture

For edible horticulture crops, the RMP allows them to deposit funds in a savings account where the government matches the amount invested there (Agricorp, 2005; 2012; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011c*). The maximal amount that farmers can deposit is based on their allowable sales and varied across time and across size as presented in Table 18. However, the matching by the government can be prorated if the program cap is reached (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*). For instance, 2013 contributions were limited to 75% of farmers' contributions (Farm Finance Branch, 2013b*).

²⁵⁰ Farmers also have a rebate when they participate in AgriStability (Farm Finance Branch, 2011*). This is granted since farmers receive the most of the RMP or AgriStability payments, so the provincial government can recover part of its costs through AgriStability (Agricorp, 2008b*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011a*; 2011e*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011b).

²⁵¹ In case the annual individual cap is reached, a partial premium reimbursement is issued so farmers do not contribute to the program up to a point where they would not be compensated (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011a*; 2011b*).

Table 18. *Share of the allowable sales for Risk Management Program for edible horticulture that are matched by the government over the time (Agricorp, 2005; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011c*; 2013c*; 2014*)*

	2005– 2011	2011– 2012	2012– 2020
CA\$5000-2.5 M sales	4.0%	2.0%	2.0%
CA\$2.5-5 M sales		0.5%	1.5%
> CA\$5 M sales			1.0%

At first, this program was limited to the 140 crops not covered under Production Insurance, but all edible crops are now eligible (Agricorp, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021a; 2021b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2008b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008b). To withdraw funds, farmers must face and self-report a specific risk that caused them a loss of income (Agricorp, 2005; 2012; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011c*). Moreover, they cannot have a balance in their account that is more than 50% of the five-year average of sales which limit the deposits they can make (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011c*; 2013c*).

RMP's Origin and Implementation (before 2008)

The RMP was instituted in 2007 as a three-year program limited to grains and oilseeds farmers (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; 2011; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2008; 2010a; 2011b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011a). At the time, it was presented as a renewed version of the MRI, following the termination of companion programs by the federal government, and a complement to both the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization and Production Insurance (Ontario Legislative Assembly,

2005b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a). Hence, farmers had to enroll in these programs to benefit from the RMP (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008).

In parallel to the grains and oilseeds program, a fresh market vegetable pilot program was also launched in 2007 (Agricorp, 2008a).²⁵² This pilot program was in fact a replication of the horticultural companion program Self-directed Risk Management (SDRM) in place since the mid-1990s (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008b) and renewed since 2006 by the provincial government only (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021a; 2021b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008b). Even though it was not identified as the RMP at the time, it eventually evolved in the current option for horticultural crops.

The grains and oilseeds' pilot-RMP resulted from a proposal made by the grains and oilseed industry that held consultation and submitted a ready-to-be-applied proposal to the government in 2005 (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2016).²⁵³ Observing the lack of a project from the government, they decided to act as a policy entrepreneur to push the RMP toward the government and reduce delays and internal deliberations from the state by drafting the entire program themselves (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a). Knowing the process, the ministry provided supports – including professional resources (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic

²⁵² Expanded in 2008 to additional commodities (Agricorp, 2008a).

²⁵³ It should be noted that in the official documents (Agricorp, 2008b*), the development of the program is attributed to commodity groups, the OFA and the Ministry.

Affairs, 2008e) – to the groups working on the program development (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; 2005b).

In this position, the state adopted a corporatist position as it recognized the capacity of the industry to lead the program development. As Minister Dombrowsky mentioned: “I’ve given a commitment to corn producers to work with them and to review the presentation they’ve made to me. So I believe this government has demonstrated very clearly to the corn producers that we are in their corner and we want to work with them.” (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a). Moreover, some comments made by elected officials and senior executives suggest that the government itself asked farmers to work on a program proposal (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2016). Even further supporting the corporatist approach, the government asked farmers to start working together toward unified solutions for all commodities rather than having different groups requesting different support approaches (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a). As presented in the following section, this eventually led to the creation of the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC) that regroups most Ontario commodity groups.

Another variable that is strongly displayed in the creation of these new programs is the positive social construction of farmers. The mid-2000s saw a wide variety of provincial funding dedicated to commodities facing market issues (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021a; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2007e) even though the provincial government adopted a fiscal restraint approach toward its budgets (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates,

2005a).²⁵⁴ To justify its specific intervention, the government identified that it is their responsibility to support farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005b) as they face a unique array of climatic and economic risks (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021c; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; 2008a; 2008c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008b; 2016). Hence, long-term programs supporting agriculture were identified as a priority for the government (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021a; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2003; 2006; 2007a; 2007c; 2007e).²⁵⁵ Again, Minister Dombrowsky's comments display the government's position: "The bottom line is that we see this business risk management program as essential to supporting the agriculture industry long-term in Canada." (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a) and "there is an urgency in your sector that needs to be dealt with right away" (Leona Dombrowsky) (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006b).²⁵⁶ For elected officials and farmers' groups, such programs are needed to level the playing field as other governments strongly support their agriculture (i.e., Québec, the US) (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006; 2007a; 2007b; 2008b). To echo, furthermore, the positive social construction of farmers, we found no mention of public discourse

²⁵⁴ Including, for instance, CA\$138 M for BSE crisis and CA\$50 M for tobacco growers.

²⁵⁵ Even though the government focused on long-term commitments, farmers also asked for short-term support (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021a; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a), a maintain of their existing programs (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2003), and some transition programs (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008a; 2008c).

²⁵⁶ It should, however, be noted that Dombrowsky's predecessor, Steve Peters, warned against the RMP prior to an affectation as Minister of Labour (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a).

pointing farmers as begging or requesting support. Instead, they were represented as having been humiliated by the market as they were forced to protest to receive additional support (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006a). They also argued how they were not looking for subsidies, but insurance programs in which they contribute (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c).

In addition, the design of the program reflects the positive social construction of farmers. This includes premium waived for the first year, automatic re-enrollment, interim payments, self-reported yield and acreage, and no-recovering of overpayments from previous programs in order to reduce the financial burden of farmers (Agricorp, 2008a; 2008b*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007c; 2007d; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008).

To obtain this program, farmers strongly mobilized their people to organize several highway blockades in 2005, many protests at the Parliament between 2004 and 2006, and a postcard campaign in which 30,000 individuals participated (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006a; 2006c; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a). They also joined the provincial government to lobby the federal government to have them financially participate in the RMP (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2006b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021b; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2006; 2007a; 2007c).²⁵⁷ However, the federal

²⁵⁷ A parallel reflection was also conducted by the Ministry and the Auditor General about the choice of a policy venue (i.e., maintaining Agricorp or asking the federal government to administer risk management programs) (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2008a). In the end, the financial assessment of the Auditor General recommended maintaining Agricorp to lower the costs, including transaction costs (Agricorp, 2008a; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2008).

government refused to participate (Agricorp, 2008b*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2008; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2008b), arguing that the Agricultural Policy Framework already included support through AgriStability, AgriInvest and Production Insurance (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; 2005b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007e).²⁵⁸ Albeit the federal position, the provincial government decided to implement the program, financing only its historic 40% share in the hope of forcing the federal government to also participate in the program (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008a). As presented in the following subsections, these demands were repeated over the years but without much success.

One last variable can also be observed through the implementation of the RMP: the farming styles. In fact, discourses surrounding the RMP implementation displayed a plurality of those. For instance, the New Democratic Party, in the opposition at the time, criticized the government for having no plan to maintain a large number of small farms (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; 2008c) which echoes the Peasant vision of agriculture. In the discourse of the Liberal Party that governed Ontario at the time, we found some mentions regarding the requirement to have a program that aligns with international agreements (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007b). Also, one farmer representative expressed the importance of having a strong industry so multinationals such as Cargill maintain their facilities in the province, aligning with Agri-food firms' discourse (Ontario Standing Committee on

²⁵⁸ The Conservative opposition in the Ontario Parliament opposed the signature of the Agricultural Policy Framework and instead recommended abandoning it as a protest (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007e; 2008d).

Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008d). Still, the farming style most frequently referred to in the discourses is the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. In particular, farms were often identified under the term 'farm families' (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008a), while the concept of innovation was regularly presented as the only opportunity to maintain the competitiveness of the sector (Agricorp, 2013; 2015; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021g; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; 2008c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2008a; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*).

Program Extension Toward New Commodities (2011)

If the RMP's pilot program was limited to grains and oilseeds,²⁵⁹ its reenactment into a permanent program in 2011 (Agricorp, 2011; 2012; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011a; 2011b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011d*; 2021e*) extended its admissibility to hogs, sheep, beef, and veal (*Ibid.*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011b*; 2011e*; 2011f*; 2021f). It also officially included edible vegetable under the RMP umbrella while keeping their specific mechanism of intervention (Agricorp, 2011; 2012; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011c*; 2011d*; 2021e; 2021f).

The RMP reenactment and extension resulted from the leadership of commodity groups which acted as policy entrepreneurs (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs,

²⁵⁹ RMP's pilot for grains and oilseeds was extended for the year 2010 during that year's summer (Agricorp, 2011; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011d*; 2021e; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011a).

2021f; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011b). Following Ministry's request, commodity groups and two of the general farmers' organizations²⁶⁰ created the Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition in 2009 (Farm Finance Branch, 2010a*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010a; 2011b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2010b) to develop a cohesive discourse around the implementation of a risk management program for all non-supply management commodities (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2012; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2010b). Such a coalition aligned the proposals toward the RMP's cost of production insurance following years of consultation with farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2005b; 2010a; 2010b; 2011b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011d*; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011b) even for fresh vegetables (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2009; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2008b; 2008e).²⁶¹

However, the unified discourse did not last over the years and during the summer of 2010, commodity groups decided to pursue their lobbying actions individually and thus proposed programs that suits their needs (Agricorp, 2012; Farm Finance Branch, 2010a*). If most commodity groups maintained their preference toward the initial mechanism of RMP, fresh

²⁶⁰ Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Ontario Grains and Oilseeds, Ontario Pork, Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, Ontario Veal, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario.

²⁶¹ At first, each group had worked on its own vision for a future program which led to a wide array of program proposals (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2005a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011b). Even following the implementation of the RMP to this group of commodities, other commodity groups (Flowers Canada, Ontario Goat, rabbit breeders) requested their commodity to be added (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011d*).

vegetable growers retracted their support and instead advocated for a program pairing savings accounts (Farm Finance Branch, 2010a*). Hence, this explains why this industry retained a specific version of RMP.

There was a strong display of the positive social construction of farmers to justify the permanent RMP. This social construction can be observed in both the justification behind the program's implementation and the characteristics of the program. Elected officials and farmers representatives regularly mentioned the hardship coming from high input costs (Agricorp, 2011; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2009; 2010a),²⁶² international competition heightened by the support provided by other governments to their farming industry (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011a; 2011b), or other specific risks that are outside farmers' control (Agricorp, 2011; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010a; 2011b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011a; 2011b; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011d*; Risk Management Program, 2011*). Farmers and the farming industry were also presented as contributing to Ontario's economy to justify additional support.²⁶³ Even the RMP was presented as such since its predictability would avoid the requirement of ad hoc programs (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011b). Commitments by farmers toward the RMP — such as paying 30% of insurance premiums, lobbying of the federal government, and program participation even when

²⁶² A policy actor even identified the government as responsible for these increased costs in the vegetable industry (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2009).

²⁶³ For instance, farmers were presented as supporting the most important private industry in Ontario (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011a), feeding the cities (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011b) with high quality products (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011b), and contributing to rural communities (*Ibid.*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a).

the market was profitable — were also presented as a fair burden placed over farmers considering their position (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011b; 2012). This is especially remarkable as it happened during years of fiscal restraints and a difficult financial climate for Ontario (Agricorp, 2009; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011a; 2011b). In the words of Ernie Hardeman, who was the official opposition critics in terms of agriculture: “We believed, and we continue to believe, that our first priority as Ontario politicians is to ensure that Ontario is helping our farmers.” (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011b). Such vision was not shared by the federal government which, once again, refused to contribute (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010b; 2011a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011d*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a; 2011a; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2012*).

The program design also represent the provincial positive social construction of agriculture as it included characteristics beneficial to farmers such as transition measures as well as waived contribution and cross-compliance requirements for the first year (Agricorp, 2008b*; 2012; Farm Finance Branch, 2011*; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2010*; 2011a*; 2011b*; 2011e*; 2011f*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2007a; 2011b; Risk Management Program, 2011*; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*; 2012*). The Minister also asked Agricorp to change its priority and

methods to place the client at the forefront, increase the transparency and provide faster services to farmers (Agricorp, 2011; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021d).²⁶⁴

Finally, the discourse from all sorts of policy actors echoed the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture as farmers were constantly identified as family farms (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2011a; 2012) that could leave the sector anytime (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a) or be forced to take non-agricultural jobs (*Ibid.*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2010a). Similarly, program objectives tended to be linked with a perpetual search for increased productivity and competitiveness which are concepts associated with an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021e; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2012).

Program Cap (2013)

After two years of the program covering the various commodities, the Ontario government noted the inherent risks that are coming with a program that has no fund limits. Even though these first two years had relatively favorable markets, officials saw the potential for a multiplication of the cost in case of crisis. Thus, the government decided to cap the program payments and administrative fees at CA\$100 M per year which was under the expectations of payments in most years (Agricorp, 2013; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013c; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2013a; 2013b*; 2013e*; 2013f*; 2013g*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic

²⁶⁴ Other elements in the discourse included requested apologies to farmers for the delay to announce the program (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2011b) and a request for a retroactive program (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2010a).

Affairs, 2013a; 2013b; 2015b; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*). Facing this situation and even though farmers understood that setting a collective maximal payment was necessary to reduce the fiscal pressure on the state (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2012; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2012*), they remained unsatisfied with the program's capping (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2016; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013a; 2013b; 2014; 2015a; 2015b) and the amount chosen (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2014c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013a). This situation then points toward a certain limit farmers might have experienced in terms of social construction. On one side, the program is maintained, and actors' discourse remained favorable to farmers (Agricorp, 2013; 2015; 2016; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2020b; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015a). On the other side, farmers criticized the incongruity of the government as Prime Minister Wynne challenged the industry to create 120,000 jobs by 2020 while restricting the support provided to them (Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2015a; 2016).

This new cap had other impacts on the management of the program (Agricorp, 2013). First, payment schedules had to be updated to reflect the proration of payments based on the available resources.²⁶⁵ This is a process that can only be done when each commodity cycle is

²⁶⁵ To achieve this, each commodity secured part of the total envelope (Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*). If surpluses are left in any commodity after payments, these surpluses are redistributed amongst commodities in needs (Ontario Standing Committee on

completed. Hence, payment schedules were adjusted with a single interim payment possible during the production year, and a final payment in the following year (Agricorp, 2015; Farm Finance Branch, 2013b*; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2013b; 2014; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*). Thus, farmers saw most of their payment coming in a year later. Second, the government changed participatory rules with the creation of the premium fund which regroups all the premium paid by farmers and is administered independently of the government payments (Agricorp, 2014; 2015; Farm Finance Branch, 2013a*; 2013b*; 2013c*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2013a; 2013b*; 2013e*; 2013f*; 2013g*; 2021g; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*).²⁶⁶ Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition became in charge of this fund, though they decided to contract Agricorp to administer it (Agricorp, 2014; 2015; Farm Finance Branch, 2013a*; 2013c*). Prior to that, premium paid by farmers were consolidated with the provincial funding to be distributed in a single way.

Second, payment recovery methods were updated in 2013 to offer more flexibility to farmers. In the past, any money owed to Agricorp was recovered from other programs' payments to producers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013b). Starting in 2013, each farmer owing money to Agricorp has to find an agreement with them to schedule the reimbursement of the sums owed (Agricorp, 2014). It also came with the beginning of interests being charged to farmers on money owed (*Ibid.*).

Finance and Economic Affairs, 2016). In the hypothetical case of a global surplus after full allocation to each commodity, the state recovers these amounts.

²⁶⁶ Except for the Self-Directed Risk Management program that continued to fund farmers' account.

Third and last,²⁶⁷ to compensate for the payment cap, eligibility criteria got released as AgriStability participation stopped being a requirement (Agricorp, 2015; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016b).²⁶⁸ Minister Leal mentioned how this requirement was hurting farmers and preventing them from participating since farmers do not appreciate AgriStability (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Standing Committee on Estimates, 2016b).

All of these changes were discussed with commodity groups prior to their implementation (Agricorp, 2013; 2015; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013a; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2015a). This displayed some corporatist elements such as:

- The program had first been designed by farmers (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2013a; 2013c; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2013*);
- Each commodity group met with the Ministry to discuss changes (Agricorp, 2014; Farm Finance Branch, 2013b*; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021g);
- Commodity groups remained in charge of the Premium Fund (Agricorp, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2013a; 2013b*; 2013e*; 2013f*; 2013g*) and involved in the Reference Committees (Agricorp, 2012; 2014; 2015; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011b*; Risk Management Program & Farm Finance Branch, 2011*).

²⁶⁷ Another minor change, starting in 2016, is omitted here. Unseeded acreage option allowed the farmer to determine their dominant crop to calculate the compensation (Agricorp, 2016).

²⁶⁸ Another minor change to eligibility criteria concerned corn-fed beef farmers that, if they preferred, could enroll in a ledge account program supported by the government (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2021g). Since this program remained quite minor (Better Farming, 2015), it is not covered in this dissertation.

Still, the Beef Farmers of Ontario were unable to reach an agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on the administrative modifications needed to implement the payment cap, thus showing some dissatisfaction (Farm Finance Branch, 2013b*).

Raising the Program Cap (2017–2019)

Starting in 2017, the government initiated a revision process of the RMP to better align with its objectives of agriculture's development (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017). With the change of government in 2018, discussions shifted to implement short-term changes and evaluate the migration of the RMP to a production insurance-like program (Farm Finance Branch, 2019*; Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2019). This new version of the program was expected in 2020 budget for a 2021 implementation (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2019), but the Covid-19 situation forced the government to focus on more urgent issues. As such, only short-term changes were effective during the period covered in this dissertation.

The most important change implemented came in 2019 with an addition of CA\$50 M to the RMP's budget (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2019c; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2019a; 2019b). It was accompanied by different small adjustments such as an increase in the share of premiums paid by farmers from 30% to 35% of the total premium (Farm Finance Branch, 2019*) and a new coverage level option of 95% that appeared (*Ibid.*; Agricorp, 2019*). Moreover, new possibilities to lose program eligibility were added when farmers provide misleading information, have unpaid debt to the state and no plan to reimburse it, or when farmers have an aggressive behavior (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2019a; 2019c*; 2019d*; 2019e*; 2019f*; 2019g*).

These changes then illustrate again the ambivalent social construction of farmers in the 2010s. On one side, the additional budget and many recurring elements in the discourse of elected officials echoed the positive social construction of farmers. For instance, farmers were considered as deserving support (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2017; 2019a) or facing risks out of their control (Farm Finance Branch, 2019*), agriculture was presented as contributing to Ontario's economy (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2017), and Agricorp maintained its focus on reducing the burden for program participants (*Ibid.*; Agricorp, 2017).²⁶⁹ On the other side, the New Democrats highlighted a budget reduction of CA\$250 M for agriculture in general (Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2019c). Moreover, groups representing ineligible commodities, such as greenhouse vegetables, argued that the additional budget should have been directed to them instead of an improvement to already covered programs (Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2019b). Even the Auditor General (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; 2019) highlighted how funds dedicated to the RMP were insufficient to support agriculture so nine ad hoc programs were needed during these years.

Once again, commodity groups and the provincial government lobbied the federal government to attract some federal money into the RMP without much success (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017). Instead, the discourse of elected officials focused on adjusting the RMP under the constraints of reconducted federal programs in 2018 (*Ibid.*; Ontario Legislative Assembly, 2017; Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2019a; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2019b).

²⁶⁹ The Auditor general in their 2017 and 2019 reports highlighted the positive social construction embedded in the RMP when they criticized the program for payments delivered to farmers that did not incur any losses (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017), and the lack of evidence regarding RMP's capacities to fulfill its intended goals of a profitable, innovative, competitive and sustainable agriculture (*Ibid.*).

Finally, elected officials relied on arguments supporting the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture more than any other style.²⁷⁰ As previously mentioned, the program's objectives targeted profitability, sustainability and innovation (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017; Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 2019b) which for the most part suggest a support for an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. Also, the Auditor General argued that bigger farms tend to participate in higher rates than smaller farms (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2017) since RMP's design benefits them more:

Summary

The RMP evolution shows the capacity of farmers groups to convince a provincial government to extend its resources to support them even when the federal government — who historically has been the first purveyor of funds — considers the program misplaced. It thus displays a strong enough positive social construction to attract both attention and resources. What is especially interesting is how both levels of governments took a different position regarding the RMP. The decision from the federal government to not renew companion programs forced the provincial government to act by itself. Farmer's group had to take the initiative and become a policy entrepreneur to propose and justify the mechanism behind the program.

Once the program got implemented, actions from farmers' groups continued to build up and challenged both governments for additional support. Again, the federal declined, and the provincial government extended additional resources to cover more commodities. However, this alignment between farmers' position and the provincial government climaxed and the Ontario

²⁷⁰ During this period, no mention referred to the Peasant farming style and a single mention was attributed to Agri-food firms: a criticism by the Auditor General toward support provided to farmers enrolled in commercialization arrangement (i.e., production contracts, vertical integration) where they do not own the animals (Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, 2019).

government decided to impose an annual cap to payment. It is possible that the incapacity of farmers' groups to maintain a united voice to face the government has impacted their relationship with the state and limited the resources they could grasp. In particular, the unification between commodity groups was needed to discuss the different shares of the budget to allocate to each commodity. Hence, this decision changed the institutional arrangement and reduced the leverage power of farmers.

It is also possible that farmers simply reached the maximum of their social construction in terms of resources they can obtain from the government. The annual cap — even when extended — was knowingly insufficient for the program to adequately compensate farmers. Ad hoc programs were then later added, but these programs do not display as strong of a commitment than a recurring support.

One last variable has been recurrently displayed throughout the RMP evolution: an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture. The discourse surrounding agriculture highlighted the family farm and a development of agriculture around innovations and market competitiveness. At the same time, the program design also puts forward the idea of a representative cost of production for a model farm, and support by commodity which imply some level of specialization.

Conclusion

This chapter informed us on the risk management programs that were provided to Québec and Ontario farmers over the past 30 years. It displayed both the types of support they received and the factors that brought the states to intervene in favor (or not) of farmers and thus justified, to the eyes of the population, why such support was necessary.

As presented, the positive social construction of farmers was a dominant factor across the programs. Most of the excerpts we isolated have shown how elected officials were praising farmers for their contribution to regional economies and considered that the risks they encountered were out of their control and thus necessitate specific programs. It also appeared in the form of programs that were implemented, with a facilitated participation. For instance, we saw deadlines being postponed, interim payments and budget increases integrated in program designs. We also saw a limited number of barriers implemented such as delays in payment recoveries and penalties lightly enforced.

Another variable we often observed was an institutional arrangement leaning toward corporatism. Such an arrangement recognizes a specific role for farmers and thus an increased capacity of influence of the state. Even though we expected to observe pluralism in Ontario and corporatism in Québec, the observations are confirming Québec's expectations but point toward a light form of corporatism in Ontario. In fact, only the MRI saw a proper pluralist institutional arrangement being present. This may relax the corporatist theoretical requirement of a single organization representing a group; or it could highlight that even as multiple organization coexist in Ontario, one dominated the political game so strongly that it overshadowed the others. Still, we can consider that farmers were able to maintain a strong political influence due to their proximity to the state. This is also observed in the limited changes observed in the size of policy networks, and a reinforcement of both corporatist institutional arrangements as agencies were created (FADQ and Agricorp). When combined with the positive social construction, the influence of farmers brings us to generally classify them under the 'advantaged' social representation of the target population.

In terms of the discourses surrounding agriculture, most of the changes echoed the Entrepreneurial representation of agriculture which was expected to be the dominant vision for both regions. Other visions were also present, including some changes associated with a Peasant vision of agriculture in Québec. Hence, it allows for a variability that we can carry in the next chapter that reviews our hypotheses. In Ontario, even if a general farmers' group (National Farmers Union) tends to advocate for an eco-friendly agriculture that promotes different models, it does not seem that they were able to bolster changes toward their vision, at least in risk management programs.

As for the other variables, we saw the capacity of policy entrepreneurs to mobilize elected officials toward their preferences. These policy entrepreneurs came from different groups of the society, including bureaucrats, elected officials, and farmers' groups. Oppositely, our variable on social climate did not bring regular variations, except for the mid-2000s in Québec when the UPA managed to receive sufficient public attention to force the government to abandon some of the intended changes. Such a display of political force can be seen as a reminder of their social construction and thus yield lasting influence. Finally, most of our control variable found little echo in the documents we oversaw, except for federalism. This latter variable played a massive role in Ontario (i.e., creation of the MRI, the OWFRP and the OFIDP, long debates regarding federal intervention in the RMP) and brought Québec to create both Agri-Québec and Agri-Québec Plus.

Chapter 7 – Discussion

The programs we presented in the previous chapter provide information to assess the general patterns of risk management policies in Québec and Ontario. If one tells its own story, our research model aims to identify more general tendencies of policy stability and policy change. In particular, our hypotheses focused on the role of institutional arrangements and visions of agriculture to understand policy evolution.

The combination of all information coming from the programs studied generated a total of 150 data points (or program-year) in our panel data dataset. Of these data points, 60% showed a policy stability. Amongst the others, the most frequent changes were, as expected, changes in settings (29% of the dependent variable data point), followed by changes in instruments (9%) and changes in goals (2%). Table 19 summarizes the frequency of each of our explanatory variables. In this table, we can observe that most variables displayed a sufficient variability to allow for a proper analysis. However, some values for independent variables remained at quite a low level, with a limited number of observations to allow for an in-depth analysis of the impacts of these variables. These include the actions of non-traditional interest groups and elected officials as policy entrepreneurs, a reduction of the policy network, the change of policy venue, the presence of a social crisis, a negative representation of farmers and agriculture, as well as any form of pluralism. In the following sections, we review what can be learned for each explanatory variable and show up to which extent it is possible to conclude any impacts from these variables on policy evolution. It should also be kept in mind, while reading the table that all variables do not have a value for every year. For some, the nature of the variable suggests that the variable cannot be observed every year (e.g., policy entrepreneur) while for others, information may not have been consistently available.

Table 19. *Frequency of variables and their values*

Variable	Value	Frequency (n=150)	% of the total	% of the variable observation
Policy evolution	Stability	90	60%	60%
	Change in settings	43	29%	29%
	Change in instruments	14	9%	9%
	Change in goals	3	2%	2%
Social construction	Very positive	50	33%	55%
	Weakly positive	31	21%	34%
	Weakly negative	8	5%	9%
	Strongly negative	2	1%	2%
Institutional arrangement	Strong corporatism	35	23%	40%
	Weak corporatism	47	31%	53%
	Weak pluralism	2	1%	2%
	Strong pluralism	4	3%	5%
Farming styles	Peasant	42	28%	34%
	Entrepreneur	53	35%	42%
	Agri-food firms	30	20%	24%
Policy entrepreneur	Elected officials	11	7%	15%
	Bureaucrats	25	17%	34%
	Farmers' groups	32	21%	43%
	Non-traditional interest groups	6	4%	8%
Policy network	Stable	113	75%	
	Expansion	25	17%	
	Reduction	10	7%	

Table 19 (Cont.)

Variable	Value	Frequency (n=150)	% of the total	% of the variable observation
Policy venue	Stable	139	93%	
	Change	11	7%	
Social climate	Absence of crisis	141	93%	
	Small crisis	8	5%	
	Important crisis	3	2%	

In general, we found that our research model allowed to represent the vast majority of elements observed in the discourse through our different variables. Thus, we considered that our model displays a strong explanatory power. Still, and as mentioned before, two recurring themes required us to adjust our codification schemes: the influence of international agreements and an internal scandal at Agricorp caused by a wrongful allocation of money. However, the first theme should be captured by the federalism control variable since international trade is a federal responsibility as the federal government is the signatory of international trade agreements. But federalism is a complicated variable. Most of the discussions on the provincial and federal role are held in federal-provincial-territorial meetings and in the Canadian Parliament, two bodies that are outside of the perimeter of our study. Hence, we found ourselves unable to adequately cover all discussions. As for Agricorp's scandal, it is largely circumscribed around 2001 for Agricorp programs, which might have affected the policy venue variable if the impact had been important enough.

Another limitation from our research model is the non-consideration of the market reality as an independent variable. Since dire situations on the market (or exceptionally beneficial

markets) could justify program change, this might be an aspect that is not fully accounted for. Still, a positive social construction should reflect, in an indirect fashion, the influence of markets on policy evolution if farmers obtain a change when the market is disastrous, or if they avoid a policy change when the market is good. Hence, though the market situation is not directly part of our model, its transposition in discourse is included.

Similarly, we did not consider a political power variable that would have represented the influence of different groups. Instead, we observed the interactions from every group, considering their participation in the discussion as a recognition of their representativity of a perspective. Knowing that not all discussions are public, and some groups may prefer close-door presentations, it is possible that we introduce a bias against these groups. To fully assess the power of different groups, we would have needed to document the reality, over time, of a wide variety of actors even though they were not included in the policy network of risk management programs. These information are difficult to gather over time (see Gaboury-Bonhomme (2018) for the limits observed in Québec) and their integration in our research model would have been difficult since most of our data came from members of parliament.

Finally, our research model is built to isolate annual elements which can then falsely associate the change of an independent variable with a policy change simply because they happened during the same year. Considering policy changes are generally a long process with discussions overlapping years, the values of independent variables might actually impact changes that happened in the future. Thankfully, our qualitative approach allowed us to recreate the narrative of each policy change on the longer run. This is why the presentations of each program were organized by policy changes rather than by year.

In the following pages, we develop an analysis of the influence of each explanatory variable on our dependent variable to understand their role in policy evolution. By doing so, we also considered the interactions explanatory variables have between themselves. This analysis is followed by a review of the elements that support or infirm each of our hypotheses in order to highlight the actual results of this dissertation.

Effects of the explanatory variables

Social Construction

Social construction is one of the most observed variables of our model with information available for 61% of the program-year. As opposed to other variables that can be objectively observed (e.g., policy venue), the social construction relied on our interpretation of the representation of agriculture and farmers in the discourses and programs' elements. As such, observations were regularly twofold. First, we considered the qualifiers used to describe agriculture and farmers as well as the type of arguments justifying the program changes as depicting the social construction embedded in the society and decision-makers. Second, we relied on the modalities of each program as a proxy to determine the social constructions.²⁷¹ Which means that we assumed these choices were made rationally by elected officials and bureaucrats to align the program with the dominant social construction of agriculture and farmers.

Our results are showing that by far, farmers and agriculture benefit from a positive social construction both in Québec and Ontario (though slightly less in Ontario) with 91% of the data points showing either a weakly or a very positive social construction. This aligns with the

²⁷¹ Mobilizing Schneider and Ingram's (1997) theory.

distributive aspect of the programs studied with funds coming from the state and given to farmers. Similarly, when keeping only program changes, we observed that 89% of them happened under a positive representation of agriculture with a bigger share of very positive social constructions (see Table 20). In particular, we observed some long-lasting programs such as crop insurance and production insurance that generally improved over the years the support or the flexibility of the coverage offered to farmers. We also presented the implementation of several new programs that added coverage and, while many were repealed (e.g., FISA, MRI, OWFRP), most of their coverage simply took a new form with budgets being reallocated. The prime example might be the transition of some commodities from the FISI to AgriQuébec, but the same could be said for the migration from the GRIP to the MRI to the RMP.

Table 20. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by social construction*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes¹
Policy changes with variation in social construction	27	45%
Policy changes without variation in social construction	33	55%
Policy changes following		
Improved social construction	13	22%
Deteriorated social construction	14	23%
Policy changes in a context of		
Very positive social construction	29	48%
Weakly positive social construction	24	40%
Weakly negative social construction	7	12%
Strongly negative social construction	2	3%
Variation in social construction that did not bring policy change (n=90)²	22	24%

¹ Percentage may be over 100 due to diverging social construction for a program-year.

² Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

The fact that 45% of the program changes followed a variation of the social construction echo the evolutionary path of the dealignment of the social construction expressed by the population with the elements implemented in programs. This situation appeared in an equally fashion between an adjustment of programs to reflect a more positive social construction and an adjustment reflecting a more negative social construction. In the case of improved social

construction, prime examples include the readjustment of social construction included in the FISI following the Saint-Pierre report in 2009 as well as the addition of several organic coverage in Crop Insurance. As for deteriorated social construction, RMP's cap implemented in 2013 strongly reflected how farmers may have topped their capacity to drag resources toward them in a context of fiscal restraint by the state. Similarly, the addition of cross-compliance requirements to participate in Crop Insurance in 2004 associated environmental externalities to agriculture and thus points toward a deteriorating social construction.

However, results also showed that variation of social constructions might not be sufficient by themselves to generate change. On 22 occasions, we observed a modification of the social construction without linking it to a policy change. These instances were mostly present in Québec (17) and included events such as the Pronovost Commission in 2007 and the turn of the millennium for Crop Insurance. In many of these occasions, the social construction changed for at least two years in a row, alternating between positive and negative evolution, which might suggest that the observation of the social construction variable for these years were not supported by a renewed vision from the society but might be 'mistakes' made by decision-makers in reading the social construction of farmers and agriculture. It also reminds of the stability vision of Baumgartner and Jones (2009) that recognizes short-term variations that do not consolidate in a proper trail of change.

Hence, our social construction variable appears to have represented a pillar of the choices made by elected officials and bureaucrats regarding risk management programs. Though it might not always have been the key element in itself to justify changes, it proved to combine with other variables and acted as a support for them to launch a wave of changes. Interactions with other variables are developed in the following sections. In fact, our analysis echoes Schneider and

Ingram (1993; 1997) assertions that policies align with social construction amongst other factors. As long as farmers were able to appear as benefactors to the society and key elements of the economy, they maintained or increased the level of support provided to them by the state.

Institutional Arrangement

Our institutional arrangement variable is also one of the most observed variables with values for 59% of the program-years. It relies on the officially recognized institutions to represent farmers and includes an informal component assessed through the importance given to farmers consultation. By considering the informal aspect of consultations, we alleviate the requirement of a single organization representing farmers to be considered a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement. In exchange, we gained the ability to recognize the presence of such an institutional arrangement in Ontario even if they have three official farmers' groups. Since these groups were sometimes granted with specific powers, sticking to the formal aspects would likely have misrepresented the institutional arrangement.

The compilation of programs' data shows that risk management policies are mostly designed and implemented through a meso-corporatist institutional arrangement. Only 10% of our data points showed an institutional arrangement associated with a form of pluralism. This then echoes Montpetit and Coleman (1999) that observed the strong place of a corporatist setting in Canadian agriculture. A recurring argument that was used by elected officials to justify such an arrangement, especially as agencies were implemented and thus formally laid down the arrangement, was the financial contribution of farmers to these programs. Though discourses are presenting this situation as the prevalent logic, it is important to highlight that financial contribution is not always granting a place on the boards of agencies (e.g., agencies in charge of

managing public pensions or car insurances). The capacity to maintain a corporatist institutional arrangement over decades can then be considered as a display of political force.

From data presented in Table 21, it is difficult to determine the influence of variations in institutional arrangements to generate program change. Only a third of the program changes saw a variation of institutional arrangement. Moreover, the changes that happened simultaneously with a variation of institutional arrangement are generally minor such as the restriction of the Option Unit Coverage (2002) in Production Insurance, and modifications of FISI's premium calculation (1996, 2018). The main exceptions appear to be related to the creation of AgriQuébec (2010) and the migration of some commodities from the FISI to AgriQuébec. Since these two exceptions strongly mobilized other variables as well, the actual impact of the variation of the institutional arrangements might be limited.

Table 21. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by institutional arrangements*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes with variation in institutional arrangements	20	33%
Policy changes without variation in institutional arrangements	40	67%
Policy changes following a tendency toward		
Increased corporatism	10	17%
Increased pluralism	10	17%
Policy changes in a context of		
Strong corporatism	21	35%
Weak corporatism	34	57%
Any form of pluralism	6	10%
Variation in institutional arrangement that did not bring policy change (n=90)¹	13	14%

¹ Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

Following our theoretical framework, it is more interesting to consider the institutional arrangement variable as a facilitator or enhancer for other variables. In particular, the combination of the social construction with the institutional arrangement can point toward an

‘advantaged’ position on Schneider and Ingram’s (1993; 1997) representation of the target population. The theory predicted that such a representation would lead to programs that are easy to apply on, highly funded policies, and a place in the agenda of decision-makers. From a different perspective, Landesmann and Vartiainen (1992) mentioned that a corporatist institutional arrangement reduces the risk for the state and thus facilitates additional support. The results observed from the combination of the values of both variables is thus not surprising. In Ontario, the multiplication of ad hoc programs and in Québec the addition and improvement of AgriQuébec and AgriQuébec Plus are examples of such combination.

Table 22 presents the interaction of both variables and their effects on the evolutionary path of risk management programs. Looking at the table, we can identify two patterns of interactions between the two variables that can foster change. First, we see a combined effect of decreasing social construction and strong corporatism to generate change. This suggests that corporatism cannot avoid a growing negative representation of a target population to affect the program implemented. However, since farmers have a strong influence on the institutions managing the programs, they can soften the scope of changes adopted. With the exception of commodities leaving the FISI for AgriQuébec and RMP’s payment cap, all other changes resulting from this first pattern aligned with farmers’ demands or a negotiation leaning toward farmers’ demands. For instance, it includes the FISA’s creation, the cancellation of the 25% measure in the FISI, and the addition of cross-compliance in Crop Insurance and the FISI. A strong corporatist institutional arrangement might then create a baseline of elements under which unfavorable changes cannot be accepted by the target population.²⁷²

²⁷² Arguments could also be made regarding the two exceptions highlighted. In the case of commodities leaving the FISI for AgriQuébec, the government relied on farmers’ referenda to

Table 22. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by a combination of social construction and institutional arrangements*

	Strong corporatism	Weak corporatism	Any form of pluralism	Stable institutional arrangement	Increased corporatism	Increased pluralism
Policy changes following						
Improved social construction	5	5	1	4	6	3
Deteriorated social construction	10	3	0	8	1	5
Policy changes in a context of						
Very positive social construction	11	8	2	20	5	4
Weakly positive social construction	7	11	2	15	6	3
Weakly negative social construction	4	1	1	4	0	3
Strongly negative social construction	2	0	0	2	0	0

Second, a correlation appears between the variation of social construction and institutional arrangement in their capacity to generate program change. We can observe many changes combining an increased social construction with additional corporatism, or a decreased social construction with a tendency toward pluralism. However, most of these data points are centered over the reign of Pierre Paradis as a Minister of Agriculture in Québec. As mentioned previously, Minister Paradis did not align with the corporatist institutional arrangement and regularly criticized UPA's positions. Thus, the pattern observed in the table might be the results of his preferences. Supporting this idea is the lower emphasis given to the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture associated with these changes as Minister Paradis was especially pushing for a Peasant vision. Moreover, they are one of the few years for which our 'seniority level of the minister in charge' variable reached senior minister for several consecutive years.

justify the change and some farmers (i.e., potato growers) were adamant of this change. For the RMP cap, farmers managed to maintain the funds even if the government was aiming for fiscal restraints.

A similar exercise was also made about the interaction between institutional arrangement and policy network, but results are not showing any effect of interactions. Whether we consider the variation of the policy network or not, the effect of the institutional arrangement remains the same. This in fact might highlight the capacity of a corporatist institutional arrangement to overcome most attempts to include (or negate) new actors since processes of consultation and discussions are already well implemented and saturated — if not controlled — by the corporatist group.

Farming Styles

Another variable for which we have a lot of data points is the farming style (55% of the program-years). Moreover, since we considered each farming style as being independent from the others, many of the program-years provide information for more than a single farming style. To make sure we consider the relative importance of each vision of agriculture for a specific program-year, we also maintained a count of the dominant farming style for each program-year. These dominations were represented in graphics accompanying each program in the previous chapter. This count then allowed us to look at tendencies toward a specific vision of agriculture.

By taking either the number of program-years with mentions regarding farming style or using the domination criteria, data are echoing the information from Chapter 2 about the Entrepreneurial vision being the most prevalent. For instance, we collected information supporting Entrepreneurial ideas in two thirds of the program-years for which we have information. In comparison, Peasant and Agri-food firms' ideas each appeared around a quarter of the time. We also observed a strong stability in the domination of farming styles with a total of only 18 changes over 150 program-years; these changes are equally balanced between each farming style. Though we could have expected that the Agri-food firms and Peasant ideas would

be more popular as the time passes by – following the trajectories identified by van der Ploeg (2008) – data are not suggesting discrepancies between the periods with elements of these farming styles. Hence, programs’ designs continue to display Entrepreneurial characteristics even if agriculture is evolving (cf. Chapter 4).

Table 23. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by farming style*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes with variation in farming style	6	10%
Policy changes without variation in farming style	54	90%
Policy changes in a context of		
Peasant	11	18%
Entrepreneurial	37	62%
Agri-food firms	9	15%
No policy changes in a context of¹		
Peasant	16	18%
Entrepreneurial	27	30%
Agri-food firms	14	16%
Variation in farming style that did not bring policy change (n=90)²	12	13%

¹ Since the absence of policy change includes years without information, the sum does not equal to 100%.

² Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

Due to the low number of variations in farming style and the even smaller number of variations in farming style that brought program change, it is difficult to assess any effect of this variable as a promoter of change. Again, this aligns with the theory that did not predict a path of program change through the perceived characteristics of agriculture. Of course, it does not mean that this variable is useless in our model. Instead, as presented in Table 23, policy changes are twice as most likely to happen under the domination of an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, even when we take into account the prevalence of these ideas. This then supports the link we made earlier between Entrepreneurial ideas and the state assistance paradigm. This is even more important when we take into consideration the social construction (see Table 24). Under the domination of the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, changes are supported by a very positive

social construction. We also found that Agri-food firms' domination is more prone to generate change under a slightly less positive social construction.

Table 24. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by a combination of farming style and social construction*

Interactions with other variables	Policy changes under the domination of a farming style		
	Peasant	Entrepreneurial	Agri-food firms
Dominant social construction			
Very positive	5	23	2
Weakly positive	3	10	45
Negative	1	4	1
Variation of the social construction			
Stability	4	25	4
Improving	5	5	2
Deteriorating	2	7	3

Finally, we can observe a pattern of program change between Peasant and Agri-food firms' ideas when the social construction is changing. As presented in Table 24, Peasant ideas benefit from an increasing social construction, while Agri-food firms' ideas do not align with stability when we compare the occurrence of change under the domination of farming style with the pattern of change without considering this variable. Thus, this suggests that even if the visions of agriculture do not bring change by themselves, they can rely on programs and social construction misalignment to bolster change.

Policy Entrepreneur

Through the analysis of the programs, we were able to identify the actions of a policy entrepreneur in 42% of the program-years. This number, however, hides a limit regarding the depth of understanding of the influence by policy entrepreneurs. Since many of their actions are conducted behind the scenes, our research method obfuscates these actions. As such, we can only consider actors that were identified as carrying an issue as policy entrepreneurs.

The most frequent successful policy entrepreneur's²⁷³ type we found are farmers' groups (38%) (see Table 25). In second place, we found bureaucrats – mainly the Auditors General and special commissioners (27%). Considering the meso-corporatist institutional arrangement in which the state shares its decision-making power with private actors, it is not surprising to observe the influence of these two groups. Oppositely, non-traditional groups, such as participants to conferences, found themselves limited in their capacity to intervene on and impact the evolution of risk management programs.

Table 25. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by a policy entrepreneur*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes with actions of a policy entrepreneur	35	58%
Policy changes without actions of a policy entrepreneur	24	40%
Policy changes fostered by the actions of¹		
Elected officials	7	20%
Bureaucrats	16	46%
Farmer's groups	23	66%
Non-traditional groups	2	6%
Actions of a policy entrepreneur that did not bring policy change (n=90)²	28	31%

¹ Since more than one type of policy entrepreneur could have been active on a specific topic, the sum of these elements can be greater than 100%.

² Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

The prevalent situation of change caused by the actions of a policy entrepreneur corroborates our theoretical framework and especially the evolutionary path identified by Baumgartner and Jones (2009). Even if not all actions of policy entrepreneurs led to a program change, this might only reflect the skill differences between policy entrepreneurs and the political context that suits the actions from the policy entrepreneur.

The most interesting impact from policy entrepreneurs, however, comes from its interaction with other variables. By their actions, policy entrepreneurs can champion

²⁷³ By successful policy entrepreneurs, we imply that a policy entrepreneur managed to obtain the sought change.

unconventional ideas or representations and defend them in front of the public. By doing so, they act as agents of change. Table 26 shows that policy changes fostered by a policy entrepreneur show an over-representation of non-entrepreneurial visions of agriculture (particularly the relatively low numbers of policy changes when part of the discourses included Entrepreneurial farming style as compared to the other farming styles). In other words, it implies that policy entrepreneurs were likely able to use the non-dominant visions as leverages to generate change (whether as a scapegoat or as an example to follow). Though we lack a large amount of data, those we have on the variation of farming styles also echoes the potential actions of policy entrepreneurs since 5 of the 6 program changes following a variation of the farming style were linked to a policy entrepreneur. Hence, even if they were not systematically successful, policy entrepreneurs seem to have been able to rely on the visions of agriculture to create a policy window and push changes.

Oppositely, policy entrepreneurs seemed to have relied less on the social construction of farmers to create a policy window. When looking at the number of observations involving both social construction and policy entrepreneur, the pattern when we consider only social construction seems to repeat in most cases. Only twice can we observe a different situation. First, elected officials were especially successful in promoting changes while the social construction was very high. This suggests a feed-forward effect driven by elected officials that may see occasions to align themselves with the perception of the population. It is interesting to note that most of these occasions can be linked with environmental issues. In the earlier 1990s, ministers were keen to defend agriculture against environmentalists, reiterate their support to the FISI and increase its flexibility. Similarly, starting in the mid-2010s, ministers presented agriculture as beneficial to the environment.

Table 26. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by a combination of the actions of a policy entrepreneur and other variables*

Interactions with other variables	Policy change following the actions of			
	Elected officials	Bureaucrats	Farmers' groups	Other groups
Part of discourses representing farming styles				
Peasant	5	11	13	1
Entrepreneurial	3	10	13	2
Agri-food firms	3	8	4	1
Domination of the discourse by a farming style				
Peasant	3	5	5	0
Entrepreneurial	3	10	11	2
Agri-food firms	1	0	6	0
Variation of a farming style				
Stability	7	13	21	2
Toward Peasant	0	1	0	0
Toward Entrepreneurial	0	2	0	0
Toward Agri-food firms	0	0	2	0
Dominant social construction				
Very positive	5	8	13	2
Weakly positive	1	5	7	0
Negative	0	2	3	0
Variation of the social construction				
Stability	3	4	15	1
Improving	2	8	5	1
Deteriorating	2	4	3	0

Second, bureaucrats (and especially FADQ's board, the Saint-Pierre report and working groups) pushed for program changes in a context of increasing social construction. When looking at these changes, they mostly appear as restrictions imposed to farmers (e.g., FISI tightening measures, Agri-Québec commodities' exclusion of the FISI commodities) or controversial issues (e.g., use of weather derivatives in Crop Insurance, FISI deductible calculations for big farms). Hence, this suggests that bureaucrats may have observed an over positive social construction of agriculture at these times and tried to counteract it by advocating for changes limiting the social construction's benefits.

Policy Network

The policy network variable was used to represent the range of actors intervening on the issues covered. As mentioned previously, Baumgartner and Jones's (2009) theory suggests that an expansion of the policy network creates an opportunity to foster policy change. This implies that traditional actors seek to limit the access to these discussions to avoid new ideas to receive support. We observed that 25% of the program-year saw a variation of the policy network, but most of these changes did not bring program changes. In fact, only 20% of the program changes were associated with a policy network variation (see Table 27). This then questions the significance of this variable. Moreover, parts of these changes are a policy network reduction and thus should instead hinder program changes.

Table 27. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by the size of the policy network*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes with variation in the size of the policy network	12	20%
Policy changes without variation in the size of the policy network	48	80%
Policy changes in a context of		
Policy network expansion	7	12%
Policy network reduction	5	8%
Variation in the size of the policy network that did not bring policy change (n=90)¹		
Policy network expansion	18	20%
Policy network reduction	5	6%

¹ Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

Hence, the results observed from this variable contrast with our expectations since the policy network expansion failed to bring program changes. Mostly, data showed that policy network expansions happened through the organization of wide summits or conferences such as Ontario Premier Agri-Food Summit. Taking into account the number of these events observed during the period, it is surprising that most of them did not yield any more impacts. In fact, the 1992 and 1998 conferences in Québec and 4 Premier Agri-Food summits were the only events

linked to program changes. This suggests that consultative events are not always an occasion for promoters of change to convince the state of their ideas. Following Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation, not all consultation mechanisms are effective to involve participants and have them promote their ideas. An additional study we conducted (Clerson, 2022b) showed how the FISI mechanisms of consultation do not always grant access and power to participants to enact change. A concurrent explanation could be that most of these summits or conferences addressed more than risk management programs, so changes might have happened to other programs but not on the one we looked at. These observations are, however, limited by our research design.

Policy Venue

This variable is associated with the institution overseeing the programs. In both provinces, the period covered encompasses one change of institution with the attribution of the risk management programs to a para-governmental agency (i.e., the FADQ and Agricorp). Since other program changes affecting the institutions overseeing the programs were scarce, we only found 8 program-years (13%) where a variation of the policy venue led to a program change (see Table 28). In addition, in three cases the variation did not bring any change. With the low number of observations and their concentration around a lower number of years, we are limited in the interpretation we can make relatively to this variable. Moreover, we predicted many interactions with other variables, but the lack of data makes it difficult to interpret.

Table 28. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by the policy venue*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes with variation of the policy venue	8	13%
Policy changes without variation of the policy venue	52	87%
Change of the policy venue that did not bring policy change (n=90)¹	3	3%

¹ Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

Still, we observed how institutions have formalized the meso-corporatist institutional arrangement with places granted to farmers on the board of both agencies. Also, moving from a ministry to an agency added flexibility to program making by easing the processes for change and the requirements for consultations. In parallel, it increased the opacity of the mechanisms and decisions since they result from internal regulation changes rather than legislative changes. Hence, the policy venue is likely to have had an effect, but since program changes were mostly realized on the long run and not immediately following the implementation of new policy venues, our research design is limited in the full observation of this variable's impact.

Social Climate

Our last explanatory variable refers to the social climate surrounding a program. As previously mentioned, we relied on media information to measure this specific variable. To supplement this method, we also noted when protests were used by elected officials or policy entrepreneurs in their discourses to support program changes. Even relying on these two methods, we only found quite a small number of social crises with most of them unrelated to program changes. As presented in Table 29, only 4 program changes are associated with a social crisis and half of them actually refer to the creation of programs before 1990 (i.e., the FISI and Crop Insurance). The other half instead refers to the same crisis, in Québec in 2009–2010, which led to reforms in the FISI and Agri-Québec's creation. Hence, we actually only found a single occasion of program change caused by a social crisis. By itself, the rate of social crisis should not be surprising since we should not expect these crises to happen on a regular basis, but it remains quite a small sample. Moreover, we found evidence of crises that did not bring changes. Hence, it questions about the level of signification of this variable in our research model.

Table 29. *Frequency of policy changes influenced by the social climate*

	Frequency (n=60)	% of the total of policy changes
Policy changes under a crisis	4	7%
Policy changes without a crisis	56	93%
Crisis that did not bring policy change (n=90)¹	5	6%

¹ Elements from this row were identified from the program-years of stability.

One variable interaction is, however, interesting to note since the social crisis that led to program change actually resulted from the actions of two policy entrepreneurs: the Commission Pronovost and the Saint-Pierre reports. Program changes adopted in 2009–2010 created a strong turmoil in Québec with protests over the province, blockades of snowmobile trails and chains blocking the FADQ’s entrance. Farmers then relied on their political power to oppose changes and ultimately managed to have most of them abandoned. Aside from this interaction, it appears difficult to associate the social climate with any other variables even if we intended to.

Revisiting Our Hypotheses

Building on the analysis of our research model and the assessment of each explanatory variable, it becomes possible to extend our interpretation to the broader concepts we developed in our hypotheses. To achieve this, we reorganized the data following the elements specified in each hypothesis. Since each of them combines values of different variables, we took back each program evolution and read them through the elements supporting our hypotheses. To facilitate the identification of relevant material, we built the hypothesis grid that is available in annex A. Once we identified all the relevant elements, we contextualized them with the data organized through our research model. This approach is expected to highlight important elements that support or infirm our hypotheses while ensuring that their context aligns with the variables sought. For instance, the first hypothesis considers one element that is ‘extended policy network’ to explain the decisions of the state. We then looked at each program to identify when the policy

network could be considered ‘extended’. Once each occurrence was identified, we cross-referenced the occurrences with the policy network variable. Though this example may seem trivial, the contextualization of each element sometimes required a more thorough analysis to pair them with the variables. In the end, this method allows us to identify elements supporting the hypotheses as well as verifying for both types of errors.

In the following subsections, we then revisit each hypothesis sorting the different elements identified in our data to generate an appreciation toward the acceptance or rejection of our hypotheses. The hypothesis grid serves as a basis to organize the observations.

Pluralism: As the Institutional Arrangement Leans Toward Pluralism, the State Will More Likely Side with Policy Options that Yield the Greatest Reelection Potential (Arnold, 1990)

To confirm our first hypothesis, three conditions need to be met. These are the presence of diverging demands received by the state, an extended policy network, and an inclination by the state to side with interest groups displaying the greater reelection potential. Since our case studies only contained a limited number of pluralism occurrences, the conclusion of this hypothesis must remain cautious. Some insights can still be obtained.

First, we have seen some moments when policy actors presented diverging opinions. In Québec, the discussions from the Pronovost Commission and Saint-Pierre reports displayed such diverging opinions at the end of the 2000s. In Crop Insurance, we also observed divergences toward the use of weather derivatives during the same years. Both these oppositions happened under a movement toward pluralism. Oppositely, non-consensual discourses were also observed at the beginning of the 1990s when Minister Picotte discredited the UPA and roundtables were created to discuss the development of agriculture. However, these did happen under a corporatist

institutional arrangement. It then shows that diverging demands did not only occur under a pluralist institutional arrangement so this sole element cannot be considered as a discriminating condition. Similar observations can be made in Ontario where we only documented three moments of diverging demands. In 1992 related to the MRI and in 1998 about the OFIDP, farmers' groups opposed on their preferences toward program change. As for Québec, we also observed an occurrence, in the mid-2010s, of divergence between farmers' groups in a corporatist institutional arrangement. Hence, though we see some moments of diverging discourses, it is not acquired that they only appear in a pluralist institutional arrangement.

The second element associated with this hypothesis is the presence of an extended policy networks. Most of the time, such a condition resulted from consultations held by the government on agriculture. These were moments when discussions included representatives from several organizations. In Québec, the Pronovost Commission is the epitome of such a situation with discussions that led to changes in the FISI and the creation of Agri-Québec. A wider policy group was also created in 1998 where the FISI was also discussed as well as the FISA's creation. However, a sub-group composed of traditional actors was created to isolate such discussions from the wider group. This reduced network got eventually even more select with the creation of the FADQ. In Ontario, it is again the early 1990s that saw extended policy network discussions, especially with the creation of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy that discussed the support given to farmers. Later in the decade, discussions brought the creation of Agricorp which instead reduced the occasions for all actors to get involved on risk management program. In both provinces, it is interesting to note that some extended policy networks led to the creation of institutions safeguarding the place of the corporatist groups. Others such as the

Pronovost Commission still contributed to opening up the debates on risk management programs.

The third element refers to the capacity of the state to identify which actors can bring the most support for their future reelection. It then implies that not all actors align in their demands. Arnold's (1990) theory also considers that the general public does not care about specific issues and thus would likely not be involved. As such, the state should be more likely to side with invested actors since they are more prone to mobilize afterward to thank those that fought for their preference. Still, such a condition is hard to assess as we do not have the entire portrait elected officials can have when they side with a proposal from a group. We can only assume that more populous groups of farmers should be the organizations able to generate the most support for reelection. As for the first two elements associated with this hypothesis, the early 1990s, late 1990s, and late 2000s in both provinces were the moments displaying observations in line with this hypothesis. In Québec, the UPA positions were mostly adopted by the state following the Commission Pronovost and the Saint-Pierre report with the FISI being maintained and the governance of the FADQ only adjusted. If the adjustment of the FISI and FADQ's governance did not please the most populous farmers' group (UPA), they reflected the desire expressed by several groups coming from different backgrounds. However, the government might have seen the risk they introduced by opposing to the UPA as they later abandoned most of FISI's adjustments, adjusted the scope of governance's changes and introduced an additional program — Agri-Québec — that increased the level of support provided to farmers. This attempt to depart from UPA's support echoed the actions made in the 1990s by Minister Picotte and Minister Trudel to stand against the UPA on risk management program. Both ministers were later sanctioned by the Prime Minister that replaced them following tension with the UPA.

In Ontario, we also saw occasions when the government had to review their actions as they faced opposition. For instance, the NDP government in place in 1992 decided to review their preferences toward environmental regulations and instead implemented the GRIP. Later, in 1998, the government decided to oppose OFA's preferences on the consideration of negative margins in the OWFRP. In this case the government opposed the largest body of farmers, but only under the conditions that all other farmers' groups, including some that are affiliated to the OFA, requested such actions. Hence, observations made from Ontario programs also seem to support our hypothesis.

Thus, based on such observations, it seems that most moments of pluralism did not display the expected element to support our first hypothesis. Actually, on the 29 program-years dominated by pluralism or an institutional arrangement moving toward pluralism, only 5 of them showed all the elements required to confirm our first hypothesis. Even if we were to only consider the program-years dominated by pluralism — whether weak or strong — the ratio would remain generally the same. On this basis, it seems difficult to accept our first hypothesis. However, it does not necessarily mean that pluralism does not display such elements, since our focus on corporatist-dominant regions reduced the number of occurrences to assess pluralism. Moreover, the research design relying on expressed opinions in the parliament or in official documents may obscure the expression of diverging discourses and instead focus on consensual elements that would support reelection. The limits of our dissertation might then have restrained our capacity to properly assess the first hypothesis.

Corporatism: As the Institutional Arrangement Leans Toward Corporatism, the State Will More Likely Negotiate Policy Options with the Corporatist Group (Cawson, 1986)

The second hypothesis predicts that under a corporatist institutional arrangement, the policymaking process should involve negotiation — rather than opposition — between the government and interest groups. To be accepted, this hypothesis requires five conditions: the domination of a single group representing the beneficiaries of the program, a small policy network, a specific place granted to the corporatist group, a convergence in the demands received by the state, and a policy agenda led by policymakers.

The first condition implies that beneficiaries of the program (i.e., farmers) are mostly represented by a single voice when they discuss with the state. Officially, the Farm Producers Act formalizes such a status in Québec with the recognition of the UPA as being the representative of all farmers. In practice, however, as it was highlighted in the previous hypothesis as well as by Silvestro (2009), there remains some marginal occurrences of other actors representing farmers being listened to by the government. Opposition may be expressed, but it does not mean it is listened to. Moreover, the creation of institutions granting specific places to the UPA, such as the FADQ, comforts this first condition on Québec programs. Additional examples include the sole participation of commodity associations affiliated to the UPA in the discussions regarding Crop Insurance, the creation of the Centre d'études sur les coûts de production en agriculture in 2002, the collection of collective marketing mandatory levies by the FADQ for commodity associations, and the reliance on commodity associations' mechanisms of consultation to end the participation of the FISI for certain commodities. Considering all these occurrences, this condition is said to be met for most of the corporatism-leaning program-years in Québec.

In Ontario, three groups are officially recognized to speak in the name of farmers. However, the OFA and its affiliated groups represent the majority of farmers and are usually presented in the document consulted for this dissertation as the main representatives for farmers. In particular, with many Ontario programs adjusted to specific commodity considerations, commodity groups play a strong role in their adjustments, and only a single group represents each commodity. Hence, most of the documented occurrences of program discussions involved a single group. Moreover, when divisions amongst farmers might have weakened their demands, farmers regrouped in a single multi-commodity group to discuss risk management programs. If it first happened in 2001 with the creation of the Farmers of Ontario Coalition (general organizations) and Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council (commodity groups). Then it also happened when commodity groups decided to unite their voice through the creation of OASC in 2005 so the RMP could become a permanent program extended to additional commodities. Even though this united voice did not last over time, they again were forced by the state to collaborate starting in 2013 to make the annual allocation of the Premium RMP fund. One last example would include the discussions about commodity plans in Production Insurance where commodity groups — generally affiliated with the OFA — are the only one invited by Agricorp or, previously, by the Ministry. Hence, for Ontario programs, we also considered that this condition is generally met.

The second condition refers to a smaller number of actors that can intervene on the program. Again, with the institutions (e.g., the FADQ, Agricorp) designed to recognize a single group representing beneficiaries, it limits the potential participation of other actors. Additionally, most of the policy networks remained the same for the duration of programs in both provinces. Moreover, under the corporatist domination of the institutional arrangements, most changes that

were made to the policy networks aimed at reducing it. These include Crop Insurance plans becoming regulations instead of legislation in 1991 and 1995, the official recognition of only three general farm organizations to be involved in the MRI in 1993, a reduction of Agricorp's board size in 2001, and the horticultural expansion in Production Insurance that was discussed through a working group with representatives from Agricorp, the Ministry and farmers' representatives in 2005 and 2006.

Only twice we found counterfactual examples for the second condition of this hypothesis. The first occurrence happened in 1996 through the discussions about the waterfowl special provision in Crop Insurance that involved new actors coming from an environmental background. The second occurrence was in 2014 with the creation of the Working Group on Farm Income that was mandated to review Québec's risk management programs. On this occasion, two new actors were invited to participate in the discussions. One of these actors came from the academia, while the other came from an organization — Solidarité rurale — that later in the same year saw UPA's president become its new president. Hence, in general, except for quite specific examples, this second condition also seems to be met for the vast majority of the program-years under a corporatist institutional arrangement.

The third condition also echoes the first since it implies that the groups representing beneficiaries are given a specific place. Again, the design of FADQ, Agricorp, and Centre d'études sur les coûts de production en agriculture's boards as well as the discussion mechanisms for Crop Insurance, the FISI, Production Insurance and the RMP grant specific accesses to these groups. Additional examples were also observed. For instance, when Agricorp was created, the number of employees dedicated to Production Insurance annual contracts' renewals largely decreased. Instead, Agricorp relied on farmers' groups to stimulate the program participation.

This is then a case where the state delegated part of its power to interest groups. Another example includes the request by the Ontario Ministry made to farmers groups to develop the RMP and adapt it to their considerations. In this case, the state declined to do the work and simply provided support in the design. Finally, the management of RMP's Premium Fund by the OASC literally gives the power to farmers groups to determine when payments occur. Hence, as with the first other two conditions, this one generally seems to be verified.

To examine the fourth condition, we have to keep in mind what was said about the first hypothesis. Observing that discourses align is difficult since interest groups do not necessarily have incentives to dedicate resources to echo an existing consensus. Only quite rarely did we observe diverging discourses between actors. We can then infer an alignment of the actors on most changes proposed or adopted over the years. These observations can also be influenced by our research design. It is possible that actors disagreed with changes and propositions related to risk management programs, but they might not get a tribune to express their position.²⁷⁴ However, in general, when we take the moments of wider expression of preferences by policy actors in a corporatist institutional arrangement,²⁷⁵ we find convergence even when conditions would allow for diverging discourses. This is the case in the late 1990s in Québec with different consultations leading to the creation of the FADQ and the implementation of the FISA. This is also the case with the creation of Agri-Québec in the early 2010s. In Ontario, the creation of the RMP and its transition toward a permanent program also showed that actors tended to work together and align their preferences as they see potential for change. The only counterfactual we

²⁷⁴ Benoit (2010) highlighted that such events happened for groups that would have opposed the UPA if they have not been afraid of consequences to their actions.

²⁷⁵ Of course, under a pluralist institutional arrangement such as the 2007–2008 years in Québec, the level of convergence is lower.

identified would be in 1995 with the opposition by the liberal party to Bill 54 that allowed the RAAQ to collect UPA commodity chapter's mandatory levies. At the same time, criticisms about the corporatist institutional arrangement of the RAAQ were also raised in the discussions regarding Crop Insurance. This is then an example of difficulties in convergence while being under such an institutional arrangement. However, for most program-years observed, convergence in discourse was the norm.

The last condition refers to the leadership of the policy agenda by policymakers. This is the hardest condition to observe since the policy agenda needs to be considered on both what is included and what is excluded. The approach we can take is then to look at occurrences under a corporatist institutional arrangement when interest groups fought policymakers to have a program change being considered or opposed to the discussion of such change. Once again, the year 1995 related to the FISI and Crop Insurance is the main example of farmers pushing the government for changes that the latter did not see as a priority. The creation of the Centre d'Études sur les Coûts de Production en Agriculture in 2002 is another example of the UPA managing to force their priorities on the government's agenda. From a governmental perspective, the expertise to conduct the cost of production studies existed inside the Ministry. However, farmers refused to consider this expertise and requested a new organization to oversee the studies. One example is also found in Ontario with the renewal of the MRI post-2002 while the government was attempting to lower its budgets devoted to agriculture.²⁷⁶ Aside from these examples, we mostly observed actions led by ministries — or agencies — that imposed their agenda or their priorities. The influence of farmers' groups was generally observed on how

²⁷⁶ Arguments could be heard about the propositions coming from different groups between 2005 and 2011 related to the RMP. However, since the state encouraged such proposals and even dedicated staff to improve them, we considered the state as agreeing with the developments.

programs were changed rather than which programs were changed. Amongst such examples, we note the exclusion of FISI's commodities from Agri-Québec, the enactment of the FISA, the FADQ and Agricorp's creation, and the imposition of a global cap to the RMP. Since these examples do not question the leadership on the policy agenda, it seems that this condition also appears to have been largely respected even if powerful — though rare — expressions of opposition to the policy agenda by interest groups were observed. Moreover, part of these expressions of opposition — and especially in Ontario — targeted the federal government, praising them to support the provincial actions (e.g., RMP's implementation). Then, the policy agenda seem to be generally led by policymakers when the institutional arrangement leans toward corporatism.

Thus, reflecting back on the five conditions that were necessary to confirm the second hypothesis, it appears that they tend to be observed allowing us to accept our second hypothesis. On the 131 program-years dominated by an institutional arrangement leaning toward pluralism, 82 of them met the five conditions necessary to confirm this hypothesis (63%). Of the remaining 44 program-years, most (25) of them lack a single condition — the 'specific place granted' condition — since they correspond to the program-years prior to the creation of Agricorp and the FADQ. For these program-years, we lack a complete understanding of the involvement of interest groups due to the lower number of documents available. Then, these 25 program-years should be seen as inconclusive, while the rest can actually be perceived as counterfactuals for at least one condition.

Moreover, if we were to only consider the 52 years dominated by a stronger corporatist institutional arrangement, 44 of them met the five conditions (85%). This then shows that our hypothesis is confirmed with higher confidence as the institutional arrangement moves toward

corporatism, thus reinforcing our conclusion. In the end, it then seems that our second hypothesis is to be confirmed.

Peasant: Policy Inspired by the Peasant Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is 'Dependent' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

The third hypothesis switches the focus from the institutional arrangement to the vision of agriculture. It predicts that Peasant-driven policies would represent farmers as a dependent group: benefiting from a positive social construction but without a strong enough political power to receive generous policies. Four conditions need to be met when policies are driven by Peasant ideas for this hypothesis to be confirmed: new programs receive small budgets or existing programs are only marginally changed to include Peasant-driven farmers, new groups are getting included inside the policy network, agriculture is positively depicted, and Peasants' ideas are used as the basis for differentiating the new groups.

The first condition refers to the presence of program changes led by Peasant's ideas. It is expected that Peasant-lead program changes would only involve a limited number of resources from the state. Since we did not capture a wide number of Peasant-driven program changes (11 program-years), the number of observations for this condition remains low. Mostly, we found elements associated with this condition in only four programs. In Agri-Québec, it consists of the changes realized after 2015 to include or recognize the specifications of specific farm practices (e.g., small farmers, organic farmers, farms with processing activities). All of these changes took the form of an improvement of the program or the added eligibility of some incomes. They do correspond to the definition of marginal adjustment, especially since they were limited in the total amount that can be given to each farmer. Similar adjustments were also observed in Crop

Insurance and Production Insurance during the same decade as organic price options and new plans were developed for farmers exploring less traditional crops or farming practices (e.g., small-scale vegetables, alternative field crops). All these marginal changes came after the 2000s' discussions praising for Peasant ideas, but without observed program or policy changes. For instance, cross-compliance was implemented first in Crop Insurance and the FISI in the middle of the 2000s, but farmers had until the beginning of the 2010s — i.e., 7 years — to comply with the cross-compliance requirements. Moreover, cross-compliance simply asked farmers to comply with long-time existing regulations which should not have requested any actions from them. These changes then do not appear as important and thus meet the requirement for this condition. Hence, from the small number of observations we have, it seems that this condition tends to be met.

The second condition requires that new groups are getting included in the policy network, allowing the expansion of the scope of discussions. Only twice did it really happen during the program-years dominated by Peasant's ideas, and both times about Québec's programs. At the turn of the 2000s, debates on the hog production brought discussions on water protection and eventually a hog moratorium. During these discussions, hundreds of groups were called to participate and share their vision on Québec agriculture. It is these discussions that eventually brought the cross-compliance requirements in Crop Insurance and the FISI. Similarly, the Pronovost Commission (2007–2008) included about twice more participants than the consultations on the previous hog industry. Taking an even more Peasant-inspired approach, the influence of the Pronovost Commission was felt for many years afterward. Though we could argue that the Pronovost Commission has planted the seeds for Agri-Québec and Crop Insurance changes of the second half of the 2010s, these years have mostly been marked by a senior

minister that pushed for changes aligning with his vision of agriculture. Hence, this condition had somehow been met in some program-years but did not seem to have been a binding condition for Peasant's ideas to be put forward.

The third condition — agriculture is depicted positively — also offers an ambivalent perspective. Discourses at the beginning of the 2000s and cross-compliance actions presented agriculture as a source of pollution that had to be controlled to avoid additional problems. However, starting with the Pronovost Commission in 2007 and up until the end of the period observed in this dissertation, agriculture had been represented as contributing to both provinces' economy and regional development. Farmers were seen as protectors of the land more than polluters thus justifying additional supports rewarding their efforts and contributions. Hence, and as it was already the case for the previous condition, the third condition did not seem to be generally met. However, we also observed the emergence of farmers trying to differentiate themselves following specific terms (e.g., organic, animal welfare) that elevates them from criticisms raised against agriculture.

The fourth condition refers to the use of Peasant vocabulary to push forward the Peasant-driven changes. Our observations show that this condition is not met either. In fact, the only observations referring to this condition are either counterfactual (e.g., 2000s discourse in Québec about agriculture being in the hands of big hog farmers) or out-of-sync with the domination of the Peasant vision (e.g., the years of Pronovost Commission which promoted ideas that would only be considered under a Peasant-dominated discourse many years later). The sole example of the alignment of Peasant discourse with Peasant changes is related to Crop Insurance post 2014 with the crops targeted as being socially and environmentally sustainable. This then falls short to a generalization of such a condition.

Hence, we only found one program-year (2007 for the FISI) where all conditions were met. This, of course, does not allow us to accept our third hypothesis. However, the association with Peasant and ‘dependent’ representation does resonate with the type of programs that have been implemented under peasant-dominated policy discussions. The failure to confirm this hypothesis might be linked with the corporatist institutional arrangements that limit the capacity of new actors to get involved and hence affect the confirmation of this hypothesis. Were we to relax the conditions related to the inclusion of new actors (conditions 2 and 4), the portrait would be leaning toward the expectations associated with this hypothesis. In this instance, 17 out of 28 program-years dominated by Peasant ideas would have met the conditions (61%). Moreover, seven of the other years happened in the 1990s when this new farming style began to take place and thus received less attention. In conclusion, we cannot accept our third hypothesis, but we would also be unable to rule out the association of Peasant ideas with dependent program beneficiaries since some observations are still pointing in this direction.

Entrepreneur: Policy Inspired by the Entrepreneurial Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is ‘Advantaged’ (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

For the fourth hypothesis, we looked at the representation of the beneficiaries of the policies adopted under an Entrepreneurial agriculture domination. This hypothesis states that these beneficiaries are represented as advantaged which mean that they have a positive social construction and rely on a strong political influence. This then allows them to obtain important changes such as an increased support or avoidance of inclement propositions. Five conditions are associated with this hypothesis: large budget and limited participation restrictions, increased

friction to maintain the status quo, attempts to negate the inclusion of new actors, positive depiction of agriculture, and a focus of the media attention toward their problems and external causes that could be fixed by the state.

The first condition refers to programs offering advantageous participation conditions. These conditions can take different forms such as eased participation, lack of verification, or large sums being available. This is the condition that has been the most widely observed for this hypothesis. Except for Production Insurance, each program associated with some years of Entrepreneurial domination has seen this condition observed. For instance, in the case of the RMP, we found thorough evidence including unlimited budget from 2005 to 2015, waiving of premiums (2005 and 2011), automatic re-enrollment, interim payments, and loose verification conditions. Similar situations were also observed in the MRI and Crop Insurance. Another perspective is available for Agri-Québec and the OFIDP, since the enactment of these programs happened during years of fiscal restraint but were still associated with additional budgets for risk management program. In particular, the OFIDP was one of many ad hoc programs adopted yearly by the Ontario government. Hence, beneficiaries managed to direct resources toward them while the government was trying to reduce its expanses. Finally, FISI's evolution is plentiful of similar examples: budgets being multiplied by four over the 1990–2020 period, multi-year budget renewals, unenforced and non-binding cross-compliance restrictions as well as the cancellation of most tightening measures implemented at the turn of the 2010s. Even though some counterexamples appeared in the different programs (e.g., end of FISI's eligibility for some commodities starting in 2014, budget cap in the RMP), it remains that this condition appears to be met for most of the program-years.

The second condition is about friction against program termination or unfavorable changes. Friction against change is especially difficult to observe. Instead, we rely on the actual changes that happened. If unfavorable changes were implemented, then it showed the friction was unsuccessful. Over the different programs, we observed some program terminations realized under an Entrepreneurial dominated vision of agriculture. These include the termination of the OFIDP, the GRIP and the MRI. We also noted FISI's changes in eligibility conditions in 2014 and 2015 which can be associated with a program termination. However, aside from these examples (and considering that each program termination led to a new program creation or the eligibility of commodities to another program), we mostly observed continuity in the programs as well as protection from the existing conditions by the different actors involved. For instance, the UPA strongly opposed the propositions brought by environmental groups in the 1990s with several moments when they left discussion committees. Similarly, tightening measures adopted at the turn of the 2010s were strongly opposed and eventually canceled. Opposition against new considerations were also present in the MRI as the environmental agenda was strongly attacked during GRIP's implementation, presenting this agenda as a risk against agriculture productivity and thus the entire industry. Hence, in general, we did not find many program-year showing that friction was ineffective. We then considered this condition as being largely met.

The third condition refers to an attempt by the policy network to negate the presence of new actors that could bring a different perspective on agriculture and thus question the relevance of the existing programs. Corporatist institutional arrangements ease the acceptance of this condition since, as it was seen for the second hypothesis, it comes with a specific place granted to an interest group and a small policy network. The creation of institutions that specifically recognize representatives from well-defined organizations (e.g., the FADQ, Agricorp) facilitates

the assessment of this condition. Other examples include comments made by organizations representing RMP-covered commodities against the inclusion of new commodities and the negation of environmental groups' agenda related to the FISI in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s.²⁷⁷ Thus, the strength of the institutions and its consultation mechanisms allows us to infer that access for new actors was not easy.

The next condition is also one that was present in another hypothesis as it requires a positive depiction of agriculture (cf. the third hypothesis). Since this condition is a direct variable of our research model, we can use the value from this variable to assess the presence of the condition. Largely, program-years dominated by an Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture also displayed a positive social representation of agriculture. This included elements such as added flexibility, coverage options, transition measures and automatic renewal that were seen in different case studies. Examples include the Bill 153 for Crop Insurance, additional budgets in Agri-Québec, the FISI (several times), and the RMP as well as the multiplication of ad hoc programs with new budgets represented through the OFIDP. Other elements pointing toward such a representation are also observed in the discourses. For instance, the implementation of the GRIP as well as the MRI renewals were justified through comparisons with other countries, provinces, and industries. The idea of the duty from the government to support farmers was also often seen (e.g., RMP's implementation discussions). Even when environmental accusations depicted agriculture as negatively affecting the society, elected officials preferred to adopt a discourse praising agriculture for its support to the economy and arguing that farmers were good

²⁷⁷ Even more, during the 1992 and 1998 consultations, the Ministry created a specific subgroup in parallel of the agricultural summit to discuss risk management programs. Such subgroup only included the usual partners of the industry.

tenants of the soil and nature. Hence, relying on the assessment made of our social construction variable and additional examples, it seems that this condition is also largely met.

Finally, the last condition relevant to our fourth hypothesis is actors' capacities to focus media attention on the problem farmers faced and how such problems are the result of external causes rather than the effect of farmers' decisions. In these cases, farmers can use these elements as a justification for state intervention since they are seen as victims and not perpetrators.²⁷⁸ This condition is difficult to observe from our research design since we did not focus our research on media content, but rather on elected officials' discourses. Hence, the interpretation of this condition is limited. Still, the way policy actors justified the need for intervention is interesting. For instance, agriculture was regularly presented as being under a crisis — often the result of international trade agreements and other countries' support — that justified additional funds. This discourse was regularly present and in particular for Agri-Québec's implementation, ad hoc programs in Ontario, FISI's rapidly increasing budgets in the 1990s and the 2000s, the creation of the FADQ, and RMP's implementation and migration toward a permanent program. Only scarce groups such as the Christian Farmers of Ontario came to argue that some of these crises were the results of — or at least amplified by — the previous farmer's preferences related to crop choices, techniques or marketing strategies. Largely, the dominant discourse has been one that present Ontario and Québec's agriculture as the victims from a rippled effect of larger actors' influences.

Hence, the five necessary conditions behind this hypothesis have regularly been present during the program-years we observed. Of the 88 program-years dominated by an

²⁷⁸ Once again, this is not about who are the true responsible for a condition, but about how it is presented to — and in — the media.

Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, 59 of them (67%) displayed all five conditions. The rest of the program-years is equally shared between program-years with missing information or the absence of one out of the five conditions. Only seven program-years lacked more than one of the five conditions. Hence, based on these results, we tend to accept our fourth hypothesis and consider that farmers were represented as ‘advantaged’ beneficiaries of public intervention when the Entrepreneurial farming style dominated the vision of agriculture.

Agri-food Firm: Policy Inspired by the Agri-food Firms’ Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is ‘Contender’ (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

Our fifth and last hypothesis addresses the depiction of agriculture under the domination of the Agri-food firms’ vision of agriculture. This hypothesis states that agriculture would be represented as a ‘contender’, thus benefiting from a strong political power that can be used to mitigate the effects of a negative social construction. Policy beneficiaries of such representation manage to avoid policy constraints and receive complex supporting policies. We associated five conditions with this hypothesis: ineffective eligibility restrictions to risk management programs, beneficial program changes that are difficult to understand for the population, attempts to negate the inclusion of new actors, negative depiction of agriculture, and avoidance of the population’s attention.

The first condition refers to the idea that programs may include participation or eligibility restrictions, though these restrictions are ineffective. We found three examples of such policies that allow some farmers — mostly the bigger — to participate in programs even though it was not the mere intention behind it. The first is related to the Optional Unit Coverage option in

Production Insurance that was in place from 1997 to 2002. This option allowed farmers to enroll pieces of land in different insurance plans. By doing so, farmers active in more than one region could avoid the good yields from some of their fields to offset lower yields from elsewhere and thus receive a payment from the program. The second example was present in the FISA with the UPA requesting a maximal contribution to farmers in the program. However, the government decided to not follow-up with this request and bigger farmers were then also able to participate in the program and receive more money from the state (since the amount that can be received was proportional to the size of the farm). A similar situation also happened more than 10 years later relatively to Agri-Québec. Until 2013, payments were capped to a certain amount, making bigger farms unable to fully participate in the program. Starting in 2013, the cap was removed and thus allowed them to participate fully even though the maximal yearly contribution rates decreased with size. The justification for such change is also interesting since the provincial government accused a modification of the federal program AgriInvest to justify why it should cover bigger farms. Aside from these examples, we did not find other elements allowing us to conclude on the presence of this condition.

The second condition follows up on the first with the assessment of beneficial program changes, and how they were implemented through opaque mechanisms. The examples above-mentioned also applied here since they were either an option added to an existing program or participating conditions that were changed. Another example can also be found in Production Insurance when specific arrangements were implemented to cover vertically integrated vegetable processors (2004) and sharecroppers (2010). These were two models of agriculture that differ from the Entrepreneurial representation of agriculture which were previously ineligible. Aside from these examples, we also found what could be seen as a counterfactual. The attempt to

terminate the FISI at the end of the 1990s to replace it with the FISA was a program change attempted under the domination of Agri-food firms. Messages surrounding the FISI and the FISA were clear and the replacement of the FISI by a new program with a very different mechanism can be seen as easy to understand. However, this attempt failed and the FISI is still in place more than 20 years later. Then, it might instead support this condition as transparent changes were not able to take place while under the domination of Agri-food firms' ideas.

For the third condition which is the attempt by the policy actors to negate the presence of new actors that could bring a different perspective on agriculture, we adopted the same avenue as we did in the previous hypothesis which is to rely on the corporatist institutional arrangements. Every but one program-year dominated by the Agri-food firms' ideas happened under such an institutional arrangement. Moreover, we have seen that changes in Agri-Québec came from existing actors, while the failed FISI reform through the FISA instead resulted from pressure of new actors being involved in risk management program. Thus, this other condition appears to be generally met.

The fourth condition refers to a negative social construction of agriculture these years. Relying on the social construction variable, we found that Agri-Québec, FISI and FISA years of Agri-food firms domination aligned with negative social constructions. For instance, the announcement of the FISA without additional budget dedicated to agriculture and the negative association made between agriculture and environment during these years showed that the social construction was less positive for farmers than what was mostly seen during the timeframe we covered. However, since most program-years targeted by this hypothesis are associated with the Production Insurance case study and that we were not able to find supportive evidence of a

negative social construction during these years for this program, it seems that this condition is not met.

The last condition is about the capacity of policy actors to avoid the attention of the population as they make and discuss program changes. If we did not observe a lot of attention from the population to the issues we covered in general, the FISA years dominated by Agri-food firms ideas aligned with important public displays led by farmers as they blocked the main highway in Québec in 1998. This is then an important counterfactual that balances the fact that every other program year associated with this hypothesis did not bring attention to the issues.

So, observing the 17 program-years dominated by the Agri-food firms' vision of agriculture, only 3 showed the five conditions we looked for to accept this hypothesis. With the concentration of 12 out of 17 years in Production Insurance, the observations related to this program had a strong influence on these results. One of the consequences of this concentration is the positive social construction associated with this program based on the addition of new plans over the years. This situation disqualified numerous program-years based on this condition. However, even if we were to not consider this condition for these program-years, we would still be unable to accept the fifth hypothesis since many other program-years would not qualify due to another of the condition that was not met. Hence, we must reject the fifth hypothesis.

Conclusion

The application of our research model to the 150 program-years documented in this dissertation showed that our model is able to explain the variation in our programs. In particular, we found that positive social construction, corporatism and the Entrepreneurial farming styles showed the highest rates of generating changes. Since these are also the variables that have been

observed the most frequently, it supports a vision of stability in the programs we observed. This observation might be surprising since we documented the rise and fall of different programs but taking a step back to analyze the type of intervention and objectives of these programs, we can definitely see a continuity in their logic. It also echoes the different publications on Canadian and Québec agriculture paradigm of state intervention which all concluded to a continuity since the 1990s (e.g., Gaboury-Bonhomme, 2018; Royer et al., 2014; Skogstad, 2008a). Moreover, as it was mentioned by Baumgartner and Jones (2009), stability is usually the norm, and it does not imply an absence of change but involves changes that do not always create a feed-forward effect.

Through these stability periods, we managed to assess five hypotheses related to the alignment between the policy design and the polity. Our results indicate that only two of the five hypotheses can actually be confirmed based on our interpretation of the data. In the first case, corporatist-leaning polity appears to have policies established through a negotiation process between the state and officially recognized groups. This entails that the scope of the policymaking process is wider than the government and elected officials. Instead, to fully understand why any policy is implemented under this particular institutional arrangement, one would have to consider both discussions between the state and specific groups as well as the discussions held inside the groups through their internal decision-making mechanisms. The second hypothesis we confirmed is about the domination of Entrepreneurial agriculture and how when agriculture is represented under this scope, its actors manage to obtain beneficial programs and low burdens. It means that farmers have generally been considered as valuable assets of the society and have been rewarded as such through additional budgets and programs. From farmers' perspective, it also means that investing resources in lobbying and political influence likely paid off over the period. We also found elements in support of another hypothesis related to the

Peasant farming style and its capacity to have agriculture depicted as valuable assets but lacking political resources to gain additional programs. Though we found supporting evidence, these were not in sufficient numbers to formally consider this hypothesis as being confirmed. It would still be interesting to push these ideas further through the analysis of non-risk management programs.

In the next chapter, we reflect on the entire dissertation and focus on what can be learned through our research. It is also an occasion to regroup the limits we identified throughout the text to facilitate further work in our research field. Moreover, we believed we set the grounds for a research framework that could be applied in different circumstances which also calls for comments.

Chapter 8 – General Conclusion

In this dissertation, we looked at the evolution of agricultural policies over the span of 30 years to understand which factors explained the choices made by governments. In particular, we concentrated our analysis on risk management programs as their presence echoes the political and economic ideas coming from the state assistance paradigm. At the core of our interest was the assessment of the correlation between agricultural policies and the evolutionary trajectories of agriculture.

Building on existing literature and sectoral data, we identified that Québec and Ontario's agriculture — two Canadian provinces — followed three different trajectories. First, we saw a movement of farms getting vertically integrating (or being absorbed by) the entire production chain. Such movement brought the creation of Agri-food firms controlling commercial activities of some industries. Second, we saw some farms deciding to embrace pluriactivity and value-added products in a way that recognizes work-intensive production processes. This repeasantization movement was observed both in terms of new farms being created with this vision, and through the adaptation of existing farms' ownership and commercial activities. As for the third trajectory, it is the deactivation of agriculture or the concentration of production activities in a smaller number of farms and thus many farmers leaving the industry. As these trajectories are followed by more and more farms, we can expect to observe different visions of agriculture coexisting. To represent these visions, we relied on van der Ploeg's farming styles as ideal-types of the vision: Agri-food firms, Peasants, and Entrepreneurial agriculture. If the first two ideal-types are self-explained through the associated trajectories, Entrepreneurial agriculture refers to a vision supporting long-lasting family farms that focus on growth through loans from banks and the adoption of new technologies in an attempt to generate higher returns. In this

dissertation we inferred that each farming style would carry a different vision of agriculture that would be represented in the discourses held by tenants of each farming style. Through this inference, we were then able to link the evolution of agriculture with programs implemented to support its development. Hence, we included the representation of the evolution of agriculture in public discourses as one of the variables in our research model.

Another variable was the organization of the relationship between the state and interest groups. We observed through our data that interest groups generally benefited from a specific relationship with the state called meso-corporatism. Through this relationship, they gained a privileged access to decision-makers and could then focus their attention on specific issues. On this basis, corporatism is opposed to pluralism, and both can be seen as the two opposed ideal-types on a continuum of institutional arrangement. With these two variables, we were able to capture the evolution of agriculture toward one trajectory as well as the form of influence farmers' representatives had with the state.

The other explanatory variables in our theoretical framework referred to the evolutionary paths of public policies. This theoretical framework was built through the combination of two public policy theories. First, we used the punctuated equilibrium theory to consider the stability of policies. Such stability includes marginal adjustments of policies as well as small changes that fail to build a path for changes. The three other paths instead involve lasting policy changes. What differentiate them is the mechanisms purporting change rather than how the policy is changed. Both the second and third paths were identified by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) in their punctuated equilibrium theory. One results from the inclusion of new actors into the polity that bring new ideas, issues and positions and can then shift the power equilibrium previously in place. The other represents changes brought by public attention. When the public starts to pay

attention on an issue, it requests important changes that would fix the issue. To calm the public, decision-makers tend to implement a solution that offers a new perspective on the issue. This situation can shift the discussions and decisions around a policy in a direction that will outlast public attention. Finally, the last policy evolution path we considered came from the social construction of the target population theory. In this theory, Schneider and Ingram (1993) predicted that policies tend to align with the combination of the social construction and political power of those targeted by the policy. Then, if one or both of these factors change in a way that misalign the policy design with these factors, elected officials should favor changes to readjust the alignment.

We applied our research model to nine risk management programs through a qualitative panel data treatment. We created this panel data from 150 program-years following an assessment of parliamentary discussions and official documents. This allowed us to reconstruct a timeline of program evolution as well as linking the factors behind the observed evolution. Even if we do not have a value for each variable, every year, it still offered us a global perspective of how the policy environment evolved over time and can explain the policy changes (or stability).

Results show that policies were influenced by the social construction of farmers, the institutional arrangement of the relationship between policymakers and interest groups, the dominant vision of agriculture, the influence of policy entrepreneurs, and the policy venue overseeing the program. Our model brought us to confirm two of our hypotheses. First, we found that as policies tend to lean toward corporatism on the institutional arrangement's continuum, the state shall be more prone to negotiate policies with the interest group rather than carry its own vision. This then means that interest groups have a stronger influence and should work on their own preferences as they might have opportunities to push it. This also implies that corporatist

groups can define how the issue is presented. More precisely, they are likely able to present agriculture through a vision of agriculture that better suits their members. This might explain a somewhat limited policy change in the decades we assessed.

The second hypothesis we confirmed is about the representation of agriculture under an Entrepreneurial perspective. When this vision dominates, farmers were able to mobilize their strong political power to present themselves as important contributors of the society. Hence, they expected — and received — programs designed to recognize and reward them of their contribution. This situation was present even when governments focused on fiscal restraint and other social groups faced program reductions. As an ‘advantaged’ group, proponents of ideas purporting this vision of a familial agriculture that invest in technology to compete with the largest international actors found themselves able to depict agriculture as the worst off, thus justifying additional support. As long as interest groups are able to maintain such representation to the population and not force their influence, they should not be at risk of seeing their support reduced. However, if another vision of agriculture eventually gets to dominate, the portrait of state intervention might change. Even though we were not able to confirm our hypotheses related to Peasant and Agri-food firm visions of agriculture, we still observed some elements of a Peasant vision that would support a representation of agriculture as ‘dependent’ and hence seeing the political influence of farmers decline were this vision was to become dominant. If this is going to be the case in the future, farmers’ groups might then be especially keen to maintain their strong links with the state to avoid the erosion of their political power. In this, one success factor could be to use the existing organizations and have them embrace a farming style before influencing the state, rather than creating organizations opposed to the corporatism system that could hinder farmers’ influence. Without following this path, the state may change its preference

first and find farmers' groups unable to align with its vision. This could affect the political influence of farmers on agricultural policies.

Lessons to Be Learned

In addition to the results of our hypotheses, we believe that this dissertation contributes to knowledge development in at least three areas. The first lesson is that we observe a discrepancy between the evolutionary pace of agriculture and policies. It means that even though agriculture evolved over time into different directions, it does not necessarily mean that programs and policies were adjusted at the same rate. Instead, we have seen some form of resistance by tenants of the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture and state intervention paradigm that held up to their ideas that agriculture needs the lasting risk management programs. Progress might have been made in other areas of state intervention, but we must come to the conclusion that risk management programs and the discourse representing agriculture did not integrate changes seen in agriculture.

This situation might also highlight the strong commitment of corporatist groups to defend their historic members and the representation they have of agriculture. Hence, they may not be so keen about the emergence of new interest groups purporting agriculture differently, neither being able to absorb each of these new visions inside their own structure. It is important to keep in mind that corporatist groups themselves play a role of mitigation between diverging interests that attempt to push their vision through the corporatist structure. As such, corporatist groups act as a first filter — or barrier — for new ideas and groups and mitigate what is seen and observed by state officials. In our specific case, it means that farmers diverging from the Entrepreneurial representation of agriculture may be members of farmers' groups, but they might have been

perceived for years as exceptions, strangers, ‘gentleman farmers’ or industry’s puppets by the longer-lasting members. It is only as they became a bigger group that they find themselves as having enough internal political power to have farmers’ groups pay attention to their situation. In the meantime, their voices are muted inside the more general organization which limit the capacity of the state to adjust its programs and policies to their reality. This situation introduces a first lag period between the building of a new agricultural movement or vision of agriculture and its recognition by their pairs.

This lag results from the denial of the existence of new visions in agriculture by interest groups in the beginning of such movements. This denial acts as a veil that hides the existence of these changes for a certain time. Once the movements are strong enough, they should start being recognized by the corporatist group either as a menace for their privileged relationship with the state or as carriers of new ideas inside their own organization. We could then say that they overcome the friction against their own representation.

However, once the new movement is recognized and the first lag is left behind, it does not imply that the state will automatically recognize the new movement. Instead, it is likely to simply move the opposition between older and newer visions to the discussions with the state. In fact, in a corporatist institutional arrangement, interest groups are only one of the actors that make policy decisions. Hence, the state also have to accept and recognize the new dominant vision. This is not an instantaneous process, so discussions and negotiations must happen. A second lag period is then created in policymaking which represents the difference between the moment when interest groups carry new ideas, and the moment the state accepts or recognizes these ideas. In a pluralist institutional arrangement, we could expect to only observe the second lag since there are multiple groups that can promote ideas to the state and when new movements

become more popular, the state is expected to listen to them. In the corporatist institutional arrangement, the corporatist group is buffering demands to the state. These buffering actions then slow the evolution process. We could then expect corporatist institutional arrangements to be more conservative than pluralist ones, though this should be studied further. Of course, the actions of a strong senior minister could scuffle the relationship between the state and corporatist group, but Minister Paradis's partially failed attempts showed that this is not an easy and guaranteed process.

An important consequence of these lags is the delay they add in measuring the presence of the new movement. In particular, data on more than one period will usually be requested by elected officials to demonstrate the presence of a movement. Hence, if interest groups and the state are not proactive enough in developing indicators and methods to measure the development of new agricultural movements, it could limit the ability of the state to make sound decisions. Hence, we should not look at these lags only from a perspective of actors asking for support for their ideas, but also as a problem for states' decision-making capacities.

The second lesson to be learned helps us to identify strategies for interest groups or activists — all potential policy entrepreneurs — that would be interested in promoting a new vision of agriculture.²⁷⁹ We have seen how a corporatist institutional arrangement creates a barrier to new groups which can limit one of the paths proposed by Baumgartner and Jones (2009) about the mobilization of bias. Knowing the institutional arrangement and its strengths and weaknesses, policy entrepreneurs may adjust their strategies and instead focus on representations to the corporatist group rather than at the elected officials' level. It means that we could see the issue as being transposed from a government perspective to a private group

²⁷⁹ This lesson is inspired by Clerson, 2022a.

perspective. This transposition of the issue opens a whole new field of inquiries that could be addressed in the future. We develop more on this in the final section of this chapter.

Another avenue that is left to policy entrepreneurs would be to have the public pay attention to the issue. This might be a way for them to gain quick access to the decision-makers and avoid the first lag we identified previously. By forcing elected officials to take care of an issue to calm an uprising from the population — and we use 'uprising' in a broad sense here — policy entrepreneurs may almost instantly place themselves in opposition to the corporatist group and carry a new vision of agriculture. However, decision-makers have a short span of attention and any issue that fails to mobilize enough or is unable to keep the public mobilized on the longer run will likely be forgotten and only receive placation attention. Hence, policy entrepreneurs aiming for such a path of change must make sure to not miss their chance since it is unlikely to come twice. Moreover, failing to build a strong enough momentum may only bring a negative feedback effect with only short-lasting changes.

The most interesting avenue for change led by policy entrepreneurs then appears to be through the misalignment of the social construction and the policy designs. By chaperoning the demands and representation of a new movement, they should be able to differentiate their vision from the typical representation of agriculture. If they succeed, the group they represent can benefit from a different social construction than the rest of agriculture and thus receive programs adapted to their preference. However, this avenue is not without risk and if the policy entrepreneur is unable to mobilize a strong political influence behind the new movement, programs' design will likely be felt as insufficient by the actors. Similarly, if the actions of the policy entrepreneur bring agriculture to be perceived under a negative social construction, it could reduce the entire considerations given to agriculture and hence limit the support the new

movements receive. Skills of the policy entrepreneurs then remain important to avoid a bad outcome. Once, and if, the actions of the policy entrepreneur are successful and the new movement gets sufficiently differentiated from traditional agriculture, new interest groups can be associated with the issue and start a mobilization of the biases' approach to generate lasting change. Of course, none of this is instantaneous, but such findings could facilitate the organization of groups that would want to promote new visions of agriculture.

Finally, the third lesson refers to the importance of documenting the details of policies studied. The programs we studied usually tended to be avoided in thorough agricultural policy analysis in both provinces. For instance, Devlin (2004) who studied agricultural policies in Ontario from 1791 to 2001 barely mentioned the existence of risk management programs or the ad hoc programs we identified in this dissertation. In Québec, Gaboury-Bonhomme (2018) pays much more attention than Devlin on the FISI, but remains mostly quiet about the other programs we covered. Such a situation also echoes Gervais and Larue's (2007) observation about the low level of attention given to risk management programs in Québec even though they receive most of the state budget dedicated to farmers.

Moreover, our own observations of the literature showed that aside from Devlin and Gaboury-Bonhomme, the vast majority of published work addressing risk management programs that we found focuses on the observed — or expected — effects of these policies rather than on programs evolution. Our dissertation may then facilitate the comprehension of such programs for future researchers that delve into these programs that are notoriously difficult to understand. We would recommend that other researchers make sure to thoroughly understand any program or policy before assessing them or making recommendations. Otherwise, the information provided to the public — including elected officials and bureaucrats — can be skewed and thus lead to

wrongful decisions. From our experience of reading material and participating in conferences that address public policies in agriculture, we feel that this field would largely benefit from such considerations. We often take for granted that we know the programs and policies we study, but their mechanisms, exceptions and fine prints should receive as a thorough treatment than the rest of the study (e.g., literature review, methodology). Hence, we hope that our dissertation can help others fulfill this precarious task.

Limits of This Dissertation

Throughout the text, we identified a series of constraints and limits that impacted our capacity to gather and analyze data. Inspired by the qualitative approach's tradition (Nicholson-Crotty & Meier, 2005) that welcomes transparency and acknowledgment of the limits and biases we could carry, we found it more useful to address limits in the related section so results could be pondered accordingly. Still, three limits are transversal to the entire dissertation and are thus worth further explanations here.

The exploratory aspect of the relationship between farming styles and their representation is the first transversal limit. In all the literature we have consulted on farming styles — and more generally on typologies — the attempt of researchers was always to assess which movements are observable on farms and in their environment. This focus was useful to assess the differences in agriculture in different countries or regions and, for some typologies, how those differences appeared over time. These farming styles or typologies offer definitions of tendencies in agriculture, which provided characteristics and factual elements to distinguish one type of farmers from another. However, in our epistemological perspective, the observation of a reality is only one aspect taken in consideration to determine its perception and representation by the

population. For us, the factual reality may diverge from its own representation. Personal biases, media coverage and policy entrepreneurs' actions are few amongst a plethora of other elements that can impact the representation of agriculture.

The distinction between what is observed and their representation is far from only being semantic. Decision-makers rely on their own representation of issues to make decisions, which may differ from reality. An example is the change from a neo-democrat to a conservative government in Ontario in 1995. Under the neo-democrats, agriculture has been depicted as a sector that caused environmental issues and where progress could be made to improve its multifunctionality. Peasant ideas dominated for a few years. As soon as Mike Harris's conservative government took place, the discourse surrounding agriculture changed with the abandonment of environmental considerations and instead the focus on the development of agriculture to compete in international markets. Of course, agriculture did not change that much over the span of a few months, but different elected officials carried a different perspective of the same agriculture. This situation shows that perception influence policymaking.

In this dissertation, this distinction became a limit since we do not consider the actual state of agriculture in our research model, but its representation in discourse coming from interest groups, bureaucrats, and elected officials. Hence, by considering that farming style typology is reflected in discourses, we assumed that reality aligns with discourses and representation. We then miss out on the distinction we previously made. We tried to avoid such a situation by deepening our research in the literature. For instance, following suggestions from Doctors Patrick Mundler and Julie Ruiz, we perused the French field of research on political alignment of farmers' groups in addition to the literature on typologies and specifically on farming styles. Unfortunately, the French field of research also showed its limit as it focused on

the relationship between interest groups and political parties and not on the vision of agriculture these interest groups represent or how they present their members. We then decided to maintain our assumption regarding the alignment of discourses and field observations since we lacked alternatives. This assumption can obviously be challenged, though the actual assessment of such a relationship would have taken a whole new dissertation process.

The second transversal limit refers to the availability of the information we considered. Our research design relied on public documents that were either available in public repertoire or through Freedom of Information requests. It thus means that informal discussions, private and redacted documents were not considered in this research even if some actors we met informally throughout this process gave us some additional insights.²⁸⁰ We knowingly decided to rely solely on public information since we would likely not have been able to properly document every program in the same way if we decided, for instance, to rely on interviews.²⁸¹ Surely, we missed some political battles and behind-the-scenes actions that could explain the changes we observed. We considered adding expert interviews in our research design, but the quantity of data to manage was already cumbersome. Moreover, not all actors are equally accessible and our

²⁸⁰ The author was hired at Centre d'Études sur les Coûts de Production en Agriculture in October 2020, following the completion of all of Québec's program analyses. This organization is involved in the FISI and can have access to internal documentation from the FADQ. During the hiring process and many times while appointed, the author specified that he was not going to partake in discussions regarding the changes of any programs covered in this dissertation, even if such information could have enriched the analysis here. This decision was made to avoid any 'contamination' of data or interpretation coming from a specific perspective on a limited number of programs. Moreover author's duties at Centre d'Études sur les Coûts de Production en Agriculture were focused on non-risk management programs. Later, in the early 2023, the author was hired by the Government of Canada to work on risk management programs. In this position, the author had access to confidential information regarding the federalism variable. However, the author only came into position after the draft of this dissertation was submitted to members of the Committee, thus reducing the potential influence from this information.

²⁸¹ For instance, every specialist we met had forgotten the existence of the FISA.

favorable position in Québec might have skewed the research design in favor of this province's programs. Highly knowledgeable readers might then find some moments when we have been unable to grasp the entire story. Unfortunately, we did not find ourselves in a situation where we would have been able to cover every single detail about each of our 150 program-years. Still, this dissertation is, from our knowledge, by far the most detailed presentation of Canadian risk management programs ever realized. Informal chats with highly knowledgeable actors showed that we documented long-forgotten program changes.

In parallel, our focus on what is publicly available also means that we followed the political gameplay. Hence, we observed changes being aborted or delayed due to political maneuvers by different actors which may not have been related to agricultural issues. Amongst examples, we observed moments of filibustering by different political parties to block the adoption of an omnibus bill that included much more than agricultural considerations. Oppositely, we also saw cloture motions where governments adopted without discussions several bills, including changes affecting agriculture. Though these examples are part of the political life of any parliamentary decisions, their intrinsic reasons are broader than agriculture. Instead, they reflect the political and electoral game between parties. Our qualitative approach allowed us to ponder for these events, but we still had to observe the reality, which is that some changes happened faster, while others took longer to be adopted — or were even abandoned — not due to their lack of support from elected officials, but simply because their adoption timing suffered from influences from wider issues. Our results might then be skewed by our focus on what was seen, as opposed to what happened.

The last transversal limit refers to our choices of programs. By focusing on nine risk management programs and not considering other state interventions, we may have missed the

expression of the visions of agriculture that are not associated with the state intervention paradigm. For instance, environmental, marketing or export-oriented programs may have offered a different perspective on the vision of the state regarding agriculture. Through our research design, we might have undermined the actual representation of Peasant and Agri-food firms farming styles, since risk management programs are associated with the state-intervention paradigm. In particular, farmers associated with these visions of agriculture may rely on different risk management tools than government support (e.g., vertical integration, pluriactivity) and thus not seek state support as strongly than Entrepreneurial agriculture. Unfortunately, by adding other types of programs, we would have created two fallbacks. First, we would have needed to add at least another variable to recognize the effect of program types on our research design. Second, it would have multiplied the number of program-years and thus the scope of information to cover. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the amount of data and the task that came with their interpretation was already cumbersome, and to keep the dissertation within reasonable limits, we decided to only keep a single type of program. The upside of having kept all risk management programs is that we were able to recreate some form of coherence of the entire suite of risk management programs and thus avoid missing program interactions. By picking programs from different fields, such coherence would have been harder. This specific limit may still explain why we have been unable to accept any of our hypotheses that diverge from the dominating movements of agriculture in Ontario and Québec during the timeframe we covered.

Moving Forward

Finally, building on our results and observations, we believe that future research could improve our research design or extend its coverage to additional policy areas. In particular, three

avenues appear to be promising in the development of future research: extending the observations to other types of policies and other mechanisms of intervention, improving the analysis of the role of the media on social representation, and assessing the interactions inside the corporatist group.

As we mentioned in the previous section, we only focused on risk management programs. Since we associated these types of interventions in the first chapter with the state intervention paradigm, it may have favored the Entrepreneurial farming style. Moving forward, it would be interesting to assess the presence of such a bias. Both levels of governments multiplied state interventions in agriculture during the past 30 years with a variety of forms, mechanisms and objectives. Going back to Lowi's (1972) policy typology, the programs we studied appeared to be either distributive (e.g., Agri-Québec) or redistributive (e.g., Crop Insurance). Other types of policies — regulative or constituent — may express a different interaction between the state and interest groups as well as enact a varying social representation of agriculture. This typology might then be a starting point to find other programs or policies to test with a similar research design in order to assess if bias were present in our design. For instance, production and environmental regulations may offer a different perspective on the relationship between the state and interest groups or even on the definition of farmers' subgroups.

Another starting point could be the study of programs that address non-productive functions of agriculture. Again, the environmental perspective is useful to illustrate such an approach. In environmental regulations as well as in environmental subsidies for farmers, the production aspect of the farm is ancillary to its productive capacities. It means that such programs focus on the environmental consequences of agri-environmental actions taken on the farm as a basis for intervention. Such a non-productive perspective may mobilize ideas leaning

toward the Peasant vision of agriculture more than on the Entrepreneurial one.²⁸² It would then be interesting to know if this vision is more present in the discourse surrounding such programs and if the social construction attributed to it is different than when actors discuss of risk management programs. Amongst examples of programs that could be studied this way is Québec's Sustainable Agriculture Plan²⁸³ and its retribution mechanism. In this latter mechanism that we developed for the Ministry and was implemented in 2022, we knowingly adopted a perspective recognizing the political power of farmers, embraced the corporatist institutional arrangement and defined farmers as being positively perceived by decision-makers and the population. It resulted in simplified participatory processes for farmers and minimal verification of farmers' declarations. However, we attempted to distinguish farmers based on the environmental — rather than production — actions they adopted which faced some opposition on the road. As opposed to previous support programs where the state shared the investment costs needed to achieve agri-environmental benefits, the retribution mechanism gives an amount to farmers that adopt specific measures as a compensation for potential losses or enhanced risk they face due to these agri-environmental actions. Hence, this evolution of the agri-environmental suite of programs could bring a different perspective on programs and variables that influence their evolution. Moreover, such a topic could build not only on our research method, but also on the findings of Benoit (2015) and Gaboury-Bonhomme (2018) who both followed the evolution of environmental programs.

²⁸² For the Agri-food firm farming style, we could think of programs addressing innovation, value chain development or food safety that may embrace the international, coordinated actions of this farming style.

²⁸³ Plan d'agriculture durable.

Future research would also be welcomed on the public representation of agriculture. In our research design, we mostly focused on political discussions and official documentation. However, the media — we could also add justice — discuss agriculture in their own terms and choose which event they cover. Even though we slightly considered media attention as one of our variables, we believe there is still much more to be learned from media attention. In particular, the orientation of newspapers and broadcast content could inform us on the social representation of agriculture. This could then be paired with the vision of agriculture displayed in these media to address similar elements than from our hypotheses 3 to 5. An intuition we have is that Peasant agriculture receives a lot of positive media coverage with the storytelling of high-end products, value-added commodities, and multifunctional initiatives. On the other end of the spectrum, the message surrounding Agri-food firms might be more ambivalent. On one side, we should expect to see economics-oriented media praising their economic contribution and good results. On the other hand, they might get a bad press due to environmental or social issues that, if left unaddressed, have a broader impact since enterprises under such farming style have more ramifications. For the Entrepreneurial vision of agriculture, we could expect to see a message about the resiliency of family farms which highlights success stories from long-standing families involved in agriculture, but also despair and difficulties of farmers having a hard time to survive – sometimes literally (Droz et al., 2014) – under the economic, social and environmental stress put unto them. Hence, focusing on the representation carried by the media could be interesting as it would help to understand what is shown to the public, as well as what they perceive from what is shown to them. In the end, such a metric would be a complementary aspect to our social construction variable. It could even be the basis of an analysis to look at how generalist media present agriculture under a different scope than the one carried by specialized media. Under a

corporatist institutional arrangement, a dichotomy could appear between specialized media that follow the dominating vision of the corporatist group, and generalist media that may fall under the influence of strong policy entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, another area for future research would be to adopt a research design similar than the one presented in this dissertation to analyze internal discussions of the corporatist group. In our research design, we focused on the public side of programs evolution and parliamentary discussions. However, in a corporatist institutional arrangement, programs and policies are negotiated between the state and the corporatist group. If we have partially been able to capture the corporatist position by relying on the corporatist group's participation to commissions and other official discussions, we missed the entire discussion and opposition inside the group. Our own experience as well as several informal discussions with observers and participants in such internal discussions informed us on the presence of divergence in many positions taken by the corporatist group. With commodity groups facing different realities, it is not surprising that they somewhat diverge on the solutions that are needed. This then forces the corporatist group to ponder and centralize the demands coming from these groups. In practice, what happens inside the corporatist group is similar to the discussions held in parliament or with bureaucrats. In both cases, representatives are elected to make decisions and they can rely on professional staff to generate information that can help them make decisions. Moreover, both the government and the corporatist group can receive mixed signals from their constituents and then need to find common ground to ensure their reelection.

Since the relationship is similar and any new movements carrying a renewed vision of agriculture must also be addressed by the corporatist group, it would be interesting to adapt our research design to apply it to the corporatist group. Internal consultation, internal discussions

transcripts, official statements, and discourses could be used as information on which to build case studies. Even public pressure could be considered as the corporatist group are sometimes covered in the news — more often specialized news than generalist ones — and crises of confidence could then be assessed.

Hence, from these three avenues, we believe that additional information could be grasped on the factors influencing policies, but also on the more general topic of agriculture's place in the society. More specifically, as farming activities seem to follow three different trajectories, adaptation and replication of our research design may inform elected officials, lobbyists, activists, and other actors of either what to expect as the trajectories continue, or how to deviate the trajectories to meet their intention.

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Annex A: Hypothesis grid as applied to each program

H1: As the Institutional Arrangement Leans Toward Pluralism, the State Will More Likely Side with Policy Options that Yield the Greatest Reelection Potential (Arnold, 1990)

- Diverging demands received by the state.
- Extended policy networks.
- The state should side with the group proposing a policy change that has the potential to yield the greater reelection potential (Arnold, 1990).

H2: As the Institutional Arrangement Leans Toward Corporatism, the State Will More Likely Negotiate Policy Options with the Corporatist Group (Cawson, 1986)

- The recognition of a single group representing the beneficiaries of the policies.
- Small policy networks.
- Specific place granted to the corporatist group.
- A convergence in the demands received by the state.
- Policy agenda led by policymakers.

H3: Policy Inspired by the Peasant Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is 'Dependent' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

- Receive new programs with small budgets and marginal changes in existing programs.
- Attempt to involve new groups inside the policy network.
- A positive depiction of agriculture.
- Try to distinguish themselves based on Peasants' ideals.

H4: Policy Inspired by the Entrepreneurial Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is 'Advantaged' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

- Large budget and limited participation restrictions.
- Increase the friction to keep the status quo.
- Attempt to negate the inclusion of new actors (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009).
- A positive depiction of agriculture.
- Focused media attention on farmers' problems and external causes that could be fixed by the state (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).

H5: Policy Inspired by the Agri-food Firms' Vision of Agriculture Would Be More Likely to Reflect Farmers as a Construction that is 'Contender' (Schneider & Ingram, 1993; 1997)

- Receive production restrictions and regulations that ineffectively prevent farmers' eligibility.
- Were they to receive beneficial program changes, the changes would be difficult to see by the population (Schneider & Ingram, 1997).
- Attempt to negate the inclusion of new actors.
- A negative depiction of agriculture.
- Avoid population's attention (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009).