



Rural Development Policies at Stake: Structural Changes and Target Evolutions During the Last 50 Years

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Abstract

Rural development policies have existed for decades, especially in OECD countries, and their impact has always been acknowledged by local actors. Our survey puts the emphasis on the diversity of policy instruments and public authorities, but also on the plurality of objectives, supporting and promoting economic activities (including agriculture), land planning, residential attractiveness and maintaining the quality of life of populations, conservation and preservation of local resources. We show that these policies have been subject to many shifts in vision and strategy – shifts which echo the changing perceptions of what rural development means and of what its objectives should be. Both the policies and the concept of rural development have evolved with economic circumstances, been discussed in the same debates, and have undergone the same reversals. They have changed in parallel with the recognition of the multifunctionality of agri-

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culture, or with transitions from centralized decision-making to greater inclusion of the various users of rural areas and even greater consideration for social criteria and ecological and environmental variables. Following a long period in which rural development policies were essentially top-down decisions imposed by state and central governments, the policy-making process has since been decentralized (or “regionalized”) and localized and has in more recent years sought to include the views of the populations concerned.

Keywords

Rural policies · Development policies · Policy instruments · Public authorities · Innovation · Governance

1 Introduction

At a time when cities and urban agglomerations have become the dominant form of life, representing the bulk of the economic wealth and development potential of states and the planet, the question of rural development policies may seem secondary, or even completely obsolete. However, this interest is not anecdotal, either for current reasons or in terms of perspective for the future. Indeed, rural areas still today contain almost half of the world’s population (according to statistics or calculation methods) (World Bank Data 2018), especially in countries such as India or China, and are often places of leisure or tourism for a large part of the urban population. But even more, they constitute the reservoir of the future wealth of humanity: this is the case of agricultural soils, which serve to feed the whole population of the world and whose maintenance is so absolutely essential, but also different minerals or ores that are at the base of all the energy resources of the planet, such as oil or rare metals now. It is also a major challenge in terms of preserving biodiversity and combating climate change (IPCC 2019). The consideration and maintenance of rural areas are therefore essential for the current and especially future development of all inhabitants and territories of the earth (Torre and Wallet 2016).

Now clearly established, the main changes in rural development in the developed countries are marked by a succession of periods with different principles of development since the Second World War, from a decade marked by the modernization of the agricultural sector characterized by the mechanization and use of chemical inputs in developing countries in the 1960s to taking into account sustainability and the fight against poverty in the 1990s. This gradual shift led to talk of a “new paradigm” of rural development (OECD 2006) characterized by sectoral expansion beyond agricultural activities, a desire to value a greater diversity of resources in rural areas, a logic of increased competition, and changes in the governance and public policy management modalities, where the multilevel approach and the involvement of the diversity of stakeholders seem to be essential. With the twenty-first century, the turning point in favor of sustainability was translated into an evolution of public policies towards the taking into account of more environmental values. This evolution has not since ceased to strengthen, under pressure from climate change, major

environmental degradation by the agroindustrial model, and the rise of awareness of public opinion.

This chapter aims to take stock of development policies for rural areas in the world. The questions we are interested in concern in particular the identification of the major characteristics of these policies, their evolution over time, and their major inflections, as well as the geographical dimensions of these measures or actions, in the major countries of the world or regions that compose them. We start by a discussion on rural and rural policies, and then we deal with the evolution of rural development patterns in the long run. The third part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of rural development policies in several large Regions of the world.

2 On Rural and Rural Policies

This rapid panorama would be too simplistic to account for the complexity and the diversity of the forces which over a long period of time crossed the conceptions of the rural and the policies of development which were applied there. The overlap or even the concomitance of the guiding principles has indeed led to a multitude of private initiatives and public intervention schemes sometimes tracing complementary paths, but also very often emphasizing oppositions of conceptions and interests. The difficult coherence between the objectives of the same policy, the divergences between ministerial orientations, the discrepancies between centralized and decentralized initiatives explain the sometimes-blurred readability of development policies in favor of rural territories. To this are added the well-known phenomena of institutional inertia and path dependence characterizing changes in coordination mechanisms and adjustments in public policies, as well as the role of state theories and administrative models as vectors of cognitive and normative norms of public intervention.

The slogans characterizing public policies are also not impervious to scientific progress. Over time, a dialogue is perceptible between the evolution of knowledge and dominant currents of thought on the one hand, and initiatives from the field and methods of applying theoretical models on the other. To give just a few examples, the works of Perroux and Keynesian thinkers were at the center of the approaches promoting the industrialization of rural territories and state intervention, then liberal thinking based notably on the Chicago School or Sen's work on capabilities has strongly irrigated the rural development policies implemented around the world. In a similar way, it is important to underline the importance of the diffusion of the models carried by the international institutions (World Bank, IMF. . .) or the transfer across borders, of devices of success, as it was for example the case for the European LEADER program.

Can we conclude that there is a tendency towards the convergence of rural conceptions and the development policies?

The notion of "rural" is often discussed and has been a subject of debate and controversy in contemporary literature and regarding the criteria used by national and international agencies or governments in the main OECD countries, for

example. Specifying the distinction between “rural” and “urban” or giving a clear-cut definition of the term “rural” is admittedly no easy task (Mormont 1990), and it is for this reason that the concept of “rural” remains vague (Halfacree 2003) and is often treated residually (as is the case in United Nations statistics). In the long run, rural areas, which had been predominantly or even exclusively used for farming, experienced major changes in terms of their economic activity and development drivers. Moreover, the clear frontier between rural and urban domains has weakened or even disappeared today, and it is challenged by the rise of the so-called peri-urban areas (Geneletti et al. 2017).

If we follow Cloke (2006), we can accept that the construction of “the rural” category rests on three interconnected frames. The first is functional by nature and serves to identify markers of rurality such as the extensive use of land (often for farming), the small size of often scattered settlements, or respect for the environmental and behavioral qualities associated with living in the countryside. The second involves a more political economic perspective, based on the suggestion that certain structural problems affecting populations often take different forms in rural areas due to the latter’s distinguishing characteristics, including a pleasant environment that attracts tourists, pensioners, and those who are not economically active; the acknowledgment that these areas are not easily accessible due to a lack of appropriate infrastructure; and the great value attached to volunteering and self-help attitudes. The third frame of understanding pertains to rurality as a social construction and places emphasis on the cultural dimension, that is to say the social, cultural, and moral values associated with rural areas, and rural living in general.

These elements combine in different ways according to the times and regions, revealing a diversity of profiles of rural territories and development issues associated with them, within national or regional spaces. Long denied by approaches that focus on modernizing the agricultural sector to generate growth, the diversity of rural territories is now recognized and mainstreamed as a necessity to enhance public policy effectiveness. Questions related to rural development are now included much more frequently in public policy agendas, as can be seen in various books describing field experiences or actions conducted in collaboration with local actors.

Nevertheless, the way in which rural is apprehended by the public policies implemented differs according to the countries and seems associated to a particular vision of rural and its place in the national development model. Therefore, it is not surprising that the stated objectives, the mechanisms mobilized, or the financial allocations allocated to this or that issue vary according to the country or region. In order to understand the nature of rural policies in the world, it should be considered, as pointed out by Knoepfel et al. (2015), the role of the State and its authorities, the tools and instruments of intervention, and the complexity and the heterogeneity of local administrative systems.

Putting the main issues associated with rural areas on the agenda thus reveals a diversity of concerns, depending on the country and the period. Even if today the issues of rural poverty alleviation, preservation of the environment, and well-being and access to services of populations, land ownership, etc., seem to be common ones, the prioritization of the problems to be treated differs from country to country.

Similarly, the articulation between agricultural development and rural development policies demonstrates distinct conceptions of the place given to agriculture in rural strategies, just as the integration of public intervention for rural areas in regional development strategies, including rural-urban relations. In a number of cases, rural development still boils down to support for agriculture and infrastructure development. Long-term trends in public policy management aim at a greater involvement of a large variety of stakeholders, of multilevel governance, and a shift of sectoral considerations towards place-based systems, including at the subregional scale. Finally, the instruments developed and mobilized to support these policies are quite diverse, although similarities or even influences are evident: if financial support measures for agriculture, infrastructure and land-use farmers, territorial dialogue bodies, or land management systems are some of the main tools put in place, their impacts demonstrate very variable degrees of efficiency depending on the case.

3 Evolution of Rural Development Patterns in the Long Run: Successive Attempts to Deal with the Diversity and Sustainability of Rural Areas

A historical interpretation of rural development practices and of analyses thereof could be broadly built around the notion of an organizing principle specific to each decade since the 1960s. The paradigm of modernization was succeeded by the paradigm of public market intervention and income support; this was followed in the 1980s by trade liberalization and later the emergence of the precepts of participation and empowerment, and, finally, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, by growing concerns about the environment and the sustainability of livelihoods. But these changes have not imposed themselves radically or suddenly but have resulted from gradually rising concern and social and political structuring processes which have ultimately led to their predominance. This has resulted in transitions and overlapping processes rather than radical breaks.

The first contemporary analyses of rural development are based on the experiments conducted in the 1950s following development programs initiated in various regions of the world, particularly by the United States or the United Nations. These programs were characterized by a strong emphasis on agriculture, which can be explained by two historical factors: the necessity to increase the food supply and the massive presence of farmers in most rural areas on the planet. They focused above all on promoting the development of agricultural production and productivity, in particular through technology transfers, the implementation of new technical paradigms, and the pursuit of higher returns, through the rationalization, mechanization, and intensification of production. The green revolution was under way, for the greater benefit of rural areas. This rationale was put into practice through the reinforcement of state intervention aimed at regulating the market, including through farm price and income support mechanisms. In Europe in particular, the first programs of the Common Agricultural Policy were structured, and the US

government had an important policy of support for the industrialization of its agricultural model.

But doubts and concerns were fast emerging. (1) The focus was essentially on the productive dimension without paying a great deal of attention to the welfare of populations and their access to resources other than food. (2) These policies paid little attention to demands for equity or equality in the treatment of individuals and the reduction of poverty or dependence. (3) Their ecological and environmental consequences (in relation to pesticides or water resources, for example) were seldom considered. (4) The populations were rarely included in the decisions processes. So, the limitations of this model have pointed to the need to find new policies.

A first approach, called the local networks approach, concentrates on the channels and means of diffusion of technical information – particularly relating to farming activities – among local actors, in terms of both its physical and social dimensions. The attention is focused on the development and spread of information and communication technologies, deployed to serve farmers, as well as on the role of agricultural consultants in this process, but other works also consider the learning processes established by the local populations, by focusing on the way knowledge is appropriated by actors and exchanged within groups (Falk and Harrison 1998). Thus, in many countries, for example, in France, professional agricultural organizations have promoted the establishment of farmers' networks, often at the subregional or even local level, whose training they have supported in order to promote adoption of a technique or changes in practices, whether in favor of mechanization in the 1960s or in favor of organic farming today.

A second channel refers to the capability and empowerment dimensions and brings to the foreground the improvement of the capacities and competences of rural residents. These approaches involve helping marginalized populations of the Southern countries improve their own competences and capabilities and social integration, particularly through experience-based learning. Sen's capability-based approach has more individualistic foundations and is built on the idea that actors must be free to choose from a range of action possibilities offered by their environment (Nussbaum 2000). It is based on an idea of social justice in which rural individuals are granted rights and tools of intervention enabling them to attain their freedom and therefore to choose their own development path. This approach is mobilized in the context of strategies aimed at strengthening the empowerment capacities of individuals with a view to stimulating entrepreneurship, considered as a driving force for the economic development of rural areas. Numerous illustrations of its implementation, in India, for example, show its success in the intervention strategies of governments and international organizations.

The Civil society approach accords an important role to civil society, by including not just farmers and public authorities in projects, decision-making processes, and local development initiatives but also a whole range of mostly local actors. The defenders of these approaches seek to move beyond approaches based on endogenous development by considering both the interests and goals of local populations and the policies and directives from outside the territories, with governance being understood here as a "government of compromise," or as a process of multilevel and

multipolar coordination in a decentralized and highly asymmetrical context (Jordan et al. 2005). There are many examples of this role of civil society, like the mobilization of citizen collectives against the setting of new infrastructures or to strengthen the democratic expression, the importance of women's collectives to fight against poverty, or even NGO action for the fight against illiteracy.

In the last 20 years, a new paradigm appears to be gaining autonomy from the dominant agro-industrial production model while developing an alternative representation of rural areas to that of dependence on the phenomenon of urbanization (Röling and de Jong 1998; Marsden 2006).

It is based on three key elements. (1) The rise of alternative practices. There have, since the 1990s, been many local initiatives and experiments, largely based on the idea of the multifunctionality of agriculture and of a diversification of economic activities in rural areas. (2) The production, through local expertise, of new scientific knowledge, and alternative farming techniques, along with possible combinations of farming production activities and other means of using and developing resources in rural areas. (3) A change in farming and rural policies: reducing direct support, exploring measures for improving farms' competitiveness, shifting from subsidy-based approaches to investment-based approaches, extending rural policies to include activities other than farming, developing new forms of governance, and promoting the involvement of stakeholders.

Added to this is the emergence of issues related to the environment and sustainable development, which have a strong impact on the conception of activities conducted in rural areas – particularly farming activities – and influence public policies and their implementation at local level, especially with regard to zoning matters (in the EU, Natura 2000, habitats directives, green and blue corridors, etc.).

Rural policies appear nowadays more as a patchwork of influences and recommendations than as a consensus on the key components underlying rural development in its diversity. The grid presented here is based on three elements, which structure discourses on development and, in some cases, recommendations: the favored conception of development, the basic principle of development, and, finally, the key development variable(s) in question (see Table 1).

In the technicist paradigm, the key variable remains technical farming expertise based on technology transfers, leading to increased productivity. Regarding the learning and knowledge acquisition processes, the formation of networks must be encouraged. Thus, the aim is primarily to develop and use local resources and facilitate the dissemination and implementation of new techniques by tapping local human resources and promoting collective action. In the case of the capability and empowerment patterns, the aim is more to develop the capabilities or competencies of the population and to raise its levels of education and know-how. The empowerment pattern advocates improving the level of knowledge and inference skills of the population by promoting collective learning processes within local communities, in the hope of enabling them to “take control of their destiny.” The capability pattern embraces the notion that it is right that each individual should achieve a level of development that corresponds to his or her expectations and capabilities. As for approaches centered on governance and participatory democracy, they tend to

Table 1 Patterns of rural development

	Technicist paradigm	Local networks approach	Empowerment approach	Capabilities approach	Civil society approach	Transition approach
Conception of development	Farming	Local network	Cognitive community	Individual	Territorial project	Agroecology/ bioeconomy
Structural principle of development	Increase of agricultural productivity and technology transfer	Development and exploitation of specific human resources	Social capital and learning dynamics	Individual choices and exploitation of competencies	Governance and involvement of stakeholders in projects	Resilience and sustainable development
Key development variable(s)	Technical mastery of agricultural production	Quality and development of local resources	Knowledge, capabilities	Implementation of choices and social justice	Power relations and coordination mechanisms	Multilevel and multi-actor governance of environmental systems

envisage development as a happy by-product of governance processes based on popular participation, overcoming opposition, and defining common projects. Finally, environmentalist/agroecology and bioeconomy approaches place the sustainability and resilience of agroecological systems at the heart of the challenges of territorial development. They place emphasis on the ability of the different stakeholders to steer agricultural, energy, and dietary models towards the socio-technical transition necessary for them to adapt to the constraints of global change (climate change, demographic change, etc.). Many rural areas have thus initiated development strategies that include projects related to the valorization of agricultural biomass (methanation), the implementation of operations to reduce food waste, or the reuse of building materials, to mention only these three examples.

Over time the notion of territorial diversity and the specificities of the challenges, stakeholder configurations and resources have gained ground, making obsolete any attempt to define a standardized and canonical model of rural policies that would be valid at all times and in all locations. The waning influence of agriculture, concomitant with the economic socio-demographic diversification of rural areas, has required that the multifunctionality of farming systems and their interaction with other activities and interests be taken into account. The search for new solutions to emerging development challenges and territorial competition has made innovation in practices a constant imperative and called into question the linear models based on the definition of standards. It has led to recognition of the advantages of dispersed expertise, collective learning approaches, negotiated agreements, and a shift in focus from agricultural production to territorial and multilevel governance. Finally, broadening the focus from purely economic aspects to the social and environmental dimensions has highlighted the need to determine and implement the principles of sustainability and transition at local level, together with mechanisms that take account of the diversity of stakeholders and of development challenges.

4 Rural Development Policies: Big Differences According to the Major Regions of the World

The previous cross-sectional analysis of the evolutions and major trends in the policies in favor of the development of rural areas in the world needs to be supplemented by a more geopolitical analysis, examining the place, the role, and forms taken by these policies or by the interventions of various public institutions in the major regions of the world. Since we lack room for a very detailed analysis of all the countries and regions of the world, we will limit ourselves to an approach to rural development policies in some of the most influential and richest countries of the world, the USA, the EU, China, and Japan, as well as Australia and Brazil.

Each time, we shall examine the history of these policies, their current characteristics, and their links with agricultural policies, as well as their more or less local or regional dimensions. Although it is difficult to make very clear groupings, we have opted for blocks of countries whose rural development policies have similar, if not identical, characteristics.

4.1 USA and Australia: The Primacy Given to Agricultural Development Policies

Rural development policies in the USA and Australia have similar characteristics, partly due to the existence of a number of geographical and human dimensions common to both countries. First, rural areas are vast, with very low population densities, and agriculture has an important place and is extremely dominant in terms of land use. If we add the coexistence of a federal state and local entities of various kinds, as well as an appetite for liberal approaches to economics, we understand that important similarities can emerge between the two systems.

A major element is that agricultural policies are largely dominant and receive much larger funding than rural policies per se. In the United States, for example, agricultural policies focus primarily on farms productivity, partly from an export point of view, as well as on the sanitary quality of production. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal agency in charge of agricultural policies, primarily promotes production and export volumes, as well as nutrition and marketing programs, and grants aid according to these priorities. It is also responsible for a rural development program, which is much smaller in size and funding, and which mainly focuses on the development of digitalization in rural areas, the preservation of the quality of life, the protection and exploitation of the forest heritage, as well as the safety of the populations living in these areas. The result is a high level of infrastructure, as well as a high productivity of farming activities, leading to an increase in the size of cultivated parcels, as well as a decrease in the agricultural population.

This option dates from the 1950s and post-World War II, a period when rural development was primarily concerned with the fight against poverty and the development of infrastructures. In the 1970s and 1980s, emerged an awareness for the living conditions of local people and the need for rural education, research, financial assistance, and planning. However, funding remains weak and actions limited at the federal level. As Honadle (2001) shows, a good agricultural policy is considered the best development policy for rural areas, particularly through the development of market access, so that the actions in favor of the inclusion of local populations are more limited than in Europe, for example.

This limited interest at the national level is accompanied by a strong complexity of local devices: there are indeed a myriad of rural development agencies at the level of States, regions, or local communities, but their action is most often carried out by the Departments of Agriculture or Economic Development (Partridge et al. 2009) and also focuses on agricultural dimensions. As noted in Freshwater (2007) “The consequence of weak authority for rural development at the national level and weak interest at the state provincial level has been rural policy that is sporadic, uncoordinated and rarely linked to local needs.” There is no common strategic vision for rural development policies, except for the struggle against poverty, which has remained a red thread since the 1950s. As a result, the problems of employment and isolation, and even survival, of local communities remain strong while US agriculture is proving capable of very strong performances, including export.

There is a similar concern with Australia, for the reasons set out above, except that the distances are even greater, the size of farms even larger, and the density of rural populations even lower. The more centralized nature of the institutional system leads here to an even greater emphasis on agricultural policies, considered absolutely essential by the federal government, in terms of the country's exports and food self-sufficiency (Botterill 2016).

The post-World War II period was already dominated by this belief, with the progressive setting of an arsenal of protection of manufacturing production including agricultural activities and leading to a complex set of measures largely inspired by the policies carried out in the UK. The Australian government has consistently given a very clear priority to liberal agricultural policies, which are based on the idea that agriculture (and agri-food) is a sector like any other and must therefore receive, as such, a marked but not different attention in its essence from that of other economic fields. This is particularly the case since the 1980s, when liberalism prevails, with a series of measures to deregulate and reduce direct aid in the milk, wheat, and wool sectors, for example.

These measures, which appear to be the dominant part of rural policies, are also accompanied by actions to reduce spatial inequalities related to life in rural areas and to protect the environmental values of these areas. These include in particular direct payments, taxes, and the implementation of development programs in terms of employment and capacity building in favor of spatial equity (Herbert-Cheshire 2000), as well as payments for environmental services, and grants of various kinds to maintain biodiversity and increase the sustainability of forest production and activities. On the whole, people's expectations in terms of well-being or quality of life are generally not considered very much, if not on an ad hoc basis, and the objective is to achieve economic self-reliance of these communities through the development of market exchanges.

4.2 China Ex-Communist, the Persistence of a Rural in the Service of Economic Development

We are confronted with a completely different approach to rural policies when we address the question of China, as the circumstances are different, both from a geographical and demographic point of view, and in view of the history and role played by the institutions. Indeed, the long centralizing tradition of the imperial regime, followed by the dominance of a collectivist economy, combined with the persistence of an extremely large population in the countryside, has marked rural behaviors and structures. Rural areas faced severe poverty and food insecurity that could lead to destructive famines. The priorities were then for a long time at a completely different level than in the developed countries, even though major evolutions have emerged over the past 70 years.

Traditionally, China was characterized (like India) by an immense rural population largely composed of small peasants living in villages or small towns. The communist regime, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, caused him to undergo

immense upheavals, in the first place the collectivization of lands and various planning measures, among which the Great Leap Forward holds a very special place. Launched in 1958, this highly proactive policy aimed to accelerate the industrialization of the country, while maintaining the population of farmers in rural areas. The latter were thus ordered to supply industrial products to the nation. This has had the effect of diverting them from part of their agricultural activity and forcing them to implement new productions such as industrial products or transport infrastructure. The immediate result was the greatest famine of the modern era, with more than 30 million deaths due to insufficient agricultural production, but also a very strong persistence of the industry in the Chinese countryside.

The various policies that have been deployed since the 1970s, following the cultural revolution, have allowed a gradual relaxation of planning and the abandonment of collectivization, thanks to an increasing integration of SMEs and market values. Previously based on a principle of catching up with economic lags through public investment in the poorest regions, they have been transformed with a much more balanced distribution of funds and actions between the different types of territories (Long et al. 2010), and the search for regional specializations. Western regions have thus seen the development of agricultural specialization (mainly live-stock) and raw materials, while middle regions are destined to energy industry and agriculture (crop), and Eastern regions had the role of export-oriented industries and foreign exchange. It can be said that policies have mainly focused on the uneven development of the regions and cities of the East, and that rural areas have largely contributed to the industrial and manufacturing development of these regions (Long et al. 2010).

But one basic principle still remains today, that of a rural-urban divide through the household registration or so-called *hukou* system. The *hukou* precisely determines whether a person belongs to the rural or urban space, and it is impossible to pass from one to the other without an internal passport. This allows to control the rural population and to avoid a migration too massive and uncontrolled on the coastal cities in particular. This strict division between rural and urban areas and their respective inhabitants also aims to ensure that only members of rural communities have access to agricultural land, and to avoid the emergence of landless peasants and the impoverishment of the peasant class. It is still estimated that over 900 million people live in rural areas, mainly in small farms or towns. They produce agricultural goods for self-subsistence but are also responsible for the very strong rural industry.

From the 2000s, attention to rural policy dimensions, which were previously rather weak and restricted to agricultural or industrial activities by a growth poles policy, increased. Actions to improve infrastructure (electricity, rural highway, rural drinking water) or the living conditions of farmers have emerged (with measures such as free compulsory basic education, medical services, TV and radio broadcasting in villages, basic social security), even the will to build a “new countryside.” Concerns have also been raised about excessive migration to urban areas and the rapid ageing of populations living in rural areas. Overall, however, the existing policy framework of China concerning rural development is still mainly composed of uncoordinated “one-size fits all” policies that most often address different sectors

or territories in an uncoordinated manner. On the other hand, the approach of targeting policies to rural areas based on informed knowledge of rurality is still lacking and this to a large extent has been responsible for the fragmented rural development in China.

4.3 Europe, an Unfinished Quest for Territorial Cohesion and Sustainability of the Agricultural Sector

The European Union's rural development policy, one of the oldest and most structured in the world, provides, through its shifts in orientation and reconfiguration of mechanisms, a good illustration of the varied and ever-changing nature of the measures implemented to support rural areas. A shift has gradually occurred from an exclusively sector-based approach to policies intended to promote the development of regions or centered on the rural component of regional development.

In the early years of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the original focus was on supporting physical capital (investments) on farms and in the downstream sector. However, questions concerning the efficiency of agricultural policies, the costs of financial support, and changes in rural land use led to the replacement of financial aid with direct interventions at local level. This was achieved through the second pillar of the CAP, related to rural development. The first territorial component was included in the CAP with the Less-Favoured Areas Directive, which sought to combat rural depopulation. These structural arrangements foreshadowed the wave of reforms of the next decade, marked by the successive implementations of intervention mechanisms by the European Commission, focusing on territories. However, the term "rural development policy" first appeared in the EU vocabulary at the Cork Conference in 1996.

A further step was taken with the Agenda 2000 reform. This new regulation introduced a second pillar, a regulatory tool for implementing the rural development policy that included rules making it compulsory for member states to implement environmental protection measures. The introduction of these regulations marked a turning point in the environmental field. At the same time, the second pillar also pointed to the need for greater flexibility in the European rural development policy. This ability to pick and choose measures also marked a shift towards a better recognition of the diversity of rural areas and of the objectives defined by the states and regions, embodied in the principle of decentralization of responsibility in terms of the procedures of implementation of the CAP.

While the gradual construction of these intervention mechanisms has foreshadowed the development of a true policy for rural areas, it has also left an impression of a conglomeration of measures subject to the influence of certain member states rather than of a coherent whole. For example, the UK and Germany have indicated their intention to "green" the CAP by making it a requirement to introduce mechanisms for funding environmental protection, whereas France tends to be a driving force for the adoption of support measures for farmers, through the provision of advisory services to farmers, or even in the field of territorial

development. This results in both a lack of integration and in restrictive interpretations of some measures by various countries.

Moreover, the abolition of zoning over the period 2007–2013 indicated that measures have been implemented with less and less differentiation between different types of rural areas and with no specific treatment for sensitive areas. This was in keeping with the Lisbon Strategy's focus on competitiveness, innovation, and employment, and with the new cohesion policy, centered primarily on the growth potential and driving role of cities. Thus, the orientations of the European policy for the development of rural areas were shaped by goals which must be coherent with those of the agricultural development policy set out in the framework of the CAP, and with the European regional development policy, which sought a convergence of growth rates and development paths for the different European territories.

The growing attention given to regions and territories in agricultural policies, designed to promote decentralization, takes account more effectively of the different issues facing the various territories and encourage recognition of the multi-functionality of agriculture. At the same time, the regional and local authorities (municipalities, intermunicipal communities, *départements*, etc.) have significantly strengthened their policy and financial support for rural areas and the agricultural sector, creating a European mosaic of intervention models.

While the two-pillar structure is maintained for the 2014–2020 CAP, one of the main objectives is to develop a more comprehensive strategy, based on greater coherence between them. The new CAP aims to address economic, environmental, and territorial issues simultaneously, by establishing three long-term strategic objectives: sustainable food production, sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action and balanced territorial development. There is therefore a greater emphasis on the joint production of public and private goods by farmers, with a more territorial approach: contributions to the conservation of landscapes and biodiversity and climate-change adaptation will be key criteria for aid allocation. Alongside the objective of improving the competitiveness of European agriculture, the most important change is a heightened consideration for environmental issues.

The current period presents major challenges and is a turning point for redefining the objectives of rural development policies in Europe. The current CAP has to be consistent with the Europe 2020 policy and in particular with its new smart specialization strategy and place-based orientations, which give a prominent place to territorial dimensions and to the choices of European territories. Using a self-assessment process, each region is required to focus on a few specific areas. It should also be noted that the allocation of EFRD funding to member states and regions is now conditional upon them having defined and implemented a smart specialization strategy that sets investment priorities.

One key question is that of the place of rural areas in this mechanism, which requires regions comprising both urban and rural areas to establish priorities. In order to meet this challenge, the European Union has structured the rural development policy around six priorities on the basis of which the regions can define their action plan for rural areas: (a) fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in farming, forestry, and rural areas; (b) enhancing farm viability and boosting the

competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and the sustainable management of forests; (c) promoting food-chain organization, animal welfare, and risk management in agriculture; (d) restoring, preserving, and enhancing ecosystems related to farming and forestry; (e) promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy; and (f) promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction, and economic development in rural areas.

Clearly, the concept of smart growth in the context of a renewal of European rural development policy remains very much geared towards agricultural priorities, in conjunction with environmental goals, whereas the constituent aspects of rural diversity have been somewhat forgotten. Vacillating between urban tropism and agricultural bias, the way in which the principles of smart-growth policies will be adapted to take account of the diversity of rural regions remains rather vague (da Rosa Pires et al. 2014). On the other hand the smart-growth approach is very much suited to intermediate rural areas with close links to urban areas, which tend to have large populations and industrial bases (McCann and Ortega-Argilès 2013), even if a growing literature acknowledges the relevance of place-based amenity services and the entrepreneurial context for the development of rural regions. Amenities are also highlighted as particularly important for attracting and retaining creative individuals, who are shown to contribute to the development of rural communities.

4.4 Japan, a Residual Rural Policy

The case of Japan is interesting in the sense that rural development policy has rarely become a national priority, in a centralized country marked by strong and renewed interventionism, but focused on technological dimensions and urban growth. It is in fact a mountainous archipelago, of which only 30% of the surface is available for permanent human activities, which imposes very strict rules of land use occupation and planning, while economic activity is highly concentrated in metropolitan regions, the Tokyo region having a leading role (about 3% of the territory, 25% of population, 40% of commerce, and 90% of foreign companies).

The post-World War II period proved extremely fruitful for Japan, with a reconstruction effort that led to record growth until the 1980s. The public policies aimed first at the development of an industrial complex and then resolutely turned to high-tech industries and science-industry exchanges, in particular with the national technopoles program, which sought to rebalance growth towards all regions of the country, then a policy of regional clusters pursuing the same types of objectives in a climate of very high concentration of economic activities in the most urban areas. They have led to a change in the economic and geographical balance, with a strong migration of low-income agricultural populations to much better-paying manufacturing jobs in metropolitan areas (Abe and Alden 1988).

One might wonder about the meaning of the notion of rurality in Japan, with rural areas marked by the proximity to the cities and the mix of land use. These areas are

probably closer to Dutch or UK design than China and marked by significant periurbanization processes. This may be the reason why rural policies appear less assertive than powerful industrial policies. The question of land availability and the very high price of land is constantly being raised in an island characterized by its small size and its mountainous character. The land reform set-up after the Second World War, based on a small-holder structure, allowed the sustainability of a class of small farmers, largely rice-oriented and locally organized around rural communities (*Shuraku*) with their own culture and traditions, and often collective land use management. It subsequently relied on a policy of direct support for agricultural prices, which was very important and never wavered, accompanied by trade barriers in favor of products such as rice or pork meat.

However, the peri-urban character of rural areas has led to a sharp rise in industrial and service activities, so that agricultural production now accounts for no more than 20% of the income of these territories. Considering with the decline of the *Shuraku* and the ageing of the rural population, laws in favor of rural regeneration and against population decline were passed in the 2000s. They aim to generate stable employment in regional areas and a new inflow of people to these areas, to provide help to young generation, and to create regional areas suited to preserve sage and secure living (Iwata 2019). The issue being addressed is how to reuse the rural landscape, and how to revitalize villages, particularly through tourism or recreational activities. These rather new policies, however, remain residual in the light of the efforts and financial volumes devoted to policies and industrial and technological development.

4.5 Brazil, a Dual Strategy between the Competitiveness of Agro-Industrial Sectors and the Structuring of Territorial Approaches

From the beginning, Brazil's development model is strongly associated with the consumption of space and its transformations and also marked by a proactive policy of developing and exploiting its internal margins during the twentieth century, through major sectoral development projects and spectacular measures of spatial rebalancing.

The period of the Green Revolution, from the Second World War to the 1970s, introduced a debate about a renewed conception of rural development and agriculture, characterized by the more intensive use of mechanization, pesticides and high-yielding varieties, or the development of irrigation. Successive governments have tried to implement major national integration projects, particularly during the period of military governments (1964–1985), favoring road infrastructures, and perimeters of peripheral colonization through the structuring of development poles (minerals, metallurgical, agropastoral, and urban). Very favorable to big landowners, this model left family farming on the side and resulted in the migration of thousands of farmers to cities, the loss of biodiversity, the pollution of several rivers, and so on.

With the end of the military dictatorship, the principles of centralized management of land use planning by the state give way to a territorial approach to development as part of a mobilization of communities to seek solutions adapted to territorial issues in the 1990s, strongly inspired by rural development policies in Europe, and in particular the LEADER program. More focused on processes related to endogenous dynamics, participating governance, incorporating family farming and indigenous communities, and the emergence of social movements linked to NGOs; this approach also incorporates a stronger perspective in favor of sustainability. From 1996, the National Family Farming Support Program (PRONAF) played an important role in the evolution of state strategies for rural development by consolidating family farming as a social category (Tonneau and Sabourin 2007).

In 2002, the creation of the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CNDRS) concretizes this inflexion in terms of rural development policy. The emergence of Rural Development Councils (CMDRs) is another strong marker of this desire to involve local civil society, and consultation places at the municipal level are then set up on different themes: health, food, social insurance, etc., representing a major institutional innovation. After the coming to power of the Lula government, the territorial turn as a new approach to planning, management, and rural development strategies appears more institutionalized, with the creation of the Sustainable Rural Territorial Development Program (PDSTR). Moving from the municipal to the territorial scale, this new approach is less focused on strengthening infrastructure and more on social organization and participation in institutions. The coordination capacity of the actors and the involvement of family farming are particularly targeted. To this end, different bodies are set up to establish territorial forums (Codeter), even if their role remains essentially consultative.

After 5 years of experimentation, a program called “Territories of Citizenship” is launched in 2008, intended to adjust and strengthen the system in place, with the main ambition to fight against territorial imbalances and rural poverty. This more complex organization articulates the federal, federated, and territorial levels. The gradual establishment of inter-municipal consortia, articulating rural and urban areas in many cases, has enabled the construction of more inclusive development projects, such as local productive arrangements (Arranjos Produtivos Locais – APL).

The debate on deforestation is a recurring and controversial figure of agricultural and rural development policies in Brazil, mainly in the Amazon zone. After the peaks recorded in the early 2000s, a turning point is made reducing the rate of deforestation by about 20%. However, these results remain fragile, with laws easing the ban on deforestation having been passed since then. The duality of Brazilian agriculture is reflected by the coexistence of two ministries, one in charge of agriculture, livestock and food, or the entrepreneurial sector, the other of family farming and agrarian reform, allowing a series of differentiated policies for marginalized populations.

In the end, the geographical vastness of the country and the number of intermediate administrations involved in each program contribute to fragility: too many objectives and instruments that do not necessarily decline together, reinforce

fragmentation of responses and interventions and the difficulties effective implementation of experiments (Sabourin 2015).

4.6 What Impact of Rural Development Policies?

Beyond the diversity of rural conceptions and the associated public intervention mechanisms in the different regions, there is the question of the impact of the rural development policies implemented.

In Europe, despite the creation of a pillar of the CAP dedicated to rural development and a favorable evolution of the resources allocated to it, the important imbalance remains in favor of the pillar oriented towards the support of agricultural prices and incomes. This results in a noticeable impact in terms of the spatial distribution of agricultural activities marked by the regional specialization of production types, the increasing integration of downstream-led value chains, and a movement to reduce/increase farms size. Faced with this fundamental trend, initiatives have been emerging for 15–20 years in favor of the development of terroir and proximity agriculture, to which are added today urban agriculture projects. Nowadays, all these agricultural models are oriented towards the search for a reduction of their environmental impact, with very relative successes. However, the weight of agricultural activities in the economy of rural territories declines to become mostly minority in terms of added value and jobs, even if its importance remains essential for land and biodiversity issues. The economic structure of rural areas has thus gradually diversified, revealing a great diversity of configurations, between areas dominated by residential functions, those oriented towards tourism or agribusiness activities in particular. The proximity to metropolitan areas or on the contrary the remoteness also orients the profile of these rural and peri-urban territories, between innovative and declining places.

In the USA, the dualism between urban agriculture and agro-industrial agriculture is very much in favor of the latter. In rural areas, the ambition of high farm productivity, which leads to increased volumes on very large farms, is also declining in the agricultural population. The high level of infrastructure benefits above all from this highly capitalistic agricultural model, which is struggling to halt the declining attractiveness of rural areas in relation to metropolitan areas. Essentially considered in terms of their capacity to provide food, raw materials, and natural resources, these territories, which account for about 15% of the population, have differentiated demographic dynamics: population growth at the west, south, and near metropolitan areas responds to a demographic decline in the center of the country and in the east, arguing for differential treatment in rural development policy measures.

In Australia, the priority directions for the competitiveness of agricultural holdings are based on scale-efficiency strategies that are conducive to increasing their size. As in the USA, the lack of employment opportunities and the income level deficit reduce the economic attractiveness of these areas. This phenomenon, combined with a lower quality of life than in urban areas, affects rural areas, where the population tends to age. Public policy measures thus prove to be insufficient to

compensate for the rural attractiveness deficit, while, conversely, demographic and economic dynamics contribute to the perpetuation of urban sprawl, especially around large metropolitan areas.

In China, the actions undertaken to build a “new campaign” have not made it possible to severely reduce the gap between the living conditions and especially the income between rural and urban, which on the contrary have continued to widen. The measures in favor of an improvement of the living conditions of farmers have had more or less positive effects depending on the territory, and the lack of differentiation in the programs implemented partly explains the territorial fragmentation that generates tensions, in some cases doubled by riots against the construction of infrastructures designed for industrial and urban development. Thus, intended in particular to stem the rural exodus, a real internal border was put in place through the hukou system. At the same time, the Chinese development model increasingly mobilizes external land and mining resources to ensure a supply of agricultural and raw materials corresponding to its needs.

The situation is very different in Japan. Despite measures to revitalize rural areas, the rural exodus and the aging of the population is continuing, leading to a decline in population density, with an impact on economic dynamics, and calls for innovation in terms of organization, services to the population and to companies, but also in terms of business models. Efforts to stimulate rural amenities in favor of tourism and to enhance the multifunctionality and sustainability of agricultural activities seem to be paying off, but they are not enough to ensure the dynamism of rural areas. As in most countries, the technical solutions offered by ICTs appear as a source of hope both for services to the population and opportunities for the creation of economic activities for the future.

In Brazil, finally, the measures taken to reduce rural poverty and eradicate hunger have had an undeniable effect on the situation of the poor. However, they have had only a limited impact on social inequalities, with policies benefiting local elites and landowners more. Despite the institutional recognition of family farming, the absence of agrarian reform and the imbalance in the allocation of public investments have not generated any expected redistributive processes. The political developments that took place in late 2018 gave a new twist to the conception of rural development in Brazil, based on a logic aimed at strengthening exploitation of natural and mineral resources, and support to the agroindustry against family farming and social assistance, with as corrolaire a disturbing attack on the fragile results in terms of limiting deforestation and preserving biodiversity (Table 2).

5 Conclusion

Rural territories are today the subject of contradictory conceptions and policies. They are considered as making a vital contribution to the well-being and prosperity of the vast majority of countries for their ability to meet the needs of food production and raw materials, amenities, and ecosystem services. But at the same time they also

Table 2 Rural development policies in some major countries of the world: an overview

	Europe	USA	Australia	China	Japan	Brazil
Main issues	Limiting environmental and biodiversity impacts Adaptation to climate change Maintaining the competitiveness of agricultural sectors Maintaining the quality of life in rural areas Diversification of rural economies Avoid the rural-urban divide	Digital development, maintenance of the quality of life, protection and exploitation of the forest heritage, security of the populations Inclusion of local populations more limited than in Europe Fight against poverty, since the 1950s Problems of employment and isolation, survival of local communities	Mainly, support to the competitiveness of farms Secondly, reduce spatial inequalities due to life in rural areas and protect environmental values	Industrial production in the countryside during the revolution. Then, more balanced distribution of resources and regional specializations (breeding, export, crops, and export). From 2000: Actions in favor of infrastructures, living conditions of farmers, and will to build "a new countryside"	Question of the availability of land and the very high price of land 2000: How to improve the rural landscape, and to revitalize villages, especially through tourism or recreation activities	Fight against poverty and famine Support for productivity and development of industrial and export agriculture Support and integration of family farming: Agrarian reform Participatory governance at the territorial level
Combination of agricultural and rural development policies	Progressive strengthening of the link between agricultural and rural policy, and then with the regional development policy	The best development policy for rural areas is good agricultural policy: Productivity, especially for export; and health quality of productions	Agricultural policies, deemed absolutely essential by the federal government, in terms of the country's exports and food self-sufficiency	Still mainly composed of uncoordinated "one-size fits all" policies	Rural development policy has rarely been imposed as a national priority	Duality between a policy in charge of industrial and export agriculture, and a ministry in charge of family farming and rural development
Impacts	Great diversity of socio-economic situations,	High level of infrastructure High farm	Quality of life (health, education, services) and	Targeting policies based on informed knowledge of rurality	Rural exodus and aging of the population	Poverty reduction and institutional recognition of

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	Europe	USA	Australia	China	Japan	Brazil
	between innovative places and declining rural Diversification of economic activities and declining weight of agriculture Reduced environmental impact farming	productivity, which leads to an increase in the volumes of cultivated plots, as well as a decrease in the agricultural population	income deficit in rural areas Aging of the rural population High urban sprawl Large size of farms	is still lacking This to a large extent has been responsible for the fragmented rural development		family farming Policies that benefit local owners and elites more Efforts to limit deforestation
Integration of public intervention for rural areas in regional development strategies, (including rural-urban relations)	Smart specialization strategy and smart villages Reinforcement of the coherence of programs and financial mechanisms between CAP second pillar and regional policy	Rural policy is sporadic, uncoordinated, and rarely linked to local needs	Liberal agricultural policies, based on the idea that agriculture (and agri-food) is a sector like the others	Rural-urban divide through the household registration (<i>hukou</i> system)	Rural areas marked by the proximity of the city, the mix of land occupations, and significant periurbanization processes	Marked dissociation between urban south and north and Nordeste, more rural and agricultural APL: Inter-municipal territorial projects with an integrating vocation, articulating-rural city
Management of different forms of public action (involving	Coexistence of intervention mechanisms for rural areas at	Strong complexity of local arrangements: Myriad of rural development agencies	Institutional mechanism more centralized than in the USA, leads to a	Limitation of access to agricultural land for members of rural communities	Centralized country marked by a strong and renewed	Progressive structuring of participative and

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	Europe	USA	Australia	China	Japan	Brazil
various stakeholders at subregional level	different scales: EU, states, regions, inter-municipal Participatory mechanisms and innovation networks of stakeholders	at the state, regional, or local community level, but most of their action is through the Departments of Agriculture or Economic Development	primacy of agricultural policies Measures to deregulate and reduce direct aids in the milk, wheat, or wool sectors	Fight against the appearance of landless peasants and the impoverishment of the peasant class	interventionism Turned above all towards technological dimensions and urban growth	territorial systems from the 1990s
Tools	CAP pillar dedicated to rural development LEADER program Agri-environmental measures and zoning Support for the competitiveness of farms Support for diversification of rural activities	Measures in favor of farming development Promotion of liberalization for US exports of agricultural goods Land conservation and management measures Water management Funds for the development of local communities	Deregulation and decrease of direct aids Direct payments, taxes and implementation of employment and programs for space equity Payments for environmental services, grants and subsidies for the maintain of biodiversity and the sustainability of forestry activities	Financial aid policy for the modernization of agriculture (inputs, mechanization, seeds) and the improvement of the quality of life of rural inhabitants Infrastructure financing Reduction of rural taxes in the internal market	Land reform based on a small-holder structure (rice production) and organized around rural communities Direct support for agricultural prices, with trade barriers in favor of products such as rice or pork Laws for the revitalization of the rural and against the decline of the populations	Mechanisms to combat poverty and deforestation Land reform From 1996, National Family Farming Support Program (PRONAF) 2002: Creation of the National Council for Sustainable Rural Development (CNDRS) territorial governance tools: Codeter (2003), "Territories of Citizenship" (2008)

see their profile disqualified for the benefit of metropolises when it comes to prioritizing technological innovation and productivity.

This is probably a major reason why, nowadays, few rural development policies are correctly able to reflect the major challenges facing these territories and to position themselves as spaces for innovation and resource development. At the same time, these policies are rarely capable to define theoretical approaches and peculiar tools at a level likely to compensate for the limitations of development models based on agglomeration principles and to cope with the negative effects of the contemporary huge urbanization processes. Finally, the funds devoted to the emergence of alternative and sustainable rural models seem insufficient for objectives and slogans to materialize in the rural territories, especially when it comes to the struggle against climate change, the attractiveness of rural areas, or the eradication of poverty. Several innovation and regional development policies recently implemented in different places like Europe try to better take into account the territorial diversity of regions and territories and to adopt a place-based approach. But their impacts are very different according to the profile of the territories considered, and the risk that the gap between the most dynamic territories and those that do not count is still widening (Torre et al. 2020).

Recent work by the OECD points out that a new paradigm of rural development (Rural 3.0) is emerging (OECD 2018), advocating a people-centered approach. It outlines its contours around six main principles: (i) the need to consider economic, social, and environmental issues as a whole; (ii) the recognition of the diversity of rural areas and their specific challenges and opportunities; (iii) the need to prepare rural territories for the ongoing digital revolution; (iv) the need to increase productivity and creating value for economic activities; (v) the support for demographic adjustments (aging) and the high quality of public services; (vi) and the support for the transition to a climate neutral economy.

It is clear that there exists a convergence between the experts around these key points and this new conception of rural policies. And that they essentially correspond to the guiding principles of the policies that are emerging in many countries. The challenges now are about the means to be allocated to the public intervention and to the incentives and regulatory mechanisms able to introduce the necessary breaks in relation to the trend evolution. And finally yet importantly, it has to remain clear that these principles could lead to successful result and outcomes only if the local populations and stakeholder will be mobilized to translate them into innovative solutions adapted to local issues.

6 Cross-References

- ▶ [Endogenous Growth Theory and Regional Extensions](#)
- ▶ [Place-Based Policy: Principles and Developing Country Applications](#)
- ▶ [Regional Growth and Convergence Empirics](#)
- ▶ [Special Economic Zones and the Political Economy of Place-Based Policies](#)

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