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**Title of the PhD work: Geographical Indications and local
resources construction, Quebec, Canada.**

Research questions

Context:

In order to understand Quebec's construction of Geographical Indications and local products, one must keep in mind the common knowledge of Quebec's agri-food context. For this, Quebec and Canada's position on international markets, institutional and productive context, and finally the legislative context, which is at the root of the research questions, will be first exposed in this paper.

- Quebec and agri-food globalization:

The shift of the Canadian agriculture to a free-trade model can be explained by the drastic decrease of farming subsidies -price support and direct payment- within the last decade. In this global tendencies, Quebec shows a big difference. Unlike other provinces, supply management system has been safeguarded, although other systems have been settled to protect the producer's income : income insurance systems for instance, of which the cost has increased significantly in the last few years. A closed market applied to the supply managed products, which represents half of the province production, has therefore weakened the competitiveness of the Quebec agri-food sector. Milk, chicken and eggs, which have by far higher prices than in the US, cannot face the globalized market of North America (Debailleul, 1999).

- Institutional context:

In Canada, international trade and trade between provinces is ruled by the federal government, and each province can control its internal market by its own law. But in Quebec, the unique model consists in the important power given to producers gathered by the only and compulsory trade union recognized by provincial ministers : the *Union des Producteurs Agricoles* (UPA). This organization, consolidated by farm and market bills¹ aims to build a "balance of power" with the buyers (Morisset, 1987; Boyer, 1997).

This balance of power is made by the mandatory organization called a *plan conjoint*. We can make a difference between the *plans conjoints* which have different levels of vertical coordination. The strongest ones are mandatory selling channels and supply management. Once voted and settled up, a *plan conjoint* involves all the producers of the whole provincial territory in a given production, free-riders are illegal (Morisset, 1996).

- The four agriculture productive pillars in Quebec:

Agriculture production is oriented by 70% in intensive farming of animal husbandry, especially dairy system, which represents 40% of producers and 43% of the total production market value. Dairy and cattle breeding, pig and poultry farming are the "four pillars" of agriculture and represent over 75% of the sector's revenue. Excepted pork meat, this mass-produced goods with high costs of production cannot be exported in international market

¹ 1963's « Loi sur la mise en marché des produits agricoles » and 1972's « Loi sur les producteurs agricoles », L.R.Q.

and especially in the US. Voices raise to promote a more diversified model of development, taking into account agriculture's multifunctionality, biodiversity and specific local quality attributes (Royer, 2005).

- The new legislative context of Geographical Indications in the province:

The decision of building an alternative model to strengthen territorial development has been settled during the agriculture and rural crisis of the 1990's. A few people have played a proactive role to have the law on geographical indications and organic production² written and voted: farmers leaders and "chefs" from the very popular touristic region of Charlevoix, a well-known rural development association called *Solidarité Rurale du Québec*, and organic sector leaders are behind the bill (Chazoule, Lambert, 2004). The geographical indications part of the bill are directly inspired by the 2081/92 EU rule, and later on an experimental case for PGI label has been started with the lamb of Charlevoix. The social construction of specific local quality products in order to obtain a PDO-PGI certification puts the question of how producers, agri-food industries and sellers can join their forces in a local or regional governance to build a local productive resource and offer an original product with a geographical name on the market (Chazoule, Lambert, 2005; Chazoule, Jouve, Lambert, 2006).

- Main question:

Is there a social construction of local productive resources based on local agri-food products in Quebec? The Quebec province is now involved in international discussions on Geographical Indications with the settling of a legislation and the emerging of new geographically denominated products. The latter are space linked and tend to create or re-create more or less strong links with the geographical field (Delfosse, 1996, 1997). Therefore, the working hypothesis is that valorisation of these links by supply chains and territory protagonists depends on the social construction of specific local resources. If confirmed, this assumption can provide an alternative and a flexible model of local governance to the agri-food sector characterized by a vertical co-ordination.

² 1996's « Loi sur les Appellations Réservées », L.R.Q.

Linked questions:

- How is the shift from a conventional agriculture to a logic of local quality, taking into account the diversified food demand raising in Quebec? The context of emergence of space-denominated products, and this emergence itself, is observed with the focus on producers, agri-food industries and local sellers, which are considered as local protagonists of rural development and food diversification. The analysis of the space-denominated agri-food products will provide a general and systematic insight of the food diversification and an understanding of the shift to a local diversified production, which remain partly unknown in this field.
- How is social construction of agri-food local products linked with the construction of regional identities? Case studies have shown that the creation of local initiatives begins with the social construction of a regional identity. This construction is often linked with the use of local resources, empowering each other through a path of endogenous development (Ray, 1998). By working on case studies products, this question is highlighted.

Methods and tools

The research work itself is carried out on two different geographical scales:

- A provincial scale to build the starting point database research of GI products in Quebec. The starting point is to draw up a first inventory of space-denominated agri-food products in Quebec with a general questionnaire.
- A local scale to carry out case studies and confirm (or not) the working hypothesis. The main source of data is the field work to gather information by interviewing local protagonists of the social construction of the local productive resource.

Between the two steps, the provincial scale and the local scale, a GI typology grid is used to choose the case-studies among the starting database.

Results (existing and/or expected)

As I am in the beginning of the research and field work, the results of the first step (large scale) and second step (small scale) are still unknown. Past researches on the same themes and field have shown the whole heterogeneity of agri-food diversification movement and the way in which economic development of local products is done

(Chazoule, Jouve, Lambert, 2006; Jouve, Canty, Niogret, 2006). By now, I expect to prove the path to a new model of development with local governance in the agri-food sector in Quebec.

Discussion

The main limit of this work is represented by this unanswered question: can a European-based law and economic model of Geographical Indications adapt to North-America's specific productive context? The way in which GI are built and recognized there, probably in a very different mode, is a collateral interest of this work.

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