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Territorialisation: Rebirth or Death of Agriculture in Rural Policies?

Aurélien ESPOSITO-FAVA

PhD Student

UMR PACTE-Territoires (CNRS 5194),

Institut de Géographie Alpine, Université Joseph Fourier
14 bis avenue Marie Reynoard – 38100 GRENOBLE - FRANCE
Aurelien.Esposito-Fava@bvra.ujf-grenoble.fr

Romain LAJARGE

Senior Lecturer/Assistant professor

UMR PACTE- Territoires (CNRS 5194)

Institut de Géographie Alpine, Université Joseph Fourier
14 bis avenue Marie Reynoard – 38100 GRENOBLE - FRANCE
Romain.Lajarge@ujf-grenoble.fr

In France, as elsewhere in Europe, sub-regional territories have gradually become the focal unit of public policy, especially in rural areas (Buller H., 2000). This growing importance is reflected in the multiplication of support mechanisms for territories. In particular, the generalisation of the LEADER programme and its later integration into the European Agricultural Fund for Regional Development (EAFRD) calls into question traditional European rural development policies. Viewed in the light of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, the LEADER programme appears to be increasingly characteristic of the changes that are taking place in the governance of rural areas. The top-down policies introduced by Europe and individual states, often based on zoning systems (subject to advantageous taxation regimes) or subsidy systems (allowing direct injections of public finance), have been widely criticised. As a result they have gradually been replaced by policies that advocate a bottom-up approach, thereby encouraging initiatives that are conceived and driven locally (Houée P., 1996). These changes have paralleled the reshaping of the “traditional” face of rural areas, which has been brought about by a number of major spatial, social and economic transformations, such as renewed growth in the rural population after several decades of decline (Kayser, 1993) the Europe-wide phenomenon of peri-urbanisation (Roux, Vanier, 2008) and a redefinition of the place of agriculture due to the valorisation of non-productive uses of renewable rural resources (Perrier-Cornet P. (ed.), 2002).

Nevertheless, the situation is quite paradoxical. Since the advent of the “environmental crisis”, a number of scientists and politicians have proclaimed the rebirth of an agriculture that focuses on production, both to feed the population of Europe (Griffon M., 2005; Parmentier B., 2006) and to provide “green” fuels to offset the world energy crisis. In contrast, since the beginning of the 1990s, other scientists and politicians have highlighted the decline of productive agriculture in rural areas (Hervieu B., Viard J., 2001) and shown that agriculture has been subject to multifunctional and post-productive changes (Ilbery B., Bowler I., 1998). This paradoxical situation has had a direct effect on rural areas (Murdoch J., Pratt A.C., 1993) and led to the emergence of the “Rural Bites Back” hypothesis. However, rejuvenation projects for rural areas often give short shrift to agriculture, preferring to base development on leisure, heritage or environmental activities. Although agriculture remains a fundamental element in the structure of rural areas, in their landscapes and heritage, in land use and infrastructure, it is no longer a determining factor in their development, their quality of life or the construction of collective identities, as was the case in previous centuries. Increasingly, the agriculture question appears to be changing.

The present article addresses a number of questions raised by the above observations. How is the process of territorialisation contributing to changes in rural policies? Is it possible to talk about a “post-agricultural” era, similar to the post-industrial era that affected most of Europe? How do territories govern rural areas? Does territorialisation signal the death or the rebirth of agriculture in rural policies? And what death or what rebirth?

In order to demonstrate the changes in rural areas that are occurring today, we will describe the shift from the agricultural management of the rural to the territorial management of rural areas. This section also presents our definition of the rural. Secondly, we describe our approach, which is based on project territories and a study of the LEADER programme, a totemic example of the territorialisation process. Finally, we show that the process of territorialisation is being accompanied by another important change in the way agricultural/rural policies are devised. Recent policies have included actions to support agriculture within projects whose primary aim is rural development, rather than including actions to assist rural areas in agricultural development projects, which has been the approach since the CAP was first introduced. This process, which has been made possible by the introduction of a new type of local governance, remains fragile. The success of this process hangs on the ability of agricultural and rural actions to combine to provide a new vision of the future for rural areas. It requires the emergence of new actors who will champion new vocations for rural areas other than feeding the population.

1) From the agricultural management of the rural to the territorial management of rural areas

a) Rural areas and rural management: a geographical point of view

In geography, rural is used to describe spaces rather than a specific type of socialisation. Such areas are usually defined according to objective criteria, such as population density, density of construction (both of which must be low), the uses made of the space (preponderance of agricultural or “natural” uses), the distance from an urban centre and poor access to urban facilities. Broadly speaking, these are the opposites of the criteria used to define urban areas. Without entering the debate on the exact definition of the rural/urban “divide”, which is still frequently seen as structural, it should be noted that there are many different types of rural area. This variety is highlighted by the following map, which distinguishes between rural areas on the basis of their main socio-economic activities. A corollary of this variety is the need for scientists and politicians to modulate their approaches to suit the different types of rural area. The differences between rural areas also lead to a multiplication of the public policies targeting these areas (Schmied D., 2005), particularly in the case of development policies. These policies are designed to: “improve accessibility, living conditions and the environment, preserve cultural landscapes and cultural and natural heritage, promote eco-tourism, incite small and medium-sized towns and large villages to play the role of service provider for the surrounding countryside and promote high quality regional craft, forestry and agricultural products while adopting environmentally friendly production methods” (CEMAT, 2007)

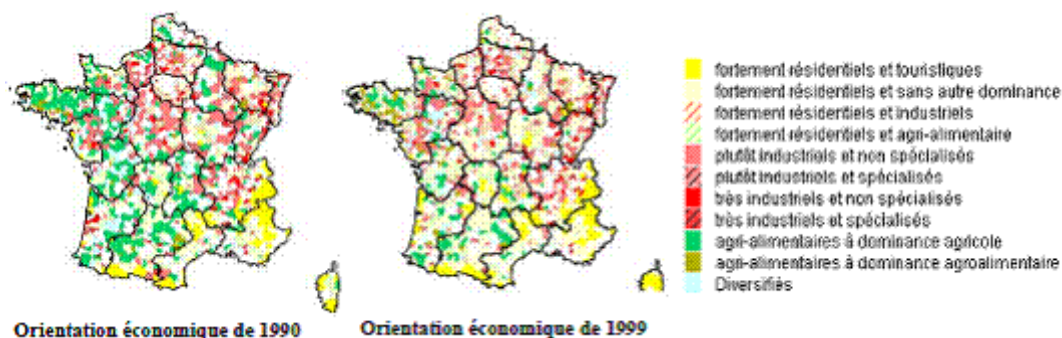


Fig. 1: Distribution of population centres according to their socio-economic orientation
(Source: Blanc M, Schmidt E., 2007)

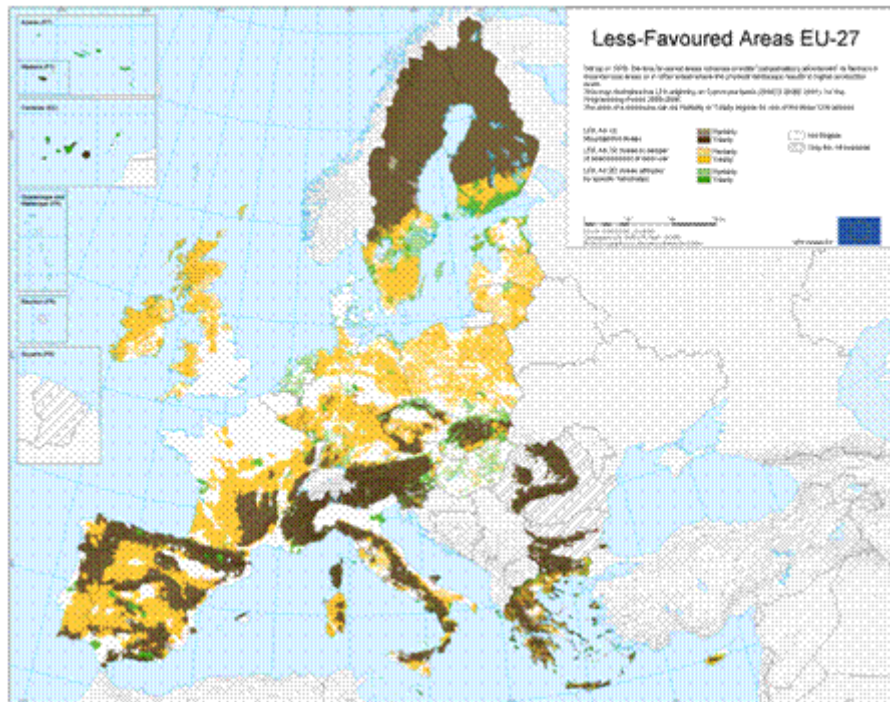


Fig 2: Map of less-favoured areas in Europe in 2008
(source: European Union)

Categorising the different types of rural area enables public intervention to be precisely targeted and allows the creation of rural public action programmes on a variety of scales, from pan-European to local-authority. For example, European Union regulation 1257/1999 distinguishes between three types of less-favoured area: mountain areas, other less-favoured areas, and areas affected by specific handicaps. When this classification is examined more closely, it becomes apparent that the three categories are based on agricultural characteristics. As well as being used to differentiate between these three categories, agricultural characteristics, primarily because they are statistically very well documented, are also used to define action priorities and, therefore, budgets for the rural.

However, the present article is more interested in the characteristics used by scientists, experts and politicians, etc to identify rural areas, than it is in the idea of “rurality”. Adopting a pragmatic stance in which the categories are first and foremost causes for action (Thévenot L., 2006), it can be stated that rural areas exist from the moment there are rural policies that identify and characterise these areas.

If a geography of European rural areas exists, it is primarily because there is a European rural policy based on spatial differentiation, which is itself based on detailed agricultural statistics. Geographers can congratulate themselves for this, but that is not enough to show the advent of new forms of rural governance.

b) The legacy of rural management by agriculture and recent developments.

In France, the characterisation of the rural via the precise identification of agricultural issues can be traced back to the creation, in 1881, of a Ministry of Agriculture with responsibility for managing rural populations, products and areas (Hervieu B., Viard J., 2001). The idea of placing agriculture and farmers at the heart of country life is firmly anchored in minds and policies, leading to the common conception that what is good for agriculture is good for rural areas and vice versa. Many types of rural sociability are based around agriculture, including agricultural shows and seasonal

work, which punctuate village life, cultural activities run by agricultural colleges, and local farmers running various local associations. Until recently, French political life was characterised by the high proportion of mayors (still 1/3 in 1989) who were farmers or from farming families. Hence, for many decades, agriculture exerted a firm grip on the management of rural life (Hervieu B. (ed.) 1992).

However, the Modernisation of Agriculture, begun after the Second World War, has resulted in a change in perspective. Over a period of 40 years, as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy, agriculture lost its central status in rural areas. This was not just because of the rapid fall in the number of farmers (almost 22 million fewer in continental Europe since 1950) and farms; it was mostly due to the industrialisation of the profession, which turned farmers into simple intermediaries between the planners-advisors upstream and the processors-distributors downstream. Agricultural land gradually lost some of its local functions and land use became more flexible, changing in response to technical advances, political directions and price supports. The introduction of numerous policies promoting “multi-functionality” and “diversification” has been unable to reverse the progressive dissociation of agricultural and rural functions. Rural development policies have sometimes been merely agricultural policies under a different name (Coulomb P., 1999).

Nevertheless, signs of change are beginning to appear. In France, the decentralised services of the Ministry of Agriculture have merged with the “services de l'équipement” in a “direction des territoires”. Farming organisations have had to reorganise as they abandon or are forced to relinquish some of their prerogatives in the rural development field. The ADASEAs, which managed agro-environmental policies (Article 19, OLAE, CTE, CAD) until 2007, are disappearing. Until 2007, agro-environmental measures were co-managed by the State and the farming profession. Since 2008, the Ministry of Agriculture has developed “Territorialised Agro-Environmental Measures” (Mainland France Rural Development Plan, measure 214, “Territorialised Agro-Environmental Measures”), which have been entrusted to project territories, most notably to the Regional Parks.

Agriculture undoubtedly remains a significant facet of rural areas but it is no longer predominant. Following several decades in which it was a major influence on the way rural areas were managed, the agricultural sector is being forced to profoundly reorganise. The profession must now choose between two possible directions: it can either remain a technical profession with a reduced number of very specialised members, or it can merge with other rural development actors by leaving the sphere of large-scale agricultural and joining the territorial sphere.

c) Towards another form of territorial governance for rural areas?

The governance of rural areas has long involved a combination of macro and micro processes. On a macro scale, rural areas are the result of major geopolitical and professional choices. These choices have led to the definition of the actions undertaken by States and to macro-regional economic strategies that have led to concentration and specialisation. This is shown by the huge decline in Europe over the last 50 years of the family-farm model of agriculture, which revolved around small numbers of livestock and mixed farming, and the support given to large, regionally specialised farms. What would the cereal producing regions of the greater Paris Basin, the Beauce and the Brie be like today without the CAP? On a micro scale, it was the village model that prevailed, with rural societies organised around municipalities or communities – small structures in well-defined “small” rural regions. This model was gradually rendered obsolete by two well-known phenomena: rural exodus followed by peri-urbanisation, which has led to a partial repopulation of certain rural areas.

These areas may not be the same as those that were depopulated, and the populations involved may not be the same, but peri-urbanisation has allowed the “country life” model to live and breathe. For an equally long time, the defining characteristic of this macro-micro process of governance was the power of the elite, who fulfilled two types of political function (Grémion, 1976). The elite were the only members of rural communities who could become members of parliament and thus have access to the centralised mechanisms of power. This allowed them to fulfil a second political function, that of negotiating benefits, subsidies, dispensations and tax advantages. Thus, the management of rural affairs was subject to a stable compromise, in which any change was tightly controlled. Without this combination of macro and micro processes, the modernisation of agriculture and rural renewal probably would not have occurred.

However, the 1980s and 1990s saw an intense shake up of this system. The progressive weakening of the central authorities’ influence over rural questions led to a reorganisation of mechanisms of government. When it began promoting the decentralisation of centralised countries, Europe entered a new cycle that allowed local communities to become more autonomous and take on more responsibilities. National governments withdrew from issues that were better dealt with on a local level, in order to concentrate on global and more structural policies (such as national and regional development) and on social policies (welfare and the equitable distribution of resources). The results have been seen more clearly in the current decade. Rural actors are focusing on new needs, which are not those of agriculture. They are orchestrating a rural renaissance (Kayser B., 1993). They are producing the conditions needed for the creation of “countries” that have to organise themselves without strong support from agriculture. There is now implicit competition between rural areas, based on their ability to offer a lifestyle that meets the new aspirations of incomers from towns and cities, who are looking for an alternative, better and more sustainable way of life that is less subject to fluctuations in the world economy. Territorial re-composition is underway.

In short, thanks to the desire for a detached house with a garden, rural areas are turning into “available territories” that can be bought lot by lot. However, the combination of macro and micro processes by which rural areas were managed is becoming partially obsolete. The underlying and quite stable model of vertical rural governance is increasingly being complemented by another, more horizontal model. This horizontal model, which we have labelled the “territorialisation model”, is more flexible and more negotiated; however, it is less stable because it is directly linked to actions (Lajarge R., 2009). This model provides a better understanding of this new process, which is playing a major role in the recomposition of rural areas by considering that “in an action-oriented social geography, as in any other action-oriented social-science, it is not ‘space’ which is the central unit of analysis, it is the ‘action’ and the ‘act’” (Werlen B., 1993, p139)

Territorialisation is simultaneously a bottom-up and a top-down process. It is a bottom-up process because it is based on the principle of participation. It gives territories autonomy, allowing them to organise themselves, define their own needs, and compete to obtain subsidies. This autonomy is first financial, thanks to the provision of public funds and to investment by private operators. But, the territories are also supported by specialists within a territorially-based public service. In addition, organised territories benefit from a type of economic organisation that allows new resources to emerge. The most important element of this bottom-up dimension is the “territory project”. However, territorialisation is also a top-down process, as States now advocate the principle that the vocations of rural areas should not be determined, a-priori, on the basis of their intrinsic characteristics. Thus, States subscribe to the creation of support mechanisms for territory projects, undertake to stimulate, contractualise and co-finance them, but also agree to limit their scope and control them.

We are seeing the emergence of another form of governance for rural areas that is based on territories and that avoids the vertical links that have connected local village societies and

national governments for decades. New actors are developing more horizontal governance and more projects for rural areas. Who are these new actors? Given its intimate association with the old model, what is the place and role of the agricultural sector in this process?

2) A project-territories approach to the process of territorialisation

a). Analysis method: the sociology of actor-networks and territorialisation

Actor-network theory maintains that actions should be analysed in terms of the creation or destruction of associations between different objects or different actors (Latour B., 2006). Each object and each actor has relations with a multitude of other objects and actors. Hence, it is necessary to untangle the relations between the objects that are promoted by the actors, either concretely or verbally. Actions only take into account the relations between certain associated objects. Each territory is characterised by a project and chooses a main vocation. This vocation may be linked to a long-standing characteristic of the “terroir” (e.g., the flavour and savoir-faire associated with a particular cheese or wine), or to an aspect of local heritage, an event or a combination of new opportunities (an influx of former town-dwellers or the arrival of an influential company, the dynamism of local cultural networks, etc). Territorialisation can be defined as “all the actions, techniques and action and information mechanisms that shape the nature or the sense of a material environment in order to turn it into a territorial project” (Debarbieux B., 2009, p. 29). The territorialisation at work in rural areas involves rural objects that are traditionally associated with the agricultural world (products, “terroirs”, production methods, cooperative forms of professional organisation, fairs, etc), as well as objects from other “worlds” (new technologies, recreation, certain landscapes, other types of architecture, etc).

In the present article, territorial projects are considered to be processes that bring together disparate objects in two ways. On the one hand, they are favoured instruments of territorialisation that allow finance to be obtained for practical actions. On the other hand, they are also mechanisms that organise the governance of rural areas. This raises the question of how these instruments and mechanisms create links between objects and actors. In particular, how do they link agriculture to the rural and through what means?

b) LEADER: an exemplary mechanism of the “territorial turning point” in the governance of Europe’s rural areas

Making the LEADER programme axis 4 of the EAFRD was a discrete sign that Europe had turned a corner in terms of rural development. First, it recognises that territories seeking to develop, wishing to obtain European funding and that meet the requirements for funding set by the Member States take priority over the statistically-based and rigid classifications that “automatically” give the right to draw on the 2nd pillar of the CAP. However, the most important aspect of the EAFRD is that it recognises the need to use funds originally intended for agricultural policy to finance non-agricultural operations and programmes. After LEADER 1, LEADER 2 and LEADER+, this fourth generation heralds a new era in which funds will gradually be transferred from the 1st pillar of the CAP to its 2nd pillar.

The LEADER+ map of Europe shows the rural areas that have been put forward by local actors and identified and characterised by the State. Hence, this map is a snapshot of rural action areas looking to further their development and thus, to a certain extent, a picture of the rural question.

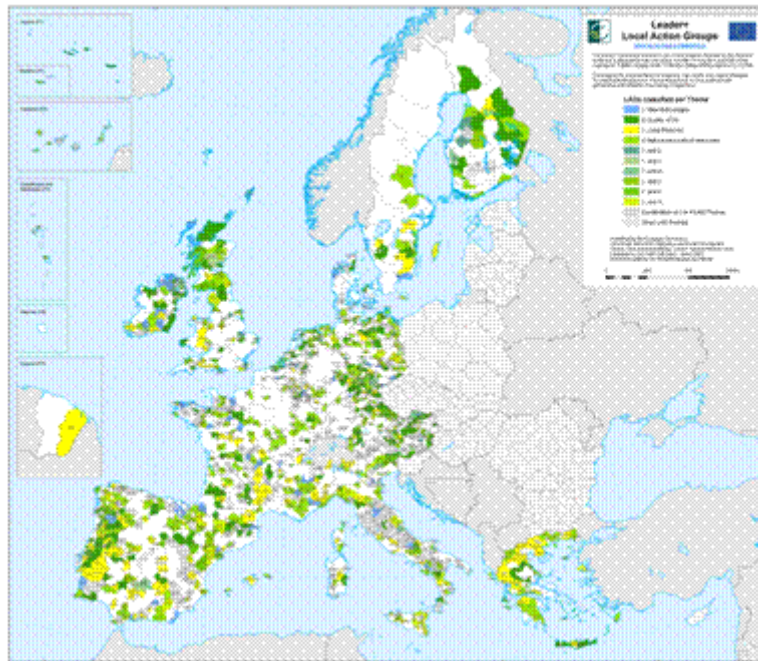


Fig. 3: LEADER+ Local Action Groups (2000-2006) in the European Union (source: European Union)

In France, only “organised territories” with the status of Local Action Groups (LAG) could apply for LEADER funding. At the top of this list are the “pays” (countries), which are cooperative structures involving neighbouring districts, and the Regional Parks (PNR). The Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Park, which was set up in 1991 in the Manche and Calvados “departments”, constitutes a project territory.

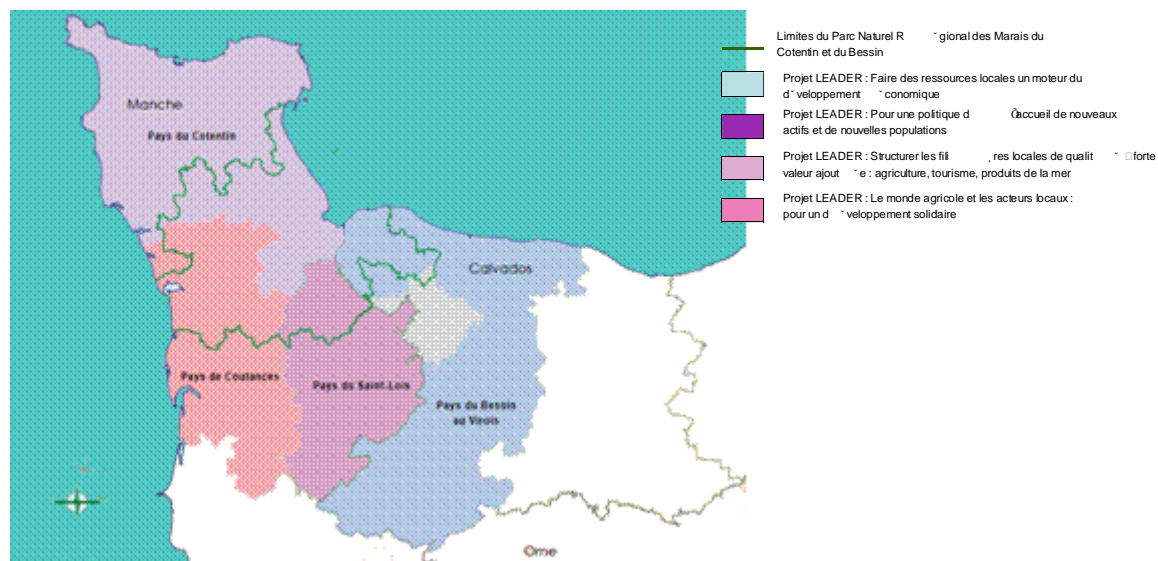


Fig. 4: Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Park and LEADER LAG (2007) (Source: PNRMCB; Aurélien Esposito-Fava, Romain Lajarge)

The park’s main aim is to preserve the area’s fragile wetland ecosystem, which is of great ecological (nesting area for rare birds), environmental (exceptional landscape), heritage (Cotentin water tower) and leisure (fishing, hunting, hiking, canoeing, etc) value. The area also has a productive and well-organised farming industry, and it is the agricultural use of these wetlands that ensures the continuity of this ecosystem. Since it was formed, the park has adapted the agro-environmental mechanisms offered by Europe and the State (article 19, OLAE, CTE, MAET, etc) to

meet its own needs. It has four LEADER projects under the 2007-2013 programme, two with overtly agricultural themes and two with more general economic themes. The agricultural themes are “to structure high-quality local sectors with high added value: agriculture, tourism, products of the sea”, for the Pays du Cotentin, and “The agricultural world and local people: developing together”, for the Pays de Coutances. The more general economic themes are “to make “local resources the driving force behind economic development in the Pays du Bessin au Virois”, for the Pays du Bessin au Virois, and “a policy of welcoming new activities and new people”, for the Pays Saint Lois. **Globally, 4th generation LEADER projects tend to focus on a more general economic approach rather than on a strictly agricultural approach.**

c) Territorialisation mechanisms and processes within LEADER 2007/2013

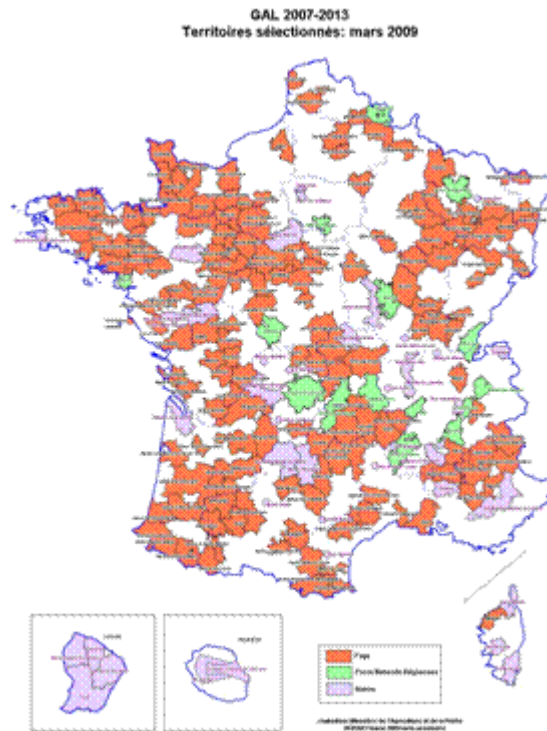
The mechanism was set by European regulation n°1698/2005 of the Council of 20th September 2005, which covers support for rural development from the EAFRD. The regulation requires each Member State to select candidates for LEADER projects. France employed a regional selection procedure, conducted in three stages. The first stage was the definition of a global framework that set the principles and objectives for rural development. During stage two, the national framework was adapted by the regions, and stage three was the selection of candidates by each region on an autonomous basis. Our observations of this procedure allowed us to analyse the territorialisation processes that LEADER has permitted, amplified or confirmed.

The global framework, known as the PDRH (Programme de Développement Rural Hexagonal – Rural Development Programme for Mainland France) allowed the regions to draw up their own development programmes (PDRR). Although the State tried to impose constraints on its regional partners, the selection of the new LAGs was primarily carried out by the regions. Steered by the regional prefect, representing the State, and by the president of the regional council, representing the elected assembly, the Selection Committee for each region chose candidates on the basis of the projects put forward by the territories and according to regional criteria. Hence, this was a true process of territorialisation, with a top-down phase (the terms for applying were sometimes very restrictive) and a bottom-up phase (local actors applied on the basis of perceived local priorities and needs).

Under Article 4 of the PDRH, which implemented the European mechanism in France, the support given to rural development was expected to achieve the following objectives: a) improve the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry through support for restructuring, development and innovation; b) improve the environment and the rural area through support for land management; c) improve the quality of life in rural areas and promote the diversification of economic activities. These three goals were complemented by a fourth goal, for which approximately 300 million euros were allocated. This fourth action was the LEADER programme, which finances rural development actions by mobilising the first three actions in a transversal way. The final constraint was that all these actions had to fall within the precise budget categories of the Rural Development Regulations (RDR), which still focus mostly on support for farming and forestry.

Examination of France’s LEADER LAG selection process shows that the measures taken by the territories did not fall within these constraints.

The LAG application process particularly targeted three types of rural area: peri-urban rural areas around large towns cities (*les campagnes des villes* or *secondes couronnes*), more fragile, more isolated country areas affected by economic and demographic decline, and the “new countryside” with more varied productive functions that are attractive to tourists or entrepreneurs or that are “in transition”. The PDRH obliged applicants to be “organised territories”. A majority of the successful applicants were “project territories”, and most had already been classified as LAGs in the previous generation of LEADER.



*Fig. 5: LEADER+ Local Action Groups (2007-2013) in France (provisional map)
(source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries)*

Most of these projects fall within axis 3, as only 12% of the funding allocated by the regions was to support farming or forestry, or to finance environmental actions (axes 1 and 2)

Does this mean that territorialisation is a process that manages to circumvent the constraints imposed, whether they are too normative and top-down or too specific and bottom-up?

3) Territorialisation: generator of new actors allowing more hybridisation in rural areas

a) Territorialisation and the renewed presence of agricultural actions?

Europe has long been aware of the need to ensure that rural development projects and action programmes properly take into account the question of agriculture. For example, in the 2000-2006 programme, the LEADER+ LAGs in the Rhône-Alpes Region spent an average of 7.1% of their subsidies on agriculture. This proportion has tended to increase in the financial models of the new LAGs, due to the constraints imposed by the RDR and the admissibility criteria for projects. However, in most regional calls for projects (as in the Basse-Normandie and Rhône-Alpes Regions), agriculture is mostly used to define a single development priority, that of “fragile areas whose economy is based on an agricultural mono-activity”¹. When development objectives concern a “rural” territory combined with other “rural”, peri-urban or even urban territories, the priority given to agriculture decreases. It seems that the agricultural economy, when it is not linked to other

¹ Rhône-Alpes’ call for LEADER projects can be consulted at http://feader.rhone-alpes.agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/Appel_a_projets_LEADER_2007-2013_Rhone-Alpes_cle8d1477-1.pdf (last visit 11th June 2009)

activities, is a handicap for rural areas. This indicates a major change in the approach to rural development.

Analysis of the actions carried out during LEADER+, or planned under the current LEADER programme, tend to support this observation. LEADER+ contains numerous agricultural actions aimed at product quality, heritage, culture and the development of agro-tourism. Nevertheless, very little material investment has been allocated. More than half of all subsidies (51%) have been spent on organisation (creating networks of actors, provision of training or carrying out of studies), and 27% have been designated for promotional operations and the organisation of events (UNA-Leader, 2007). In Rhône-Alpes, 40% of subsidies have been assigned to product promotion, through brochures, publicity materials, events and fairs.

Agriculture provides territories with a vector of “rural identity”, either via produce or via the landscapes it creates. Numerous actions aim to increase openness towards the outside world (brochures, signposting, local brands, product quality and origin certification). Fairs provide a good illustration, as they show a desire to maintain a lively local scene and they strengthen the connection between participants, local people and visitors, etc. By concentrating on actions involving training, network formation, and even the creation of organisations to promote the area internally and externally, territories have shown that rural development is not synonymous with a local and blinkered outlook.

Territories would like to bring together agriculture with other facets of rural areas, such as tourism, the countryside, local identity and life, built heritage, culture, gastronomy or leisure activities (e.g. walking). For example, a fair based around a key product allows consumers to meet producers and thereby build new, more direct relationships, but it can also be used to present new “products”, such as the area’s built heritage, its landscape or a range of “discovery” walks. The organisation of a **local distribution circuit** also provides an occasion to show off agricultural products, an opportunity to promote the territory’s identity and a certain conception of a new local social cohesion.

Territories also use agricultural actions to resolve problems of land use, tensions between inhabitants (long-time residents/newcomers) or strategic differences with respect to the future of depressed areas. For example, the Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin Regional Park views agriculture in terms of the environment, and the agro-environmental measures it promotes are first and foremost a multi-usage land management tool. The Baronnie Provençales area has avoided the curse of continuing agricultural decline by playing the “taste of the land” card, which it has used to attract new activities. The Ardèche is using the emblematic figure of a product (chestnuts) to try and develop a link between tour operators (increasing in number) and inhabitants (generally inclined to want to preserve their living environment).

In short, agriculture has numerous virtues. By carrying collective identities, by geographically magnifying certain specificities and by playing on a local sense of belonging, “agricultural” actions fulfil a hybridisation role. The agricultural aspects of this new type of rural development action have little to do with agricultural production, the recomposition of the farming profession or farming revenues. This is demonstrated by the fact that the finance associated with these projects rarely benefits farmers.

b) Territorialisation and new agricultural actors

The progressive dissociation between rural development actions and actions aimed at the agricultural sector is nothing new to the farming profession. The sector has a double system of governance, and has a long history of acting locally while constructing more global strategies. Members of the industry are used to working cooperatively, to juggling the technical and political sides of their work and to dealing with the bureaucratic side of obtaining European support. They

know that price support schemes and farm subsidies do not come from the same budgets as rural development. Because obtaining LEADER funding does not affect eligibility for other subsidies, agricultural interests would be expected to want to establish themselves as prime elements in LEADER initiatives. However, this is not happening, as actors from the spheres of traditional agricultural and the environment are poorly represented in LEADER projects. Conversely, a wide range of associations (education, culture, heritage, local development), development organisations (Chambers of commerce, tourist offices) and territorial bodies ("Pays", Water boards, inter-district assemblies and various groups of local politicians) are increasingly establishing themselves as distinct actors of rural policies that attribute budgets to agriculture. These actors account for 65% of project leaders for farming actions (UNA-Leader, 2007) in France's LEADER+ projects. In Rhône-Alpes, local authorities and groups of local authorities represent 33% of the beneficiaries of LEADER+ agricultural actions. Given the type of operation financed by LEADER, the lack of agricultural actors in LEADER actions prior to 2006 is likely to continue until 2013. In fact Chambers of Agriculture and agricultural leaders are poorly represented on territorial bodies, as they have continued to manage agricultural affairs through farming-specific bodies, such as the CDOA (Commission Départementale d'Orientation de l'Agriculture). In recent years, these bodies have become obsolete and are now threatened with closure. If the objective is to create a message for agriculture that will be heeded by farming's new partners (which will be less and less government ministries or Brussels), agricultural actors must turn towards the managers of territories.

It is now possible for certain agricultural policies to be integrated within territorial policies. The advisability of doing this is shown by the reorientation of European rural development policies towards a greater degree of subsidiarity and the care given to the support for Nuts 3 and 4 territorial authorities supervised by strong regions throughout Europe. We are seeing a strategic move by agricultural actors towards the territorial scene.

Conclusion

From a territorial point of view, agriculture is viewed less and less in terms of the production of raw materials; therefore, subsidies for developing agriculture are no longer aimed at increasing production. Nevertheless, agriculture continues to be a part of the rural landscape and its profile has even increased due to the current worldwide financial crisis. Of course, the need to diversify the activities of agricultural households and the development of a more sustainable agriculture could suffice to enable farming to maintain its position in rural areas. However, the revamping of rural policies in Europe and the growing territorialisation of these policies offer much greater opportunities for rural areas. By linking the question of agriculture to the questions raised by other facets of rural areas (tourism, fishing, the environment, heritage, culture, energy, health, aging, quality of life, gastronomy and biodiversity, etc), it has become obvious, even to members of the farming industry, that agriculture, and more precisely the agricultural economy, is not the keystone of rural development (Woods M., 2007). Nor is multifunctionality the answer to the development problems facing rural areas. On the other hand, if agriculture manages to insert itself in transversal issues and to form networks with other resources it may be able to find a place in the new rural environment.

Today, the role of non-agricultural actors in rural development is at least as important as the role of agricultural actors. Hence, the territorialisation of rural policies is reinventing agriculture, its place in rural areas and the role of members of the farming sector.

Obviously, the CAP continues to support the profound restructuring of farming production, in order to increase productivity and to support the well-organised and powerful interests of the agro-food industry, which has little interest in participating in territorial governance. The current global

economic situation may give the major powers a desire to control world production; however, an alternative has emerged. Either agriculture continues to be a major industrial sector in Europe, which would enable it to survive for a few more years if public subsidies remain high (to provide economic support and to offset the resulting social and environmental costs), or the time for two separate agricultural policies has come. That is to say, a policy supporting industrial agricultural production would be separated from a global rural development policy. As such, industrial agricultural production in southern and especially in eastern Europe would continue to be supported as part of European regional policy to promote the economic modernisation of these countries, which are still massively agrarian. This would run alongside a Europe-wide rural policy that would allow regions to promote the intrinsic qualities of local territories, to link these territories, to organise exchanges of value in the interterritoriality and not only in the market, to increase the interactions between agricultural and non-agricultural actors, and to share the rewards of sustainable development by increasing the access of European citizens to a renewable resource.

Viewed from this second perspective, rural questions become questions of “habitable countryside” and no longer merely an element of an intransigent CAP, which is subject to increasingly difficult negotiations. Rural policy would be affected by other issues, notably the new demands of Europe’s citizens, which were partly confirmed, at least in France, by the recent elections in June 2009: better living conditions and higher quality food for an increasingly peri-urban population. Thus, agriculture and agricultural actors appear as elements in the new territorial governance, which is more bottom-up. Agriculture is as indispensable to rural areas as the presence of postal or health services. However, in the future the actors responsible for agriculture may be very different to the traditional actors we have been familiar with for decades. Once again, rural development revolves around the central issue of “living together” and not around the more difficult question of how public actions can accompany this social change. Because new rural public services must be provided if rural areas are to meet demands for a high quality of life! Agriculture alone cannot create this new rural landscape. On the other hand, the territorialisation of the rural may allow agriculture to reinvent itself and to find its place. But, for this to occur, agriculture must stop thinking of itself purely as a food production industry. Until this hybridisation is complete, rural development policies may be better placed within a true planning and development policy for the whole of the European Union than in Europe’s agricultural policy.

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