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La Nièvre and Les Alpes de Haute Provence : difficulties and promises of employment development in French rural areas.

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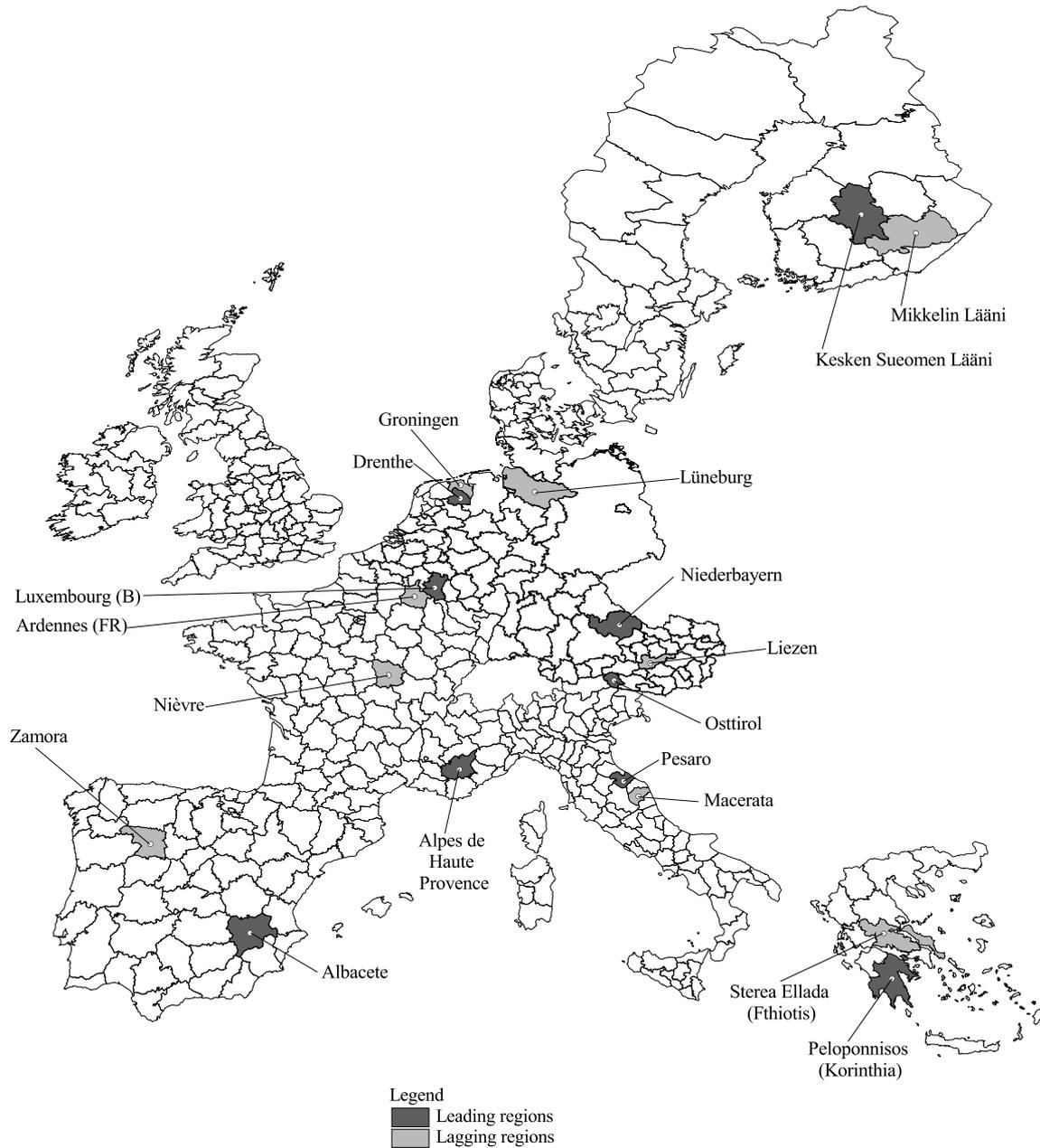
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1. Introduction

This paper presents a part of an European study conducted by the RUREMPLO team ⁽¹⁾ and discuss its main hypothesis and results, especially for the French case. The RUREMPLO project try to interpret and understand the employment dynamics in EU rural regions. It was based on 18 case studies carried out in 1997/1998 by research teams from 9 EU Member States. The regions was divided into “leading” and “lagging” rural regions, defined on the **criteria of creation of non-agricultural employment in rural areas**. If the rate of growth of non-agricultural employment in the rural area was 0,5 points above the national average, the region was considered as a leading one. With 0,25 points below, the region was a lagging one. Evidently, this criteria is not a performance's criteria, but indicates the weight of non agricultural activities in rural areas.

In each of the nine participating countries in the RUREMPLO project, we have selected a leading and a lagging region (map 1). We have chosen rural regions from which we expected that they could provide insight in the factors behind the process of employment growth or stagnation. Nevertheless, the selected regions reflect a wide range of characteristics with regard to their location, natural resources, industrial tradition and physical structure. The RUREMPLO project is based on **a systemic approach** with the assumptions of mixed exogenous and endogenous factors, which takes into account the influence of actors strategies on the employment development on a specific territory.

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Map 1 Selected case study regions in RUREMPLO
Source: LEI; RUREMPLO project.

1. General characteristics of the studied regions ⁽²⁾

Before analysing the French cases it is useful to replace it in the general European context and to compare the main economic and employment characteristics.

² This part of the paper resumes the first part of one the RUREMPLO final reports, written by Jaap Post, Ida Terluin and Asa Sjöström in « Comparative analysis of employment dynamics in leading and lagging regions of the EU, 1980-97 », The Hague, LEI-DLO.

1.1. Employment development

Among the case study regions there are both rural regions with a low and a high share of employment in agriculture. Table 1 shows that regions, with a high share of agricultural employment, like for example Korinthia (Greece) or Albacete (Spain), which have experienced a comparatively high employment growth in other economic sectors. On the other hand, there are also regions with a high share of agricultural employment that had a bad performance in non-agricultural growth. The diversity of the sectoral structures in the case study regions also indicates that there is no clear correlation between the sectoral employment structure and the growth rate of non-agricultural employment. Yet, there can be a negative relationship between the share of agriculture in rural employment and total regional employment growth, because employment in agriculture is declining.

Both in leading and lagging case study regions there was an increase in employment in the sectors of community services and of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels during the period 1980-1995, along with a decline of agricultural employment (table 2). Often the largest share of employment increase was achieved in the community sector, but there are also case study regions in which the largest share of employment growth occurred in the sectors of manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, and financial services.

Table 1. Distribution of employment over sectors and employment growth in the case study regions (%)

	Year	Agriculture	Industries	Services	Period	Regional tot. employment growth	Difference: employment growth region/country(a)
Leading regions:							
Luxembourg (B)	1994	8	20	71	'80-'92	0.9	1.0
Niederbayern (GER)	1992	10	44	46	'80-'93	0.9	1.1
Korinthia (GR)	1991	33	22	45	'81-'91	0.8	1.3
Albacete (SP)	1995	12	30	58	'80-'95	0.2	0.9
Alpes de H. Prov. (FR)	1996	6	21	73	'81-'92	0.5	0.7
Pesaro (IT)	1995	5	43	52	'82-'95	-0.5	0.5
Drenthe (NL)	1995	7	27	63	'80-'91	3.6	1.3
Osttirol (AUS)	1991	10	35	55	'81-'91	0.6	0.5
Keski Suomen L. (FIN)	1995	8	30	62	'80-'93	-1.2	0.2 b)
Lagging regions:							
Lüneburg (GER)	1990	7	32	61	'80-'90	0.2	-0.5
Fthiotis (GR)	1991	34	20	46	'81-'91	-0.6	0.1 b)
Zamora (SP)	1995	28	20	52	'80-'95	-2.2	-1.1
Ardennes (FR)	1990	8	37	55	'81-'92	-0.6	-0.7
Nièvre (FR)	1996	8	27	64	'81-'92	-0.6	-0.6
Macerata (IT)	1995	10	39	51	'82-'95	-1.5	-0.6
Groningen (NL)	1995	2	24	70	'80-'91	2.4	-0.3
Liezen (AUS)	1991	10	34	56	'81-'91	-0.4	-0.8
Mikkelin L. (FIN)	1995	16	26	58	'80-'93	-1.8	-0.2

a) Measures the difference in percent points of non-agricultural employment growth in the region and non-agricultural growth in the country; b) Due to country specific reasons, we deviated for these regions from the general selection criteria. Source: Terluin et al., 1999, p. 27, 32, 40.

1.2 Rural amenities

Almost all case study regions had some sort of valuable rural amenities: settlements with a rich history and architectural remains, cultural landscapes of outstanding scenic beauty or high nature value and protected areas like regional or national parks. Thus, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion concerning their weight in explaining differential performance in rural employment creation. The comparisons show that it is not primarily the existence of amenities that matters, but the degree to which these assets are effectively valorised in an economic process generating added value.

1.3. Location

With some exceptions, both leading and lagging case study regions are peripherally located. So leading regions show that proximity to regional or global economic centres is not a necessary condition for employment growth. Moreover, Nièvre - one of the lagging case study regions – is located near Paris. However, this proximity to a main European economic centre affects its employment in a negative way.

Table 2 Overview of the share of employment increase/decrease by branch in the total increase/decrease in leading and lagging case study regions (%)

ISIC no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Branch	Agri- cul- ture	Mi- ning	Manu- factu- ring	Electr./ gas	Con- struc- tion	Trade/ rest./ hotels	Trans- port	Finance services	Commu- nity
Leading case study regions									
Luxembourg (B) (80/82-94/95)	-34		+8		-66	+20	+9	+19	+44
Niederbayern (GER)('80-'90)	-39	-1	+37		-60	+12	+3	+28	+20
Korinthia (GR) ('81-'91)	-88	+1	-12	+1	+2	+50	+1	+10	+36
Alpes de H.Prov. (FR) ('81-'92)	-14		+1	+1	-86	+23	+3	+36	+36
Albacete (SP)('83-'93)	-93	-6	+18		+11	+20	+5	+2	+44
Pesaro (IT) ('81-'91)	-89		+29	+2	-11	+10	+6	+15	+39
Drenthe (NL) ('84-'96)	-100		+11		+12	+23	+6	+12	+35
Osttirol (AU) ('81-'91)	-73	+3	+43	-10	+18	+1	-17	+11	+25
Keski-S. Lääni (FIN) ('80-'94)	-34	+1	-31		-15	-9	-9	-2	+99
Lagging case study regions									
Lüneburg (GER) ('80-'90)	-14	-2	-13		-64	-2	-5	+54	+46
Fthiotis (GR) ('81-'91)	-82	-4	-11		-4	+25		+10	+31
Zamora (SP) ('83-'93)	-97		+6		+29	+26			+36
Ardennes (FR) ('82-'90)	-33		-59	+9	-4	+63	-4	+8	+21
Nièvre (FR) ('82-'90)	-30		-60		-9	+58	+16		+24
Macerata (I) ('81-'91)	-76		-15		-8	+21	+4	+9	+66
Groningen (NL) ('84-'95)	-65		+12	-35	+4	+12	+7	+29	+37
Liezen (AU) ('81-'91)	-40	-3	-48	-6	-3	+5	+21	+33	+41
Mikkelin L. (FIN) ('80-'94)	-40		-28		-13	-8	-9		+99

Note: For Les Ardennes and La Nièvre, branch 6 contains all market services which are not included in branch 7 and 8, Source: Terluin et al., 1999, p. 57, 59.

1.4. Capacity of actors : policymakers, entrepreneurs and labourers

In most of the leading case study regions the capacity of policy makers is rather well developed, whereas in most of the lagging case study regions the capacity of policy makers is rather weak. Positive aspects in the capacity of policy makers in leading regions are the way in which they implement policies according to the priorities and needs of the region, in which they are able to attract public funds and private investments and in which they create preconditions for firm settlement. By doing so policy makers contribute to employment creation. Weak points in the capacity of policy makers in lagging regions refer to a lack to formulate strategies, lack of political consensus, lack of good contacts with upper level authorities and lack to identify the needs and priorities of the region.

In a number of leading and lagging case study regions the capacity of entrepreneurs is well developed. This is often the result of a restructuring process in traditional industries. The new and small companies are competitive at national and international markets. However, their capacity to innovate is often limited. In other leading and lagging case study regions the capacity of entrepreneurs is weak, due to a cautious and risk averting attitude or to lack of industrial tradition. The capacity of labourers seems to be roughly the same in leading and in lagging case study regions: their attitude to work is good and they are prepared to work hard.

1.5. Internal and external networks

On the whole leading case study regions were characterised by rather strong internal networks, whereas those in the lagging case study regions were usually rather weak. The internal networks in the leading regions were for example enhanced by an active attitude of local actors, solidarity, easy communication and strong local leaders. Problems faced in the internal networks in the lagging regions are a low density of actors, little interaction among internal actors, a lack of cooperation among sectors, internal conflicts, lack of active actors, lack of capacity of local actors and lack of formal networks, which are able to guide the development process.

External networks are considered here to be the interactions of actors inside and actors outside the region. It appears that the most frequent use of external networks is to get financial support from regional/national/EU level (policy relations), to export products (market relations) and to be in contact with (multinational) firms, either due to the presence of subsidiary business in the region or to attract firms into the region (firms relations). In the leading case study regions external networks functioned better than in the lagging case study regions. Difficulties in the external networks of lagging case study regions are due to the marginal/remote position of the region within a larger administrative unit, lack of unified strategies, lack of capacities of the local actors and an inward looking attitude of the local actors.

1.6. Engine behind employment growth and strategies of actors

The engine of employment growth consists of a mix of endogenous and exogenous forces in all case study regions, except for Pesaro and Macerata. In these regions, which belong to the so-called "third Italy", industrial districts consist and endogenous forces are the engine of employment growth. It is striking that in leading regions endogenous forces tend to initiate the process of employment growth, which were subsequently enhanced by exogenous forces. In lagging regions it was often found that exogenous forces tend to initiate the process of employment growth, and that endogenous forces react on them.

In both leading and lagging regions strategies of policy makers towards maintaining or augmenting employment were directed towards the improvement of infrastructure, financial support to firms, setting up of public services, improving the education level of the labour force and supporting economic activities in thinly populated areas. A main difference in the strategies of policy makers in leading and lagging case study regions was that policy makers in leading regions were more often involved in setting up industrial sites with appropriate equipment, relatively to policy makers in lagging regions. The advantage of such industrial sites is that these can reinforce the effects from other measures. Besides, a concentration of firms may create synergy effects, since a high density of firms facilitates networking and the exchange of services and information. In some lagging regions strategies of policy makers were weak due to the failure to include these in a broader development perspective.

Although companies are a direct source of employment, usually the purpose of a firm is not to create employment but to make profits. In order to achieve this goal a firm needs labour and a location of settlement. In order to survive, firms have to be flexible and to respond to market changes. A common strategy for firms in both leading and lagging case study regions is to improve their competitiveness in the market by higher quality products, technological innovation and flexibility. Firms in leading regions produce more often market niches than firms in lagging regions. In some leading and lagging case study regions a tendency to self employment can be perceived.

All leading case study regions, except for Osttirol showed in the 1980s and early 1990s a positive immigration balance, reflecting the attractiveness of the region as a place to work and to live, both for economic active people and retirees. However, in some of these regions there is an outflow of high educated people due to a lack of high qualified jobs. On the other hand, six out of the nine lagging case study regions faced during the same period a negative immigration balance, mainly made up of an outflow of students and economic active people and a smaller inflow of retirees. The outflow of economic people reflects a pessimistic atmosphere of the economic climate and erodes the human resource base. Labour unions in both leading and lagging region usually stress the importance of training of labourers.

2. The French cases : the Alpes of Haute Provence and La Nièvre

We will try here to present the most important results of the French case study. The field work has been made in 1998, with statistical data available mostly until 1996.

2.1. Why The Alpes de Haute Provence and La Nièvre have been chosen ?

The Alpes of Haute Provence (hereafter called AHP) meets the criteria adopted by RUREMPLO for the selection of the « leading regions » : the average annual growth rate of non agricultural employment was +1,1% between 1981 and 1992 (+0.4% in France). The AHP are mainly rural : there are no large towns, and the *Préfecture*, Digne-les-Bains, is one of the smallest ones in France. Agriculture has always been the most important sector till the beginning of the 1960's and today's share of the active agricultural population in the total population is above the national average (6,3% against 3,9% in 1996). The industrial sector has always been very limited. The territory is scattered with many small towns and villages.

On the contrary, *La Nièvre* was a more industrialized French department. Since the end of the second world war until the beginning of the 70's, the decrease of active population in rural areas has been rapid and continuous This evolution occurred in the same time with the

industrial development and with the growth of the services sectors, principally the public ones (education, health and social activities). During the 80's and 90's, this movement slows down. Between 1982 and 1996, rural municipalities have lost a small amount of jobs (especially retailers and proximity services) when the industry (particularly the metallurgy) was experiencing several crisis (notably in the 1990-93 period) and has deprived a lot of jobs (may be a true de-industrialisation). Globally during the period 1981-92, the annual decrease of non agricultural employment was of -0,4% . This evolution explains why we have chosen La Nièvre as a lagging region study case.

La Nièvre has experienced a long industrial crisis, which continue to-day. This crisis bring not only closures of enterprises and dismissals, but also structural change in qualifications and gender of the active population. Both industry and agriculture are more specialized to-day and new sectors are developing, mainly the services ones.

2.2. Some historical facts

The AHP are a good example of a region which has made the transition from an economy where agriculture is the main feature to an economy where services are predominant. A distinctive economic trait which characterizes AHP lies in the nature of these services : they are not only those services which can commonly be found in developed economies (general administration, health, education, trade) - but also and above all tourist services.

The consequences of the industrial revolution in the 19th century in France had an impact on agriculture, which started to lose part of its workforce given the local demographic growth, the attractiveness of urban society and the small size of farms (especially in AHP). Rural exodus started towards the middle of the 19th Century. Later, as a result of the introduction of mechanisation, coupled with the handicap of low soil fertility and hilly conditions, the agricultural sector had to face strong competition from more favoured regions. This was indeed the case for all mountainous districts in France (and in the studied departments) and the situation worsened considerably after World War II. The region of Barcelonnette, in the highest mountainous area of AHP, is famous for being the birthplace of immigrants who made their fortune in Mexico. However, peasants from AHP have mainly emigrated to the urban areas of France. The agricultural sector is still losing farms and jobs today. The Morvan mountainous region in La Nièvre was also a region of alternate or definitive migrations towards the Parisian market of labour. We can note La Nièvre's tradition of nurses which prefigure modern institutions of Children Welfare.

The AHP and La Nièvre have both some good agricultural subregions in the Durance valley for the first and on the Nivernais plateaux and the Loire valley for the second..The industrial situation is quite different in the two case studies.

La Nièvre has a long industrial tradition. The ironworks of Guérisny and the mines of La Machine (near Decize, in the southern part of the department) are part of the history of the Nivernaise industry. That is why the metallurgy stay today the dominant sector of industry. With 15 678 jobs in 1995, the industry employs near of 25% of the active population (and 38% of the salaried employment). The Loire valley employs 29% of the workers. The strongest points of the industry are the transformation of metals and automotive equipment. Some new sectors are developing some expansion strategies : rubber and plastic, electrical and electronics equipment, paper production.

Industry in AHP has never developed significantly because of the region's isolation and relatively remote geographical location, far away from regional and, above all, national hubs of economic development. The only industries which are noteworthy were established in the Durance valley, which is the only area easily accessible from other regions. AHP have, strictly speaking, never been industrial. Since World War II, industrial employment (except the building industry) has remained fairly stable, at around 10 % of total employment (11,6% in 1996). Till the end of the 1950's, services in the AHP were still those of a less developed economy. The historical turning point in this sector occurred at the beginning of the « *trente glorieuses* » which followed World War II, when the demand for leisure activities in France grew rapidly. AHP have entered the dynamic of winter sports holidays with the establishment of several ski resorts. At a later stage, and this is still the case today, the region developed tourism through the enhancement of many natural and cultural resources.

La Nièvre has also a tertiary sector which is dominant (60% of the active population), but they are mainly of traditional and public type (trade, transport, health and education). The services towards persons and enterprises are growing as the tourist ones.

3. Local resources in AHP and La Nièvre

The majority of AHP territory is mountainous, but only a part of La Nièvre is of the same type (the Morvan). The Mediterranean climate of AHP make a big difference with the continental ones of La Nièvre. Both have a lot of rivers and lakes and have the tourism as an important activity.

3.1. The AHP : "physical resources" are mobilized for development and job creation

The AHP has a Mediterranean climate influenced by the altitude and the valleys' orientation. The summers are hot and dry and the winters mild in the lowlands and in the medium mountain. The area devoted to extensive rearing is more widespread than arable land (only 30% of the total area). The AHP are scattered by streams which would be torrential if they were not regulated by dams. The water which they carry is a reserve for irrigation, energy and drinking water supply for the PACA region. Thanks to the numerous dams which regulate rivers and enable the functioning of electrical power stations, the AHP have several stretches of water where water sports are practiced. It's quite uncommon to consider the air quality as a local resource. This is nevertheless the case in the AHP, reaching a point where air quality is an advertising argument not only aimed at tourists but at entrepreneurs as well.

Accessing the AHP and travelling within its territory has always been problematical. As a peripheral region, the AHP have not benefited from priority funds for the development of roads and railways. The road network is typical of mountainous regions : narrow and winding roads, on which it is impossible to drive fast. This is why moving around is time consuming and is one of the reasons for the concentration of economic activity in the Durance valley, open to the south towards Marseille and wide enough to let an express way go through. The railway remains a very marginal means of transport.

The urban structure of the AHP reflects the low population density and the very modest importance of industry and the functions of its towns, which are essentially commercial and administrative. This bunch of small towns which does not constitute a structured network, but a series of small micro-regional centres, serving territories of various sizes, is rather badly

connected to the main regional and national hubs of development - we have just emphasized this problem when we mentioned transport's infrastructure.

Since the 1960's, the AHP has started to seriously invest in tourism development. To this end, the infrastructure for winter sports and lodging for tourists has been built. Tourism during the summer has increased considerably. Winter sports holidays have been considered as the main axis of development for mountainous regions during the strong 30-year period of economic growth after World War II. Several ski resorts have been created in areas where everything had still to be developed, ranging from the necessary skiing equipments to hotels and other lodgings. Several natural parks (Luberon, Mercantour) can be found either partly or in their entirety in the AHP. The necessity of protecting the environment and the importance of tourism in the region's economy have reinforced the local actors' interest in nature and the historical cultural heritage.

Culture has become an integral part of the attractiveness of rural areas. In many places in France, cultural events have been created which provide a lively atmosphere for the touristic summer season, even in the remotest villages. The natural resources have provided the incentive for the AHP's transition from an economy where agriculture was the dominant feature to an economy mainly based on tourism - we shall see later that industry has always remained in a latent state of development. The space available, the mild climate, the beauty of the landscape and the proximity of urban centres on the coast explain the uninterrupted development of secondary homes, whose presence prevents the complete depopulation of certain areas.

3.2. La Nièvre : from the use of mineral resources to the promotion of agricultural and natural resources.

At first sight, la Nièvre has a favourable position : it is close to Paris, there are good railways and roads infrastructures, abundant agricultural and forestry resources and fluvial facilities. When we look at this more precisely, it seems evident that the department stay strongly enclave, notably because of the Morvan's mountain making a true obstacle, especially in winter. Consequently, most of the activity has been concentrated in the Loire valley. The isolation of the region is frequently mentioned as an important obstacle to the development of the employment in the region. It is especially true for the rural areas of the central Nivernais and the Morvan massif. On the other hand, the Loire valley and the axis Paris-Nevers are efficiently served, notably by the train. Numerous rivers cross and/or take their source in the department, without counting canals, lakes and reservoirs created for the floating of wood. It is there about one resource that La Nièvre tries to valorise, notably by the tourism.

Producing grains, livestock and wine, the department also possesses one of the biggest forest of France, notably of oaks, on more than 230 000 hectares. Finally, resources in quick waters (and drinkable ones) are abundant, coming mainly from the Morvan. The forest covers the third of the surface of the department. The forest resource is considerable, possessed partially by the State. The concentration of land is elevated and has been growing during the last years. Its explain the type of bovine production specialization.. La Nièvre is especially known for its Charolais bovines. The production is essentially meagre animals, mainly exported towards Italy.

Forestry, agriculture and the landscape resources are the chosen bases for the development of La Nièvre, with attempts of diversification, notably towards the agro-tourism. The objective is to reverse progressively the historical tendency to export natural resources under a raw shape, with a weak added value. It is indeed, very difficult to come out of the model of fire wood export towards Paris, ruined by the arrival of coal and replaced very partially by the production of Noel firs or by the selective exploitation of hardwood.

The creation of the Regional Natural Park of the Morvan in 1974, in the Morvan region with its strong cultural and social identity, was based on the idea that it was a territory and not only an employment basin. A sustainable development strategy is hired, leaning on the human resource of about 35 000 inhabitants living on 225 000 hectares (15,5 inhab/km²s) and counting on the important cities at the doors of the Park (Avallon, Corbigny, Nevers, Autun).

In the same way, the present specialisation in the production of meagre cattle is based on grazing resources of good quality and on structures of exploitation that don't quit to enlarge. Tourism on farm bounded to the local natural resource discovery (rural lodges) is a good opportunity, but often stumbles on an insufficient local product valorisation. Finally, La Nièvre, as the AHP, has also important cultural resources : religious, historical, archaeological or leisure ones which can support tourist activities.

4. Socio-economic activities and employment in AHP and La Nièvre

Most frequently, the employment in rural areas is marked historically by the weight of traditional activities, first those bounded directly to agriculture, whose decline liberates an available manpower for growing activities located in urban areas. This phenomena has existed in both studied regions, but it has been probably most precocious in La Nièvre because of the industrialization based on the metallurgy and because of the proximity of the Parisian labour market (important migrations from La Nièvre to Paris since the end of the XIXth century). The specificity of the AHP case is the direct transition from agriculture to the tourism activity with the associated tertiary sectors development.

Table 3. Socio-economic indicators of La Nièvre and the Alpes de Haute Provence

Socio-economic indicators	La Nièvre	AHP	France
Population (1990)	233 278	140 300	56 615 155
Area (km ²)	6 816	6925	543 965
Population density (inhab/km ²)	34	20	104
Population growth : 1982-90	-0,3	+1,2	+0,5
Employment growth : 1982-90	-0,7	+1,03	+0,4
% population > 65 years old	21,1		14
GDP/inhab (UE=100 in 1994)	87	94	116
Employment per sectors (% ,1996)			
Agriculture	8,4	6,3	4,6
Industry	21,2	11,6	19,4
Building industry	6,3	8,9	6,4
Tertiary sector	64,1	73,2	69,5
Rate of unemployment (1996)	10,9	12	12
Main cities (1996)			
	Nevers 58 915	Manosque 19 107	Paris
	Cosne 13 184	Digne 16 087	Lyon
	Decize 9 057	Sisteron 6 594	Marseille

Source : INSEE/DAS

In both regions, job losses are sensible in agriculture, but also in some important industrial sectors (equipment goods for example) and in retailing and proximity services activities in the rural areas. On the opposite side, sectors which are gaining jobs are in services activities located in the towns and in some new sectors at the beginning, like communication industries and tourism related activities.

Table 2 – Evolution of paid labour in the AHP and La Nièvre by sectors of activity

	AHP			La Nièvre		
	Number of workers	Annual	Rate	Number of workers	Annual	Rate
	1981	1995		1989	1995	
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	1028	820	-1,4	1614	1483	-1,4
Agri-food industries	665	1062	4,3	989	1047	1,0
Leather and clothing	63	90	3,1	684	460	-5,5
Publishing, printing and reproduction	291	233	-1,4	1033	822	-3,4
Pharmacy, perfumes and maintenance	310	429	2,7	112	195	12,4
Household equipments	260	104	-4,3	2525	1923	-4,0
Car industry	3	3	0,0	961	1318	6,2
Shipbuilding, aircraft eng. and railways	9	20	8,7	28	90	36,9
Mechanical engineering	193	207	0,5	2092	2289	1,6
Electrical equipment and components	81	350	23,7	891	102	-14,8
Mineral products industry	12	348	200,0	918	653	-4,8
Textile industry	59	18	-5,0	251	233	-1,2
Wood and paper industries	341	199	-3,0	921	744	-3,2
Chemical engineering, rubber, plastics	2181	1397	-2,6	3276	2616	-3,4
Metallurgy and metal conversion	101	136	2,5	2639	2548	-0,6
Fuel production	0	0	0,0	80	80	0,0
Water, gas and electricity	419	431	0,2	646	654	0,2
Building industry	4379	3065	-2,1	4244	3721	-2,1
Car trade and maintenance	724	968	2,4	1575	1507	-0,7
Wholesale trade, middlemen	993	157	-6,0	2265	1968	-2,2
Retail trade, maintenance	268	2824	68,1	4388	4045	-1,3
Transport	589	131	-5,6	3665	3741	0,3
Financial services	611	992	4,5	1751	1809	0,6
Real estate	64	335	30,2	682	535	-3,6
Postal services and telecommunications	1193	1107	-0,5	207	1997	144,1
Consultancy and assistance (1)	899	892	-0,3	1081	1227	2,3
Operational services(1)	534	761	8,9	1636	1567	-0,7
R&D (1)	158	163	21,8	195	184	-0,9
Hotels and restaurants	1564	2161	0,6	1500	1536	0,4
Recreational, cultural and sports (1)	324	394	12,5	363	600	10,9
Personal and household services (1)	666	812	6,1	1850	2192	3,1
Education (1)	3432	3555	1,0	5554	6354	2,4
Health, welfare activities (1)	4993	5215	0,7	7489	9095	3,6
State services (1)	5781	5929	0,6	7688	8175	1,1
Associations (1)	601	706	6,5	743	1039	6,6
TOTAL	30385	38606	1,9	68396	69467	0,3

Source : INSEE, Employment directorate

(1) For these sectors the data for the AHP are for the 1993-1995 period of time.

The comparison of evolution of the total salaried employment (1981-1995) between France, the AHP and La Nièvre shows that the two last have a similar trajectory, but much less than the French one. The decrease of employment is principally those of non salaried workers (farmers, craft workers, retailers,). France as a whole was able to compensate this decline by creation of jobs in new sectors (services), but the AHP much more and the Nièvre not enough to compensate the industrial losses. In the 1981-92 period, the AHP has increased its non agricultural employment by an annual average growth of 1,1% with a slow down during the last years (+0,4% for France and -0,3% for La Nièvre). As industry and building sectors have lost many jobs, in both regions the growth of non agricultural sectors is explained by the development of new services activities, mainly public ones (health, education,) in La Nièvre, principally bounded to the tourism in the AHP.

4.1. Branches creating jobs

The branches that create jobs during the recent years are few in La Nièvre. We can mention services to persons and enterprises. The big commercial centres also are growing, often at the expense of the small rural retailers. The area of urban pole attraction is constantly spreading. Finally, the public employment, notably in the sector of health develops itself also quickly.

In the AHP, the tertiary sectors has been the only one to have seen an increase in the number of jobs during the period 1981-1995, going from 59.7% of employment in 1981 to 73.2% in 1996, for an additional creation of 9,240 jobs. The commercial branches (wholesale, retail, car trade) have benefited from 2,788 additional jobs, i.e. an increase of 65% in 14 years, all due to paid labour. The growing importance of public sector employment in a highly rural department such as AHP is obvious. In 1981, paid labour in non commercial services made up 19.4% of total employment ; this share increased to 31,3% in 1995. If an additional government service such as the postal and telecommunication services prior to privatization are taken into account (2.3% of jobs), and considering that a share of these three branches must be allocated to trade services, we can estimate that the public sector contributes about 25% of jobs. It is therefore and by far the most important structural support to the AHP economy as in La Nièvre..

4.2. The industry : restructuring and losing jobs in both regions

In La Nièvre, the industrial strategies are rather defensive, but we should note the presence of one important subcontract firms network (more than 180 enterprises), that works on the very pointed market gaps: copper's work, computer services, treatment of surfaces, work of plastic and rubber. The food industry is rather weak compared with the agricultural production.

The industry in La Nièvre has known several big waves of restructuring of activities : the mining crisis in the 70's, the crisis of metallurgy in 1990-93. The most recent difficulties affect the automotive sector. The public authorities of the department rely to a big extent on the improvement of infrastructures to give back some competitive advantages to the present firms and to attract enterprises on the new activities: communication technology, high automotive technology, new materials.

In the AHP, between 1981 and 1996, the industry's relative importance in total employment has progressively decreased, from 13,5% to 11,6%.. Two branches lost many jobs : chemical engineering, household equipments, which has practically disappeared. Two branches have significantly increased the number of employees : the food industry (+37,8%) and electrical and electronics engineering (+407%).

4.3. Agriculture : diversification, quality objectives, new activities and functions

Agriculture in both regions is diversified. The agriculture of La Nièvre is constituted by at least three regions : the Morvan (production of wood, Charolais cattle breeding), the Loire valley (wine of Pouilly) and the Nivernais central region (Charolais cattle breeding). The production of grains is predominant on a strip that goes from Cosne-on-Loire to Clamecy. This type of agriculture is capital intensive and employ few people per hectare.. There are also some specific micro-regions that are often connected to the neighbouring departments like the Puisaye (Chavignol 's goat cheese).

The production of meagre bovines dominates, either in specialised system of extensive breeding (nursing cows), or in the mixed farming-breeding systems. The extensive character of this production gives few opportunity of jobs creation in this activity. In spite of efforts made with some professional organisations, the fattening is practised in a minority manner, and it often concerns only a part of the livestock.. The research of a higher added value by creation of a Charolais chain clearly displaying a quality objective is still limping.

Along the Loire, to Pouilly-sur-Loire, a small well-known vineyard, classified in AOC, is producing the « Pouilly Fumé » and, in a smaller quantity, the « Pouilly-sur-Loire ». Being an old region of production of table grapes for the Parisian region, the vineyard has been replanted from the 60's in *sauvignon* (about 1 000 hectares currently) for the production of the Pouilly Fumé, while 40 hectares were maintained in *chasselas* for the manufacturing of the Pouilly-sur-Loire. This region is pulled completely by the vineyard, as much in terms of employment (in spite of the mechanisation of the harvest, some seasonal workers remain for the dressing of the vine), as in terms of induced purchases : vats in steel, oak barrels, input purchases for treatments of the grapevine. Finally, the purchasing power of wine growers nourishes the local trade. This region makes therefore an exception in relation to tendencies observed in the other rural regions of the department.

Agriculture in the AHP is also characterized by a variety of products, resulting from the diversity in natural conditions. Mediterranean crops such as fruit trees, olive trees and lavender can be found in the department, as well as the rearing of dairy herds in the mountains.

Farm holdings are mainly specialized family farms. The farming system is determined by the farm's geographical location rather than by its size. Three technical and economic farming systems (*OTEX*) are predominant :

- a) cereal and large-scale farming (24.9% of holdings in 1995), particularly durum wheat and cultivations typical of the Provence : lavender and *lavandin*, which are facing a serious crisis given the decline in cultivated area and the competition of synthetic essential oils.
- b) extensive sheep and goat rearing (24.2% of holdings). It is a farming system typical of mountain areas and dry hills, enabling the development of low productivity land.
- c) fruit growing (18.1% of holdings) It is concentrated in the irrigated part of the Durance valley and mainly concerns apple trees. It should be stressed that the olive tree, a symbol of

Mediterranean cultivations, which was extensively grown in the south and west of the department in the past, has found its dynamism again as the result of the growing demand for olive oil.

At the department's level, these characteristics are at the root of the reduced land and labour productivity and, finally, the small farming revenue. Over the 1993-1996 period, the gross revenue per farm holding in AHP was, on average, 32% below the national average. It can be seen that, in this region, the agricultural sector is not very competitive, explaining the constant fall in the number of farm holdings and employment.

5. Labour markets

The work force is not an ordinary merchandise, exchanged on a pure and perfect market, orchestrated by an auctioneer organising the bids. The adjustment between the supply and the demand of labour is a slow process, full of surprises for paid workers as for employers. The imperfection of the circulation of information on qualifications, as on the definition of work post is a rule. Most enrolments suppose a complementary training on the job. The negotiation of the wages are taking in account elements of the hired person and the historical acquisitions of the branch (collective conventions, importance of trade unions, specific advantages bound to a qualification, etc.).

The demand of labour is the result of a complex process. It is the balance of enrolments (either in new enterprises, either in the existing ones) and of suppressions of jobs (layoff, stakes to the retirement no replaced, passage to the part-time working...). Enterprises, more and more, search for qualified people, that they seem to find with difficulty. The internal and external formation remains the principal way of qualification.

Table 5. By sectors employment in the Alpes of Haute Provence and La Nièvre.

	AHP (1996)	La Nièvre (1995)	%
Agriculture	6,3	8,4	
Industry	11,6	21,2	
Building industry	8,9	6,3	
Services	73,2	64,1	
Total	100,0	100,0	

Source : INSEE

The labour markets in AHP and in La Nièvre are unbalanced, as it is in all the NUTS 2 regions of France and on the national territory as a whole. This imbalance results in a high level of unemployment : 12% of the AHP's active population, 10,9% in La Nièvre, 12% in France as a whole (1996). The reasons for this high level of unemployment are numerous and complex. We can mention the effects of the globalisation of the economy as well as the insufficient flexibility of employment regulations and the labour cost, even if this last factor is not so evident in the French case compared with other European countries. Other factors play a crucial rôle : the global rate of growth. pushed the more consumer oriented policy of Lionel Jospin (since 1997) and the voluntarist employment policy (35 hours of work law, young's jobs) have began to reduce unemployment in France.

At a local level - in a territories like the departments of the AHP and La Nièvre these general factors exert their influence. The wage levels, the institutions which contribute to the functioning of the labour market and the migration of workers are the main local explicative factors of employment. The average wage was respectively 97% (AHP) and 92,5% (La Nièvre) of the French level in 1995. This difference is not sufficient to provoke by itself a delocalisation of companies. The quality of infrastructure, the qualification of the labour force, the regional, national and European policies are competitive factors much more important for the definition of attractiveness of a region.

For understanding the dynamics of the labour markets some structural constraints should be taken into account : the imbalance between the industrial and services sector; the dependency of the largest industries upon decisional centres outside the region ; the insufficiency of public transport between cities (and through rural areas) ; the importance of migration flows ; the imbalance due to the seasonal nature of some activities and the competition of « black market » jobs. All these variables with the problem of adequacy of qualification to the proposed jobs are the keys of local employment dynamics .

6. Strategies of actors in the Alpes of Haute Provence and La Nièvre

How policy-makers of both departments have taken into account the historical and cultural heritage of development in order to define different strategies according to the economic characteristics of each regions ? What was the behaviour of the farmers, the industrial and services sectors towards employment in rural areas ?

6.1. Policy makers and the local development strategies

There are many people's representatives who play a role in local development policy-making in France : deputies and senators district and regional coucillors (elected by the department and the region), mayors and municipal councillors. Each one defends his own interests and his own political beliefs and, at the same time, each one takes into consideration, in its actions, the interests of the district's territory which he brings to the attention of the highest levels of the political sphere, namely the State and the European Union. In a department such as the AHP, without any major city, the *Conseil général* is politically important, since, given the available budget, it is where the decisive power concerning intervention in local strategies can be found. In La Nièvre, the relation between the national interests and the local ones was taken into account essentially by the socialist Party. For example, François Mitterand was councillor, Mayor of Château-Chinon, then President of the French Republic..

The strategies which concern the job market do not exist as such. This question is tackled by national policies and very little comes from local budgets. However, there are precise strategies concerning aid which should be given to the department's economy and which are translated into choices having a major influence on the activity and structure of the territory. In the AHP as in La Nièvre, these strategies are largely the result of a consensus between policy makers of different institutions and political beliefs, economic actors and civil servants in the department.

In both regions, there are strong links between the behaviour of actors and the European structural funds. Europe does not exactly implement a policy directed at the eradication of

unemployment, but Brussel's objectives are an effort directed at the improvement of infrastructure and development which are influencing the state of the labour market. The main element is that policy makers and the other actors are establishing links between orientations and European funds (ERDF/FEDER, ESF/FSE, EAGGF/FEOGA) on the one hand and the policies adopted by the State, the region and the department. In practice, no policy is applied in isolation since each one takes into account the nature of the other ones. This is why each project is defined using different sources of funding : the principle of national compensation for the mobilisation of European funds works well. La Nièvre is completely covered by the European help policies : first, for sustaining the reconversion of the industrial sectors of Cosne-sur-Loire, Nevers and Decize and second, for consolidating the totality of the rural areas. In the AHP, the help was directed principally the mountainous agriculture.

6.2. Strategies of farmers

The principal effort of the farmers in both regions is to increase the size of the farms and the productivity. With a limited land area, such a strategy in a strong competitive environment tend to limit employment, notably in extensive farming systems. It has positive repercussions on country planning. First of all, it partly limits agricultural waste disposal and contributes, in this way, to landscape conservation. Secondly, it helps retaining a minimum number of inhabitants in low population areas. Finally, it ensures the continuity of a permanent economic activity in disadvantaged areas where other sectors are missing (industry) or are of a seasonal nature (tourism). The creation of natural Parks reinforce these effects

Others strategies does exist for small and medium farmers : the pluriactivity which combine on-farm and off-farm production :(in 1995, in AHP, 19% of the farm managers and much more of the spouses are engaged in off-farm activity), the diversification of activities and the production of high quality products

Young farmers, in the AHP, tend to introduce new crops and adopt new farming systems. Soft fruit, herb growing and organic farming are amongst the alternatives most frequently explored. Diversification through cattle rearing is also present : free-range chicken, goats, beekeeping, but they are only partial solutions. Some well-known traditional products such as the Banon goat cheese (from the Banon region in the west of the department) are renowned thanks to a constant demand.

In La Nièvre some examples of diversification could be mentioned. A few new original orientations appear in the department. Thus, a cereal producer is involved in the production of dried flowers This activity mobilises the family workforce and seasonal workers at peak period of work. The sale is made in bundles of one same species flowers. Outlets are found for 40% close to a neighbouring enterprise that manufactures some floral compositions (49 employees), the remainder by sale on the local markets and by direct sale on the farm. This producer considers other diversification: the plantation of walnut-trees on two hectares and the creation of a « rural lodge».

In the Morvan, the new activities come from the forest with the culture of the Christmas tree. La Nièvre is currently the biggest French producer of Christmas trees. This activity is a part of traditional forest activities, but does not always get on with others forestry activities . Other markets more specific, but well adapted to natural habitat of the Morvan, exist as well. Several producers got involved in the medicinal plant production. To summarise, we can say

that here most of the actors give the priority to the family workforce and minimise the salaried workers employment.

The tourist diversification is the most important phenomenon for both regions. Farmers' participation in the tourist activities is not so easy. He must have capital to build lodgings, have enough workforce to welcome tourists and produce the raw material for the preparation of meals for guests. Only few farmers are able to offer quality services to tourists : in AHP, there are only 18 farms offering an original service and about 5% offering « gîtes » or guest rooms under the «*Gîtes de France*» quality the label. La Nièvre owns in rural areas, 18 “gites” (442 rooms), 2 holiday-villages (500 rooms), 27 “chalets” (169 rooms) and 23 958 secondary residences, that can welcome close to 120 000 people.

Even though it is limited in the space, the renovation of the vineyard of Pouilly-sur-Loire is interesting and we can learn much from it. Founded on an effort for the quality (classified in AOC, Controlled Origin Appellation), on the continuous investments at the level of the grapevine work (mechanisation of the harvest, struggle against frost) and of the wine production, this sector that regroups about hundred producers on 1000 hectares can still spread. At the level of the employment, the work of the grapevine presupposes the enrolment of one worker per 3 to 4 hectares. As wine farms have an average size of between 8 to 12 hectares, about 300 people are employed full-time in grapevines. To this, it is necessary to add seasonal worker, by about sixty employers, for the dressing of the vine The co-operative employs 8 persons for wine producing, handling and merchandising. The co-operative cellar has a capacity of 7 000 to 10 000 bottles/day, for a turnover of 25 millions of F, of which 55-60% is going to export.

Agricultural production in the AHP's plateau, hilly and mountainous areas is positively influenced by a natural environment which allows farmers to adopt a quality-oriented strategy. Amongst the typical products that we can find : perfume plants (lavender, sage and mint) ; the Sisteron lamb (230,000 animals per year) ; the Banon goat cheese ; the quality lavender honey ; Riez and Banon truffles and the olive oil from Haute Provence, to be awarded the AOC (quality label). In the Durance valley and in some other small areas in AHP, the situation of agricultural employment is totally different from the one found in the plateau. The farmers' strategy is, in this case, not to adapt the means of production to the workforce available on the farm but to look for the workers needed for the orchards and intensive irrigated vegetable production outside the farm, i.e. on the job market. The peaks of labour demand are in the summer, at the beginning of the autumn (harvest) and in the winter (tree pruning). The labour demand is never totally covered by the local workforce and this explains the flow of workers coming from other French regions and from abroad, mainly Spain and Portugal. According to a study on fruit farming carried out in the north of Sisteron over one year, local workers account for 60% of the working hours of seasonal workers, workers from other regions account for 13% and foreigners for 27%. At harvest time, there is about one temporary worker per hectare and the share of foreigners reaches 40%.

6.3. Industrial strategies

The strategies concerning the set up of companies in the AHP in the 1960's have been dictated to a large extent by the nuclear plant in Cadarache (5000 jobs), located at a short distance in the neighbouring department : the idea was to meet the need for subcontracting and to benefit from the repercussions of high tech. Elf-Atochem and Sanofi and some sub-contractors have settled nearby and structure the Durance valley economy.

The territorial duality of AHP is clear : on the one hand a peopled islet (130 inhabitants/km²) with several industries (14.9% of jobs) on only 7.6% of the territory ; on the other hand, a large area (92.4% of AHP and 10 inhabitants/km²) with an essentially agricultural (14.8% of jobs) and tourist population. This duality explains the strategies of consolidating activities and employment where they have reached a significant level, i.e. in the Durance-Bléone Valley and resisting to « desertification » elsewhere.

The industrial and commercial actors in the AHP keep an attitude towards employment, very cautious during the last few years. On the contrary, the sector of services has increased considerably its share in the total number of people newly employed : in three years, 1995-97, the number of new jobs in this sector has practically doubled (from 5,938 to 10,916)

The same behaviour is frequent in La Nièvre. In the agro-industry as in the transformation of wood, the follow-up strategies are on the whole rather defensive. Companies reduced their workforce during the last years, notably in the co-operative sector. With very few exceptions, businesses limit themselves to the first transformation, or even to the trade of raw materials (rough timber, cereals and oilseeds, meagre cattle). Some big enterprises installed in rural areas suffer from high transport costs. Finally, as in the AHP, the main sectors able to create jobs are services ones (health, education, tourism).

Conclusion

As in a lot of European regions, the French rural areas creates less jobs than the urban zones. But paradoxically unemployment is there also frequently less elevated : unemployed people do not remain in the small rural townships. They are going away to tempting their chance in the city. The heavy tendencies are practically impossible to thwart. The politics must recognise the reality, to accompany and sustain reconversions, to take care of people.

However these evolution are relative, different along time and throughout the space. In agriculture, to the extensive ways of production (what is clearly the choice of cattle breeder or wood operators in La Nièvre) can be drawn progressively some forms of intensification : fattening, and transformation of livestock, if possible labelled, development of quality products (AOC). The research of higher value added would permit to create employment. In the same way, small market niches (production of medicinal plants, cheeses, dried flowers) can create posts of work provided that they agree to the previous formation effort and that the dynamic of markets, which are often confidential, are attentively followed.

One can wonder not to find more agro-industries in both departments, but evidently this situation is the direct consequence of the choice in La Nièvre of raw product's exports, whose outlets appear more secure to actors. The consequences concerning employment are not only quantitative, but it also drags a deficit in certain artisan or industrial competencies that can make defect cruelly in case of reconversion project.

The AHP's territory is subject, in its less peopled areas, to difficulties resulting from the lack of sufficient services, located far away. Actors have designed a strategy in order to fight against « desertification ». The State has, first of all, kept administrative jobs (health, education, administration), while at the same time grouping services in larger villages. The

other actors (*Conseil général*, local authorities, small entrepreneurs) are setting up specific actions in order to support the functioning of the local economy, in terms of the supply of provisions (small shops, offering several services) and marketing (sale cooperatives), sometimes supported by European funds. The combination of governmental action with the one of local actors in AHP shows that there is a possibility of slowing down the process of « desertification » of the countryside and, as was seen in a previous Chapter, to obtain a population increase in those rural areas where the population level is very low. However, a question remains unanswered : the possibility of pursuing this trend, undermined by market forces.

Finally, an element which concerns the repopulation of the countryside with a low population density in AHP should be stated : the migrant population. There are no demographic studies on this subject but the available data suggests that there are two categories of individuals : those who look for a better quality of life and settle down by starting their own establishment, mostly artisanal, and those who move to more distant rural areas because life is cheaper and who are often unemployed or receiving the RMI (*Revenu minimum d'insertion* ; unemployed receiving a minimum wage). For the latter, this choice is double-edged since, settling down without a job, far away from urban areas, reduces the possibilities of finding a job. Therefore, the migration of people to small isolated villages does not always lead to an economic revival of marginal areas. Nevertheless, the local authorities (mayors) welcome the arrival of the unemployed, since they can then justify the demand of public funds for the local organisations.

The tourism is an important activity for the AHP and La Nièvre. Some efforts have been made for ameliorating the accomodation and to progressively valorise the natural, cultural, historical or religious resources. The impact on the employment, especially in rural areas is difficult to measure (very seasonal, many branches of activities concerned).

The public authorities and, above all, the territorial communities work for the employment. Mayors turn into real chiefs of enterprise orchestrating the new activity development, tempting to attract enterprises and trying to define a coherent strategy of development.

The national employment policies have an important impact on level of the employment in rural areas. For example, the employment of young people (« young's jobs ») in the education sector, the 35 hours duration of work are measures which can modify the competitive position of sectors and regions.

In general, employment and enterprises resist better when a local action is led. National help measures have little impact if they are not sustained by a local demand. It is quite the same for the European programs. When an action is undertaken on programs that concern everybody, the employment is stabilising or increasing. Both the AHP and La Nièvre are able to develop added value productions and to diversify their agricultural, food and natural resources. But it is not evident to adapt structures and organisations to this new orientation. There is a lot of people whom make money thanks to the raw products export with a minimum of job's creation. It will take time to change this model, but some precursors are emerging.

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