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THE IMPACT OF A COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY ON THE FRENCH RURAL TERRITORIES AND THE STAKEHOLDERS

Anthony Tchékémian

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THE IMPACT OF A COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY ON THE FRENCH RURAL TERRITORIES AND THE STAKEHOLDERS

The main purpose of this research is to understand how the European subsidies of the Common Agricultural Policy have an impact over both farmers and the territories they live in. Our study reveals that the French program of rural development tends to enhance the territorial projects. Farmers who really depend on the subsidies from the CAP adopt various strategies and attitudes in order to keep their activities and income. Farmers have mainly a short term view on the prosperity of their farm. They hardly plan their future ahead and their working habits. Farmers are encouraged by the program to develop new multi-use related activities and to focus on the landscaping of the french rural territories. The zoning of the program helps understand territories differently by putting forward a new reference system. Besides, the program is aimed at making the cohabitation easier between urban and rural territories and thereby leading the stakeholders towards a better comprehension of the overall needs and requirements of the society.

A research study on 6 representative rural and agricultural territories in France

Research issues

What are the different aspects of the CAP and how is this policy implemented on the territories?

How do the stakeholders use for their own purpose the CAP subsidies?

What is the impact on the stakeholders and on both the rural and agricultural territories?

Which policy is the CAP opting for the french rural territories?

Methodology

Research areas studied:

- a study on the effects of the rural development program when launched
- a gathering of « counties »

Data used for the 6 rural territories:

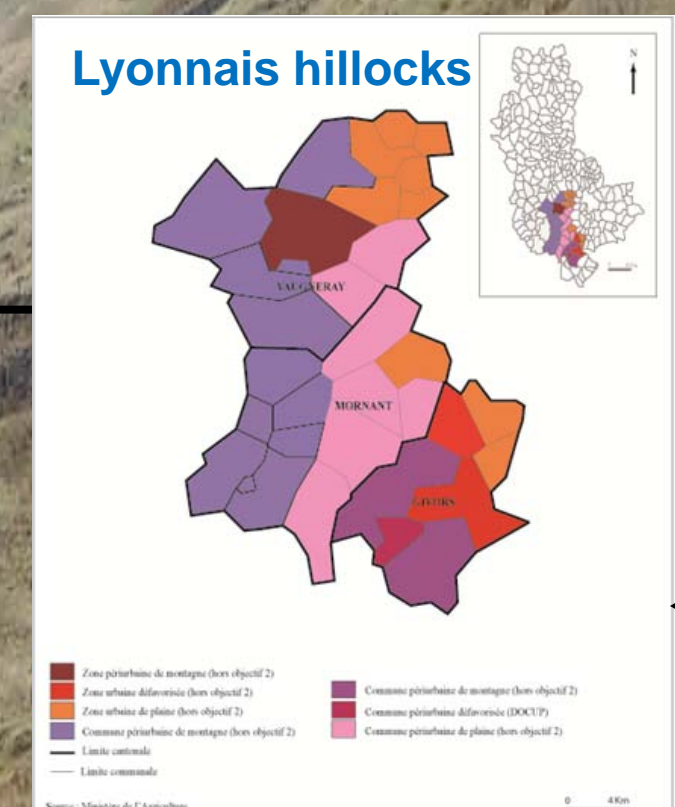
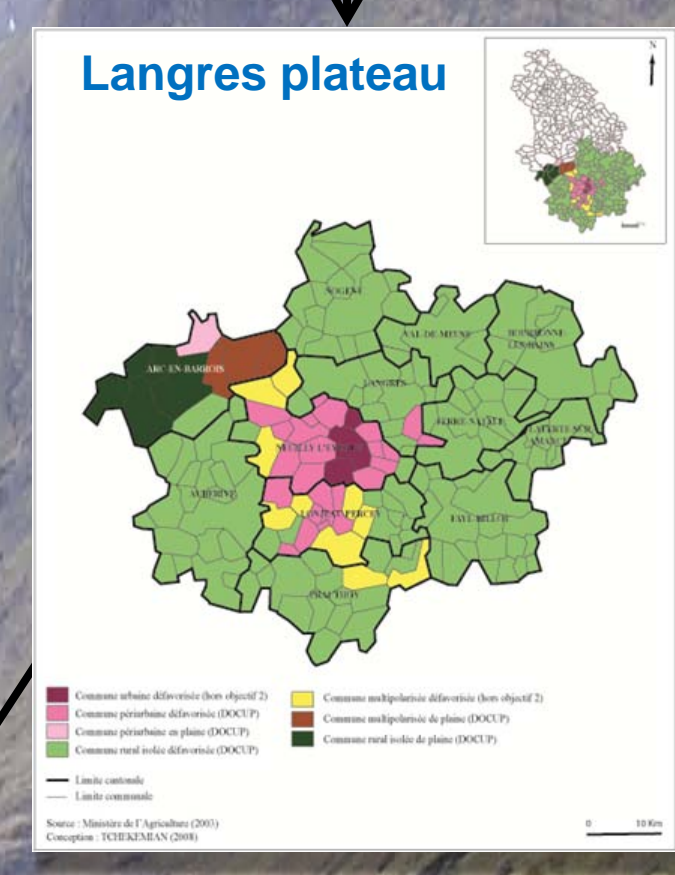
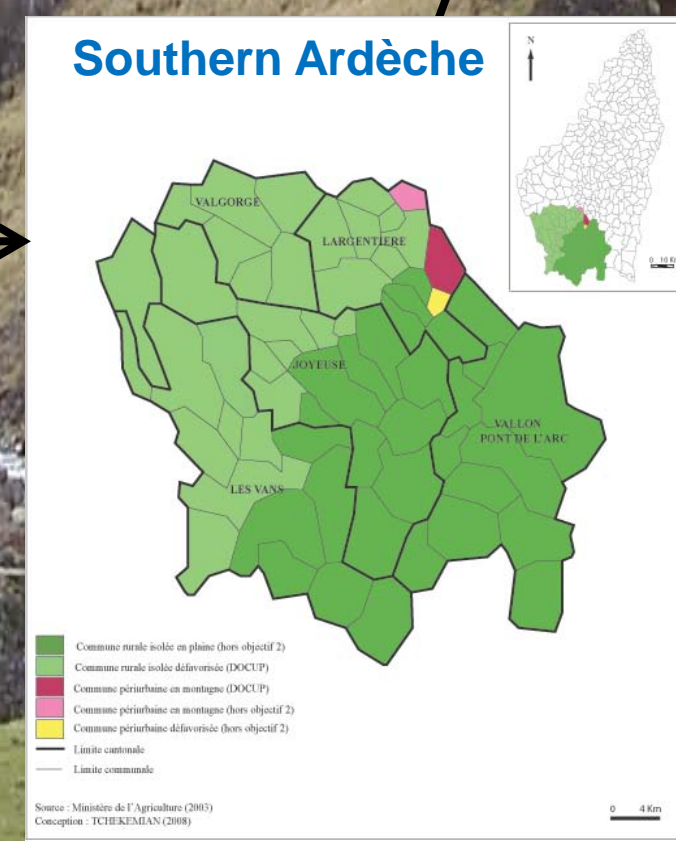
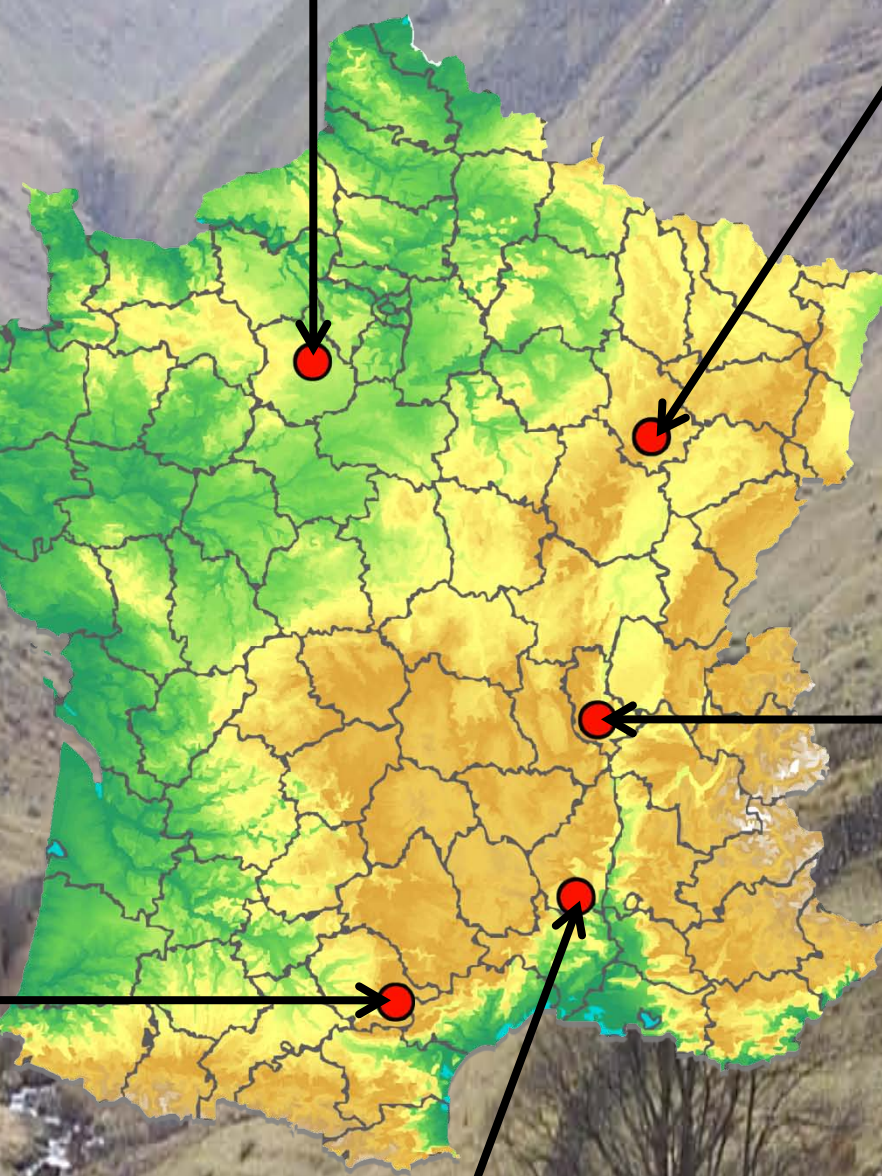
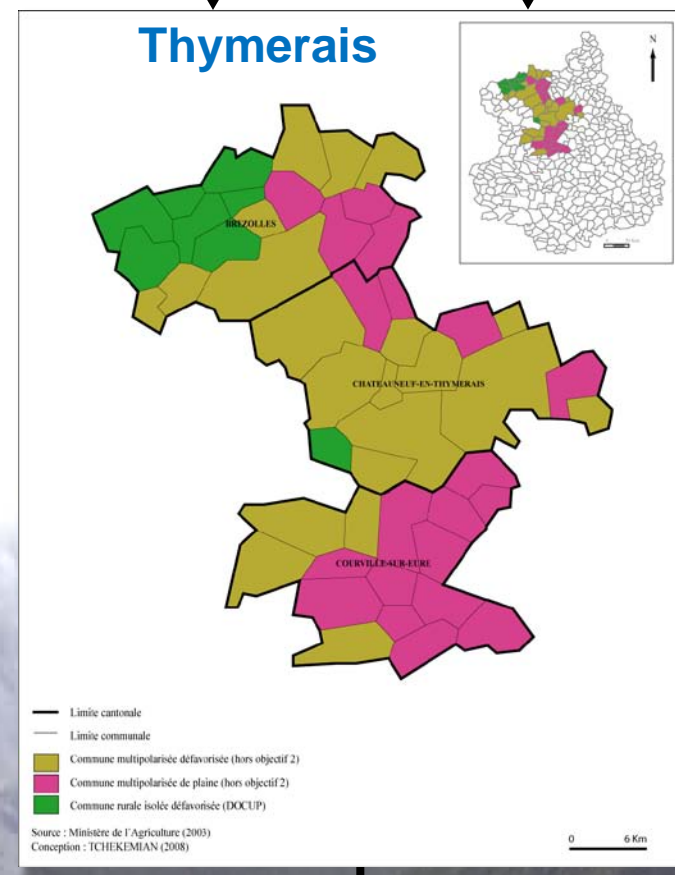
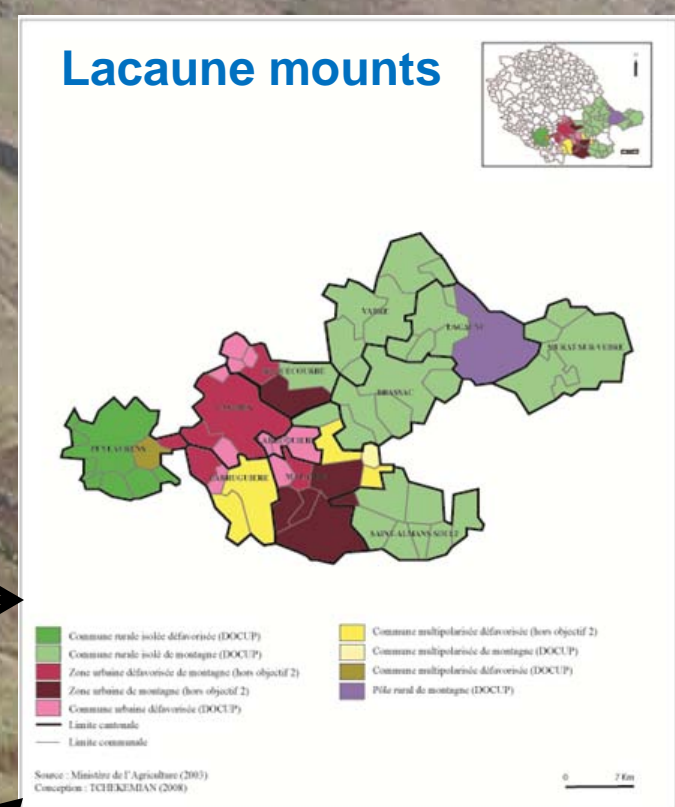
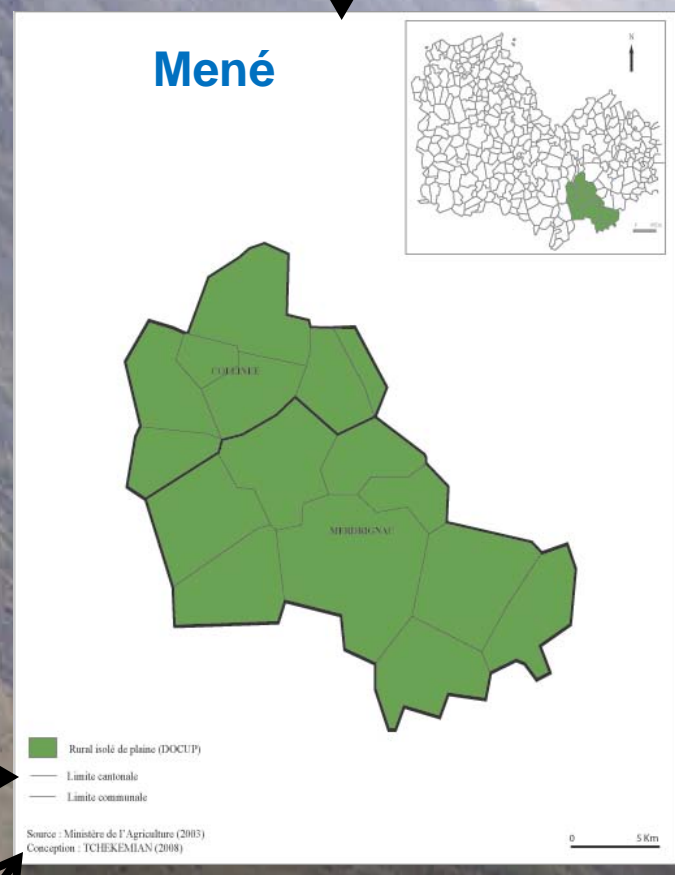
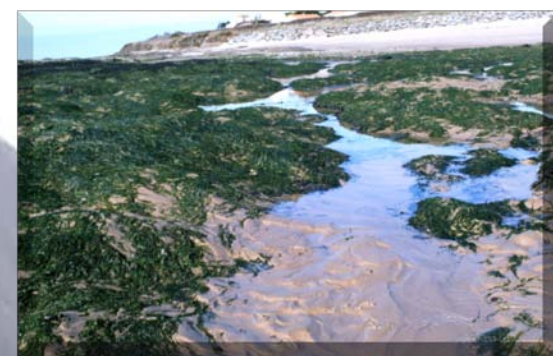
- a quantitative study of the rural development program
- interconnection with other programs (european, national, regional)

Interview guidelines according to the stakeholders interviewed:

- the rural and agricultural administration officials and professionals
- 234 semi direct interviews : 37 per research area

Qualitative data analysis:

- theme analysis
- text analysis with the software program (Sphinx Plus²)



Main achievements

The CAP impact on the stakeholders:

- the farmers behave differently according to the subsidies they get
- the stakeholders adopt various strategies
- the farmers patterns change accordingly
- it raises a selection in the projects and among the subsidized ones
- the CAP is used differently according to the stakeholders.

The CAP impact on the territories:

- the urban expectations are met through:
 - diversification (in-farm sales, rural tourism)
 - amenities (landscape, environment)
- different aspects in agriculture:
 - "agri-resource": maintenance, development of economic activities
 - "agri-heritage": maintenance of the existing landscapes and their appealing touristic aeres
 - "agri-nature": a respect for environment
- the CAP emphasizes on territories rather than on branches
 - tools: CTE / CAD, MAE.

The CAP at stake today

The farmers' anxiety facing the future of the CAP

Main issues for the agricultural professionnals: being competitive on the market

Challenges met by the the agricultural policy: to decrease the farmers financial dependance

- to work out new projects with other rural stakeholders
- to develop more interaction between farmers and the civil society
- to alleviate procedures, reduce the load of the administration papers
- to develop the technical supports, assistance, networking, marketing
- to provide the necessary tools to face competition (a project management, a long term business spirit).