

Quebec's 17 regions: many ways to achieve growth

Are some regions really outdoing others? A look at the economic data shows that vitality does not only exist in areas with the fastest population growth, or because of a surge in investment. To varying degrees, each region can show growth from the start of this century, both in terms of its own performance and that of its neighbours. In Quebec, growth is not simply limited to two or three regions: data aggregation selected shows that while some regions, such as Mauricie and Montreal, are struggling in relation to the overall picture, others, such as Outaouais, are doing better than the average. This comparative picture covers the 2000 to 2012 period. It is not exhaustive and may not, in some respects, entirely reflect the progress accomplished in some regions these past few years.

A WORD ABOUT ECONOMIC DATA

It is not always easy to obtain regional data that allows for a comparison between regions. GDP is often the benchmark statistic. However, this analysis intends to highlight other statistics; GDP will only be introduced at the end of the document. This alternative angle makes it possible to assess the regions' performance from other perspectives.

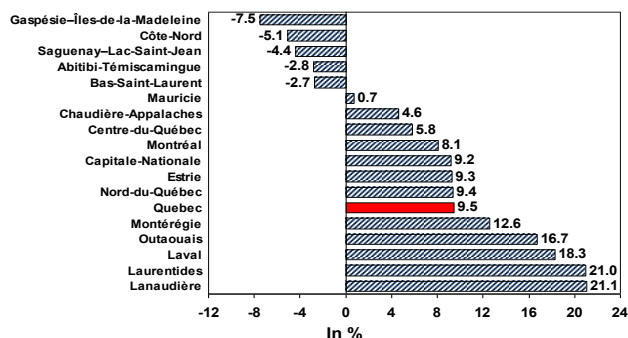
THE DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMIC

It is crucial to examine demographic change as it is one of the things that drive growth. In fact, a growing population base means greater potential for workers, something that appeals to business. If there is one figure that holds little mystery, it is demographics, as it gets a lot of media coverage. However, certain factors should be highlighted. This study looks at two periods: from 2000 to 2012 and from 2008 to 2012 (the last five years). In both cases, the

same four regions lead the way (graphs 1 and 2). For 2000 to 2012, Lanaudière shows growth of 21.1%, neck and neck with the Laurentides (21.0%), followed by Laval (18.3%) and Outaouais (16.7%) (table 1 on page 2). The same regions rank at the top from 2008 to 2012, although the order is slightly different.

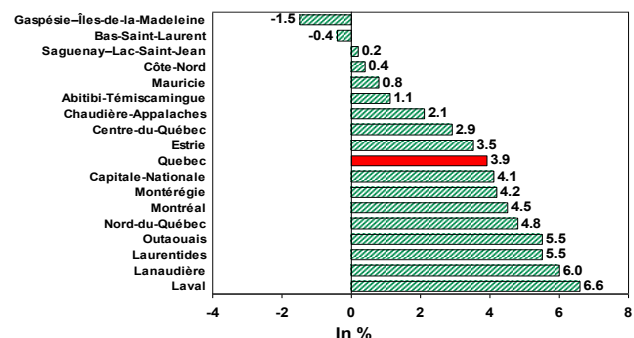
In contrast, five regions show declining populations for the 2000 to 2012 period. Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine suffered the biggest contraction (7.5%). All eyes are focused on the Côte-Nord because of Hydro-Québec's work on the Rivière Romaine, and the strong mining development in the North calls for workers, but the Côte-Nord territory still had its population decline by 5.1% since 2000. There were declines in Saguenay (-4.4%), Abitibi-Témiscamingue (-2.8%) and Bas-Saint-Laurent (-2.7%), as well.

Graph 1 – Population growth from 2000 to 2012



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 2 – Population growth from 2008 to 2012



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

François Dupuis
Vice-President and Chief Economist

Yves St-Maurice
Senior Director and Deputy Chief Economist

418-835-2450 or 1 866 835-8444, ext. 2450
E-mail: desjardins.economics@desjardins.com

Joëlle Noreau
Senior Economist

**Table 1 – Number of people:
 From 2000 to 2012 and from 2008 to 2012**

	Number of people	Variation in %	
	In 2012	2000 to 2012	2008 to 2012
Quebec	8,054,756	9.5	3.9
Bas-Saint-Laurent	199,834	-2.7	-0.4
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	273,009	-4.4	0.2
Capitale-Nationale	707,984	9.2	4.1
Mauricie	263,269	0.7	0.8
Estrie	315,487	9.3	3.5
Montreal	1,981,672	8.1	4.5
Outaouais	372,329	16.7	5.5
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	146,753	-2.8	1.1
Côte-Nord	95,647	-5.1	0.4
Nord-du-Québec	42,993	9.4	4.8
Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	92,536	-7.5	-1.5
Chaudière-Appalaches	408,188	4.6	2.1
Laval	409,718	18.3	6.6
Lanaudière	476,941	21.1	6.0
Laurentides	563,139	21.0	5.5
Montréal	1,470,252	12.6	4.2
Centre-du-Québec	235,005	5.8	2.9

Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

For the 2008 to 2012 period, only two regions saw their populations decline: Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine (-1.5%) and Bas-Saint-Laurent (-0.4%). Regions involved in the mining boom saw growth, with increases of 4.8% in Nord-du-Québec (+1,973 people), 1.1% in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (+1,664 people) and 0.4% in Côte-Nord (+387 people). Simultaneously, the growth posted in Laval (+25,271 people or 6.6%), Lanaudière (+26,901 people or 6.0%), the Laurentides (+29,221 people or 5.5%) and Outaouais (+19,305 people or 5.5%) has led to a total population increase of more than 100,000 over five years.

We could spend a long time on population development, but let us be brief: we note that, from 2000 to 2012, five regions posted growth that was above the Quebec average. From 2008 to 2012, eight regions were above average. More recently, growth is occurring nearly everywhere, though the rates vary from 0.2% to 6.6%.

The demographic question is closely tied to the matter of employment. The population base influences the number of potential workers and, ultimately, the presence of businesses looking for available labour. However, is job growth restricted solely to regions that are top-ranked for demographic growth? Not necessarily.

EMPLOYMENT: SOME SURPRISING OBSERVATIONS

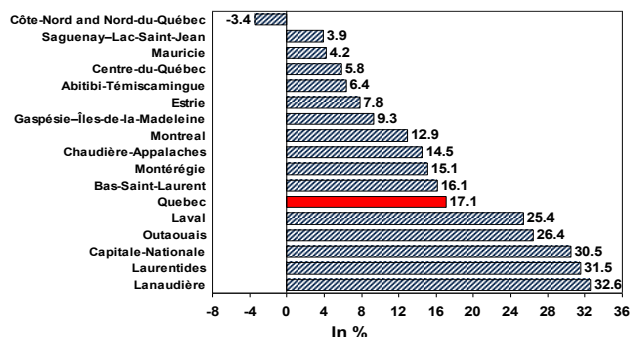
A look at employment figures may give the lie to the old saw “those that have shall get.” True, regions that experienced strong demographic growth saw a substantial rise in their number of workers. For employment, Lanaudière (+32.6%), the Laurentides (+31.5%), Outaouais (+26.4%) and Laval (25.4%), which were all above the Quebec average for population growth from 2000 to 2012, are among the regions with the highest percent increases in the number of workers in Quebec (table 2, and graphs 3 and 4 on page 3). However, the Capitale-Nationale region ranks third for fastest employment growth since 2000 (30.5%), but only eighth for population growth, below the Quebec average. Population growth is not the only pillar.

**Table 2 – Employment growth:
 From 2000 to 2012 and from 2008 to 2012**

	Number of empl. ('000)	Variation in %	
	In 2012	2000 to 2012	2008 to 2012
Quebec	3,984.4	17.1	2.7
Bas-Saint-Laurent	93.9	16.1	-0.1
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	126.0	3.9	1.5
Capitale-Nationale	382.1	30.5	6.7
Mauricie	112.9	4.2	-3.3
Estrie	146.3	7.8	-1.9
Montreal	941.9	12.9	-0.9
Outaouais	196.5	26.4	0.2
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	69.9	6.4	1.9
Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec	51.2	-3.4	2.8
Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	36.5	9.3	2.2
Chaudière-Appalaches	213.6	14.5	3.3
Laval	213.2	25.4	4.5
Lanaudière	240.5	32.6	7.6
Laurentides	299.7	31.5	11.0
Montréal	754.6	15.1	5.0
Centre-du-Québec	105.5	5.8	-8.3

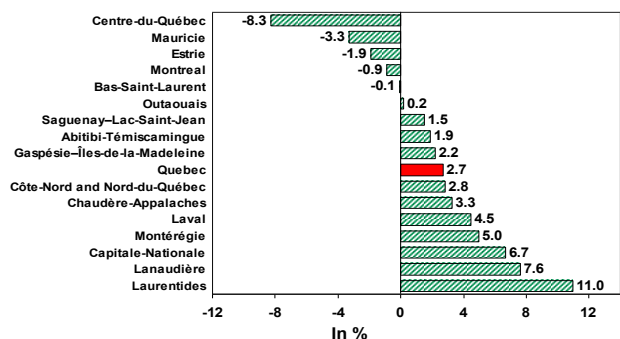
Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 3 – Employment growth from 2000 to 2012



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 4 – Employment growth from 2008 to 2012



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Moreover, in regions that have gotten a lot of media attention due to the commodities boom in the 2000s, the situation is not comparable to what occurred in Western Canada. Employment in Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec (these two regions are aggregated for labour market data) fell 3.4% from 2000 to 2012, while in Abitibi-Témiscamingue growth was 6.4% during that period. The average for Quebec was 17.1%. These results, below average for Quebec, can be chalked up to a variety of factors. However, forestry activity is a common denominator in these regions. This sector was hard hit by the collapse of the U.S. housing market and declining North American demand for paper, in addition to seeing decreased logging potential. At the same time, Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, often associated with commodities, also posted employment growth below the Quebec average (3.9% and 9.3%).

Note that employment statistics are tied to place of residence, which may have inflated statistics in regions with strong demographic growth.

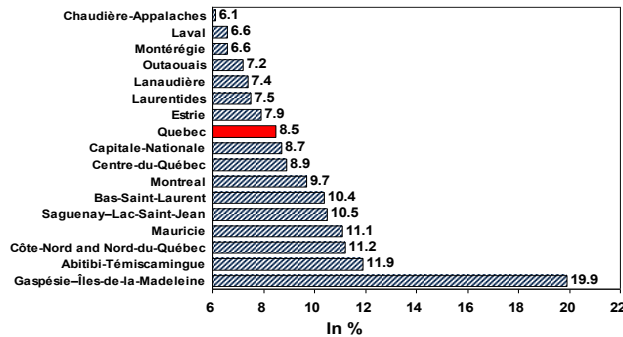
From 2008 to 2012, six regions came in below or struggled to achieve 2008 employment levels. Centre-du-Québec (-8.3%), the Mauricie (-3.3%), Estrie (-1.9%), Montreal (-0.9%), Bas-Saint-Laurent (-0.1%) and Outaouais (+0.2%) were the hardest hit. The manufacturing sector was heavily impacted. Of the regions most closely associated with resources, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine posted somewhat faster employment growth (2.2%) than Abitibi-Témiscamingue (1.9%) and Saguenay (1.5%), while others saw employment decline. As prices for basic materials have gone down, extraction activity has slowed. The strongest employment growth occurred in the Laurentides (11.0%), Lanaudière (7.6%), Capitale-Nationale (6.7%), Montérégie (5.0%) and Laval (4.5%), regions that have a smaller proportion of manufacturing and natural resource extraction activities than those mentioned previously.

In short, population growth may play a role in the rise in the labour pool, but it is not the only thing that drives the economy. While employment can generate growth, increasing productivity is a powerful lever for propelling each of the regions forward. Organizing work differently, acquiring better equipment and changing production processes are all means of achieving greater prosperity.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: MUSICAL CHAIRS

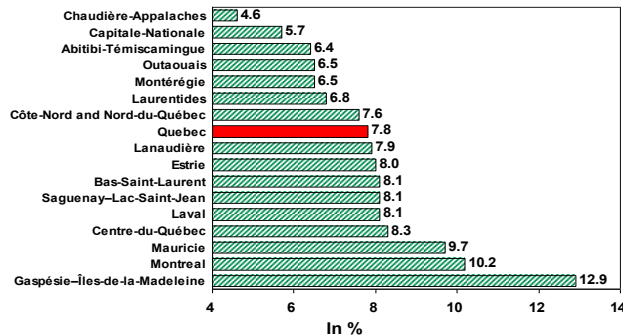
In a way, the unemployment rate is a barometer of economic activity. Although it is not the only figure for assessing a country's or a region's health, it makes it possible to monitor the strength of the job market. Since 2000, Quebec's average unemployment rate has fallen, going from an average of 8.5% to 7.8% in 2012, with a low of 7.2% in 2007 and 2008. Certain regions that are not leading the pack in job creation have some of the lowest unemployment rates (graphs 5 and 6 on page 4), such as Chaudière-Appalaches (4.6% in 2012), a region that is generating a lot of envy for its unemployment rate. Capital-Nationale comes next (5.7%), with a strong, enviable rate that same year. Abitibi-Témiscamingue ranks third (6.4%), followed by Outaouais (6.5%), Montérégie (at the same level) and the Laurentides (6.8%).

Graph 5 – Unemployment rate in 2000



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 6 – Unemployment rate in 2012



Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Note that some regions saw their unemployment rates decline sharply from 2000 to 2012, with their position in the overall rankings improving substantially. Abitibi-Témiscamingue, for example, was in 15th place with an unemployment rate of 11.9% in 2000 (one of the highest); in 2012, it ranked third, at 6.4%. The Capitale-Nationale region went from 8th to 2nd place during this period. The large Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec region went from 14th to 7th (11.2% to 7.6%) from 2000 to 2012. For its part, Outaouais has always been one of the four regions with the lowest unemployment rate, in 2000, 2008 and 2012.

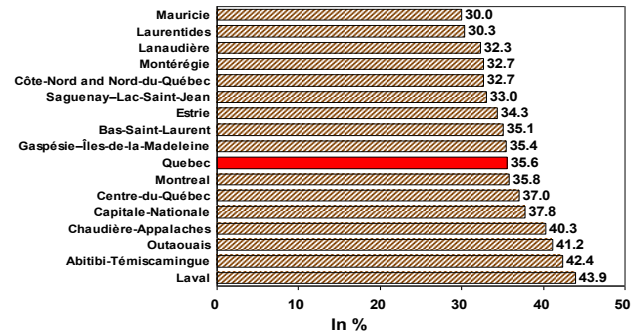
Note that Quebec’s 2012 unemployment rate has not dropped back below pre-recession levels. However, some regions have managed to get their 2012 rates below the average for 2008. Regions with strong demographic growth are not the only ones that managed to achieve this feat: others include Chaudière-Appalaches, Montréal, the Laurentides, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean, Bas-Saint-Laurent and Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec.

**AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES:
NOT JUST A “COMMODITIES” EFFECT**

In 2012, average weekly wages ranged from \$678.46 (Centre-du-Québec) to \$889.47 (Outaouais), with the average for Quebec at \$786.59. Six regions were above the average: Outaouais, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec, Laval, Montréal and Capitale-Nationale.

Wage increases from 2000 to 2012 ranged from 30.0% to 43.9%, depending on the region. While booming commodity prices created jobs and put pressure on wages in some areas, the resource regions did not necessarily scoop up all of the top spots (graph 7). In fact, Laval ranks first (43.9%), having capitalized on its role as a technocity in the last decade to encourage high-tech firms to set up shop in its territory. Abitibi-Témiscamingue comes second (the mining boom, among other things), followed by Outaouais (public service, high-tech), Chaudière-Appalaches (manufacturing, in particular) and Capitale-Nationale (public service, high-tech).

Graph 7 – Change in average weekly wages from 2000 to 2012

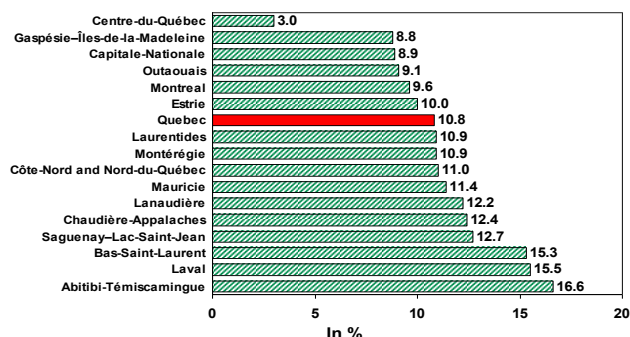


Sources: Statistics Canada, Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

The bottom slots go to Mauricie (30%) (forestry is collapsing but other sectors are starting to take up the slack), the Laurentides (30.3%) (same), Lanaudière (32.3%), Montréal (32.7%) and Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec together (32.7%). We might have expected this region to lead the pack, but not all of the mining developments announced have started, although some mines are in operation (Raglan, Casa Berardi, etc.). Moreover, the data comes from the Labour Force Survey, which identifies workers using their primary residence, rather than their workplace. Some projects are in the exploration phase and are not necessarily being handled by Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec firms and employees. The labour associated with this activity can come from anywhere in Quebec.

During the most recent period, from 2008 to 2012, the top players change a little (graph 8). With mining operations booming, Abitibi-Témiscamingue ranks first, followed by Laval, then Bas-Saint-Laurent, Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean and Chaudière-Appalaches, which, as we will see later, has increased its concentration of manufacturing employment against the Quebec average.

Graph 8 – Change in average weekly wages from 2008 to 2012



Sources: Statistics Canada, Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

This quick look at growth by average weekly wages allows us to correct the idea that wages surged in some regions but not others. There are variations in the growth recorded from 2000 to 2012, but no deepening disparities between the regions. Moreover, as the data and graphs show, the resource regions are not alone in benefiting from the rise by average weekly wages.

INVESTMENTS REFLECT ACTIVITY

Investments are frequently used to illustrate economic growth. While useful, they are not the only indicators to consider. Because they include housing expenditures, they are closely tied to a region’s population growth. In this context, it is not surprising to note that the regions with good demographic growth have it better. The record of the change in the value of investments from 2000 to 2012 holds a few surprises (table 3). Clearly, the highest investment in 2012 is in Montreal (\$16.2B), with 22.9% of the total for Quebec, followed by Montérégie (\$11.3B, at 15.8%), Capitale-Nationale (\$6.8B, at 9.6%) and Côte-Nord (\$4.3B, at 6.1%). These regions alone account for just over 54% of investment in Quebec this year.

Table 3 – Public and private investment

	2012 \$B	2000 to 2012 Var. (%)	2008 to 2012 Var. (%)
Quebec	71,048.0	94.7	18.2
Bas-Saint-Laurent	1,690.8	113.2	23.6
Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean	2,350.0	62.6	23.9
Capitale-Nationale	6,802.7	142.8	9.6
Mauricie	1,785.7	47.2	-4.4
Estrie	2,303.5	74.4	17.7
Montreal	16,245.4	28.6	36.6
Outaouais	3,028.3	182.4	8.0
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	2,069.9	128.8	52.8
Côte-Nord	4,316.7	177.6	220.6
Nord-du-Québec	2,624.9	575.8	-1.4
Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine	787.8	260.6	9.1
Chaudière-Appalaches	3,505.8	134.1	28.2
Laval	3,021.4	154.4	-12.8
Lanaudière	3,371.7	220.1	9.1
Laurentides	4,134.1	90.3	-8.1
Montérégie	11,254.1	113.1	4.3
Centre-du-Québec	1,754.4	84.9	20.3

Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

In Quebec, investment spending went from \$36.5B in 2000 to \$71.1B in 2012, an increase of 94.7%. Where is the growth? It can be seen across Quebec during this long period. However, some regions experienced more spectacular increases than others. Attracting the most attention is Nord-du-Québec, where investment grew by more than six times. This growth allowed it to go from 1% of total spending in Quebec in 2000 to 3.7% in 2012. In second place, Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine tripled its investments, reaching 1.1% of Quebec’s total. Lanaudière and Outaouais accelerated their own as well, though their respective shares stand at 4.7% and 4.3% for all of Quebec.

There are many reasons for the investment growth: the Québec Infrastructure Plan—in effect since 2007—the housing boom of the 2000s and, on a more local level, mining investments and Hydro-Québec projects (hydroelectricity and wind energy). Of course, we must also take into account spending by the institutional sector (hospitals, schools, etc.) and investments in the commercial sector and non-residential real estate (mainly office towers).

Lastly, while growth may seem spectacular in some regions, it remains limited with respect to total investment in Quebec.

NEW DISTRIBUTION OF THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Growth is also measured by the presence of economic activities that play a structuring role. This is especially true for the manufacturing sector. Because regional data on manufacturing employment is volatile and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) sample is small for regions, we must focus on a broader horizon, starting in 1987.

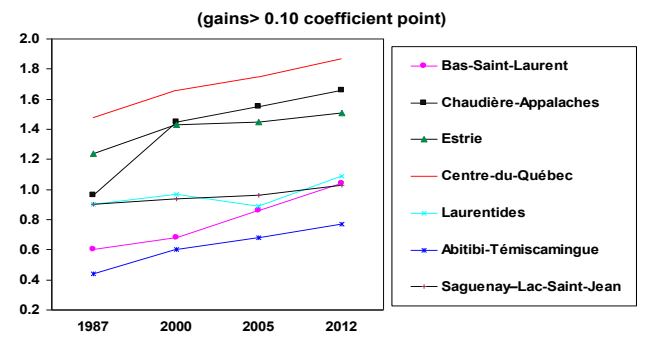
Graphs 9, 10 and 11 show the evolution of the manufacturing location coefficient for all of Quebec over the last 25 years. This indicator shows the concentration of manufacturing activity in a given region compared with the average for Quebec. A coefficient greater than “1” means that manufacturing jobs account for a larger share of regional employment than in Quebec as a whole. The graphs divide the regions into three categories: those that have made the most appreciable gains in recent years, those that have barely changed, and those that have lost ground.

The winners here were not what we might have expected. Those with the greatest gains are Chaudière-Appalaches, Bas-Saint-Laurent, Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Centre-du-Québec and Estrie. Montreal, Outaouais and Mauricie are among those that were hit the hardest. Montreal was affected at every level: textiles, apparel, refineries, printers, household appliances, foods, etc. These are sectors with fairly weak productivity compared with their competitors. International competition has been ferocious over the last decade, especially in textiles, apparel and food production. For their part, Mauricie and Outaouais witnessed, among other things, the nosedive by forestry products, as well as wood and paper products. The areas around the major urban centres are the biggest winners in the redefinition of Quebec’s manufacturing sector.

GDP OR THE PANORAMIC VIEW

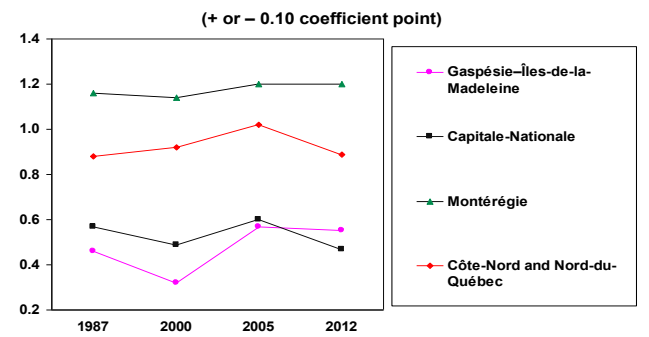
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gives an overall portrait of a region: it is a bit like a résumé, in the form of a number. As it is a near-universal metric, it is an indispensable tool for economic analysis. Due to methodological changes at the Institut de la statistique du Québec, data is available only from 2007 onward. As several comparisons in this analysis were made for the 2008 to 2012 period, we will continue with this scale. With regard to GDP at basic prices, Côte-Nord made the most substantial gains (28.3%), largely due to mining activity, the major work on the Rivière Romaine and the gradual resumption of forestry activities (table 4 on page 7). This region is followed by Abitibi-Témiscamingue (mining boom) and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (momentum from wind power, mining and resumption of

Graph 9 – Manufacturing location coefficient: Regions that gained the most



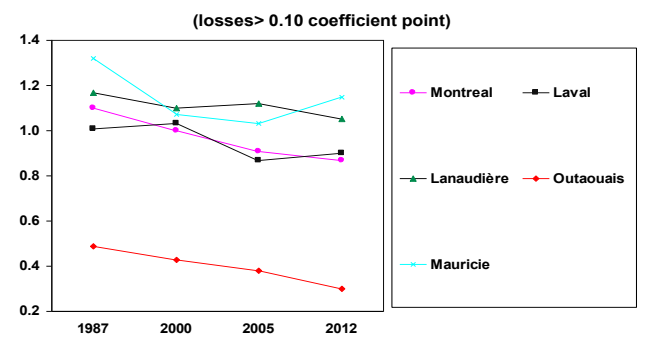
Sources: Statistics Canada and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 10 – Manufacturing location coefficient: Regions that barely changed



Sources: Statistics Canada and Desjardins, Economic Studies

Graph 11 – Manufacturing location coefficient: Regions that lost the most ground



Sources: Statistics Canada and Desjardins, Economic Studies

forestry activities). Outaouais and Montreal are in fourth and fifth place respectively. In contrast, Mauricie, Nord-du-Québec, Chaudière-Appalaches, the Laurentides and Laval are bringing up the rear with growth ranging from 5.5% to 10.7%. Among these stragglers are resource

Table 4 – Growth by real GDP at basic prices and per capita from 2008 to 2012 (in %)

GDP	Basic prices	Per capita
Quebec	13.0	8.8
Bas-Saint-Laurent	10.7	11.1
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	13.2	13.0
Capitale-Nationale	13.2	8.7
Mauricie	5.5	4.7
Estrie	10.9	7.2
Montreal	13.9	9.0
Outaouais	17.3	11.2
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	26.5	25.1
Côte-Nord	28.3	27.8
Nord-du-Québec	7.8	2.9
Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	22.5	24.3
Chaudière-Appalaches	9.9	7.6
Laval	10.5	3.7
Lanaudière	13.7	7.3
Laurentides	10.5	4.7
Montérégie	11.1	6.6
Centre-du-Québec	10.8	7.7

Sources: Institut de la statistique du Québec and Desjardins, Economic Studies

regions, regions with more manufacturing, and even some with strong demographic growth. In short, as each region has many facets, it would not be appropriate to judge a territory’s performance on the basis of one label (resource, fringe, industrial, etc.).

The picture is a little different if we look at GDP per capita. However, Côte-Nord, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine respectively have the three top spots, just as with GDP at basic prices. The rankings change starting in fourth place, held by Saguenay–Lac-St-Jean, followed by Outaouais and Bas-Saint-Laurent. The breakdown per capita paints a less flattering picture for regions with rapid population growth during this period. By comparing GDP at basic prices to GDP per capita, Laval goes from 13th to 16th place, Montérégie from 9th to 13th, and Lanaudière from 6th to 11th. Similarly, Nord-du-Québec, which may have seemed like the overall winner in recent years, is in 17th place. The recession and the pullback by prices limited the hoped-for gains.

GROWTH IS EVERYWHERE

In light of the indicators used for this analysis, it is difficult to declare a winner or build a podium for the regions that are always on top. In fact, regions have been taking turns at the top and bottom of the ranks. While they gain in some respects (e.g. demographics), they lose in others (e.g. manufacturing location coefficient) (table 5). True, demographic growth is an important location factor for employers: the four regions at the head of the pack in terms of population growth (Lanaudière, Laurentides, Laval and Outaouais) are also among the top five in terms of employment for 2000 to 2012. Note that these regions border on two key centres (Montreal and Ottawa) and that

Table 5 – Summary table: how the regions performed from 2000 to 2012

	GDP growth Basic prices 2008 to 2012*	GDP growth per capita 2008-2012*	Population growth 2000 to 2012	Employment growth 2000 to 2012**	Investment growth 2000 to 2012	Avr. weekly wages 2000 to 2012**	Mfg. loc. coefficient*** 1997 to 2011
Bas-Saint-Laurent	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Capitale-Nationale	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Mauricie	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Estrie	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Montreal	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Outaouais	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Côte-Nord	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Nord-du-Québec	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Chaudière-Appalaches	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Laval	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lanaudière	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Laurentides	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Montérégie	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Centre-du-Québec	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Legend

Top 6

7th to 12 th place

13th or higher

*Available only as of 2007

**The Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions are treated as a single region

***For the coefficient of localization: green is the section with growth of more than 0.1 points, yellow is 0.1- to -0.1 points and red is a loss of more than 0.1 points

Source: Desjardins, Economic Studies

workers have a long daily commute between their homes and their workplaces. However, population is not the only guarantee of success. Capitale-Nationale is in third place in terms of the rise in the number of workers, coming in eighth for population.

An examination of the figures for household disposable income reveals other winners—Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The question is: How many people are affected by spectacular rises? We cannot deny that they make a noticeable difference in some regions, but what is their effect on Quebec as a whole? The same question can be asked about investment growth.

With respect to examining one of the pillars of growth, the manufacturing sector, it is clear that the leaders are not the regions that are top-ranked for demographics and employment. Instead, often-overlooked regions (Chaudière-Appalaches and Centre-du-Québec) are coming out ahead. Two phenomena may be responsible for this fact. On one hand, the central regions are seeing manufacturing activity contract in areas that are subject to fierce international competition, and on the other hand, productivity gains in factories throughout Quebec are making it possible to produce more without necessarily creating new jobs.

In light of these figures, two regions are attracting special attention. Mauricie, first of all, is essentially trailing behind (13th place or lower) with only one figure in the centre group (6th to 12th place). Next is Outaouais, which is basically found only in the winner's circle (1st to 6th place), except for its manufacturing location coefficient. Bear in mind that this is a comparison between regions, just for few selected data and not an exercise to give regions a definitive ranking.

Several findings emerge from this short analysis. First of all, some regions are underestimated, especially Outaouais. Also coming to light is the fact that each region is contributing to growth in its own way. The speed of these contributions varies depending on the metrics used, as does the amount contributed. Taking the indicators one at a time, no region posts a negative score on more than two of the chosen indexes, and only a couple have two (Côte-Nord, for population and employment from 2000 to 2012, and Bas-Saint-Laurent, for population from 2000 to 2012 and employment from 2008 to 2012). Both of these regions have largely positive scores for the other data.

Furthermore, there are no all-around leaders that are outdoing the rest. While some regions are booming, their weight in the overall Quebec economy means we cannot say that they alone contribute to growth in Quebec. Like a kaleidoscope, the perspective changes depending on the indicator used. In the manufacturing sector, we note that border areas (Bas-Saint-Laurent, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Centre-du-Québec, Laurentides, Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean) made greater strides than urban areas where population growth was especially strong (except for the Laurentides). A view of the whole shows that we cannot judge based on assumptions, nor on the strength of any one given sector of economic activity. Quebec's economy relies on its 17 regions. The major centres can play their part thanks to contributions from other regions. For example, urban areas are platforms for exports. However, these areas need the other regions, where many of these goods and services are produced. An overview of the last decade using several figures allows us to take another look at some of the ideas received. Each region, regardless of its weight, saw some indicators improve and was able to contribute, in its own way, to the growth of the whole.

Joëlle Noreau
Senior Economist