



L'agriculture familiale à l'épreuve de la Covid-19 : le cas de la Guadeloupe

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Family farmers and consumers in Guadeloupe facing the Covid-19: a new opportunity for agroecology transitions ?

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Presentation summary

Fruits and vegetables basket

1. Introduction

- Research context and questions
- Methodology
- Field context

2. Results

- Adapting the type of products : the baskets
- Consuming by solidarity
- Challenges to improve links between farmers and consumers

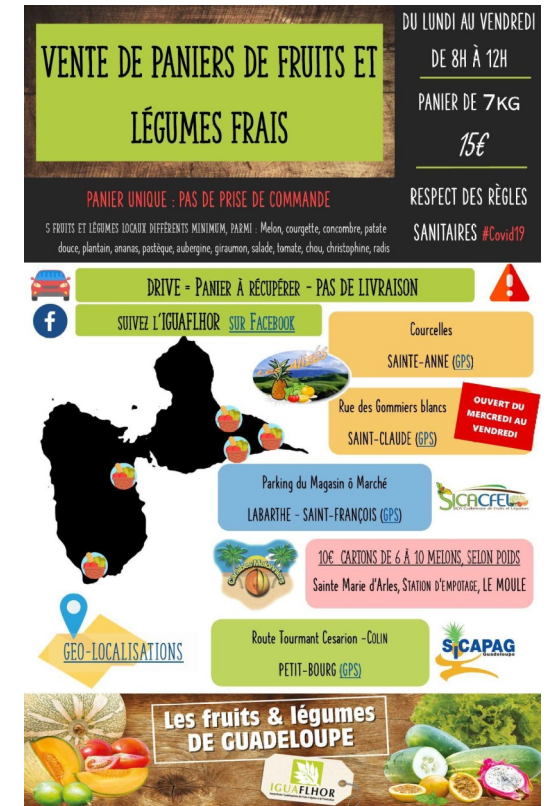
3. Discussion

- Applying the socio-technical transition grid
- The baskets : a socio-technological innovation for agroecology ?



1. Research context : the Covid-19 crisis, an opportunity to observe changes

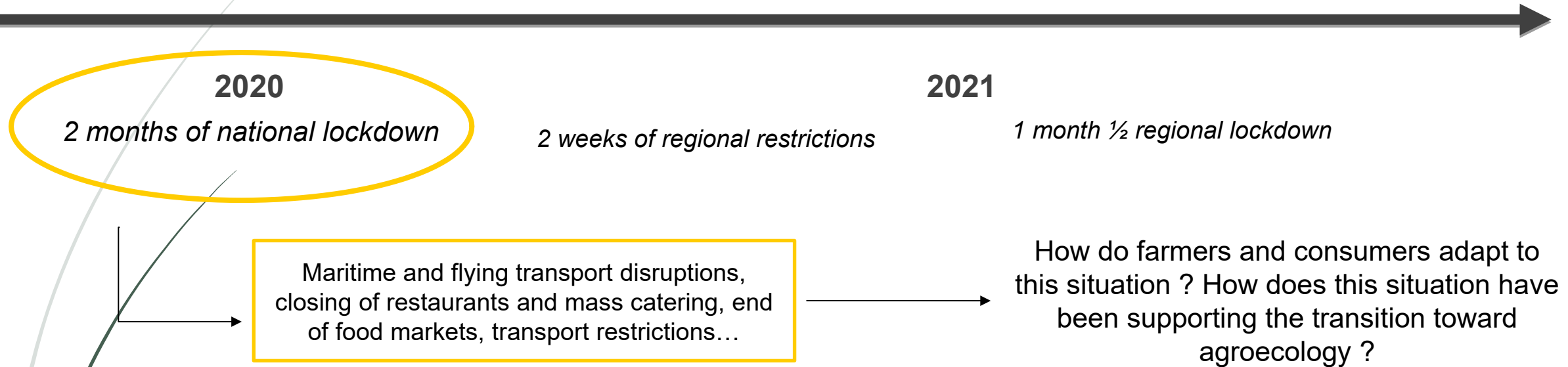
- An **exploratory study** → transitory hypothesis (David, 2001)
- Several **striking observations** during the 2020-lockdown, in Guadeloupe :
 - Consumers look for buying out of supermarkets
 - Farmers offer their products directly to consumers (without any intermediaries)
 - Civil society organisations promote direct links between farmers and consumers
- AgroEcoDiv : a research program to understand and implement agroecology



Add campaign from a farming cooperative for direct sales of fruits and vegetables baskets

1. Research questions

- Chronology of the Covid-19 pandemic in Guadeloupe



**To what extent innovations to adapt to the crisis
have been supporting transition toward
agroecology ?**

1. Methods for inventorying and analyzing changes

- A two-months study

- Combining :

A quantitative
analysis

381 surveys
To consumers

A qualitative
analysis

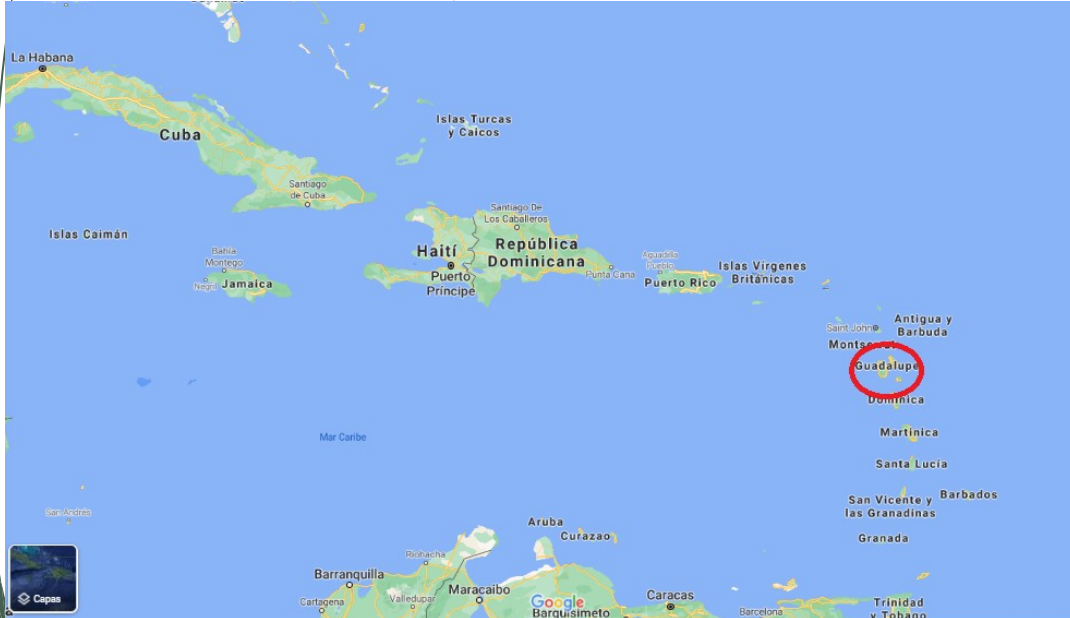
14 interviews
To farming productive
actors

**In order to study the way consumers and
producers adapt to the Covid-19 lockdown**



Contests from producers because of the sales difficulties

1. Farming context in Guadeloupe



Farming context :

Farms medium size : 4,2 Ha

... but a **two-speeds agrarian model**

Export cultures
(*banana, sugar
cane, melon*)

Family farming
(*other vegetables
and breeding*)

75 – 80% of farms

Agroecology : a political, administrative, technical framework

Family farming : using diverse sales channels

... but mainly with **few intermediaries**

“57% of interviewees said that they sell the most part of their goods on channels where there is one intermediary or less.”

The most used farm products sales channels in Guadeloupe

| Sales channels | Proportion of farmers |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Retail distribution | 42% |
| On the road / farm | 31% |
| Food market | 12% |

2. Results : Adapting the type of products : the baskets

□ How do the farmers adapt to the lockdown ?

→ Depend on the chains

□ **Few changes for export cultures**

... besides the fact there are dependant from global trade

They could rely on :

→ Autonomous transportation

→ Public support (funds)

□ **Major changes for family farming** because of :

The increase number of consumers : +40%

... which mainly adapt by :

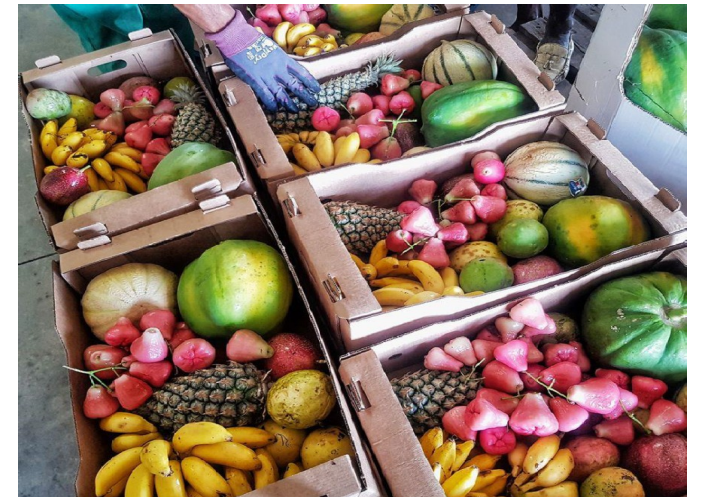
→ Spread of a type of product

76% of producers sold greengrocer basket

→ Using new communication technologies

37% using a new order system (social networks mainly)

Example of a fruit and vegetable basket



2. Results : consuming by solidarity

Several and massive changes for consumers :

75% declared having changed their consumption habits

→ What is bought ? More vegetables, less meat

40% of consumers declared having eaten more vegetables and 40% less meat

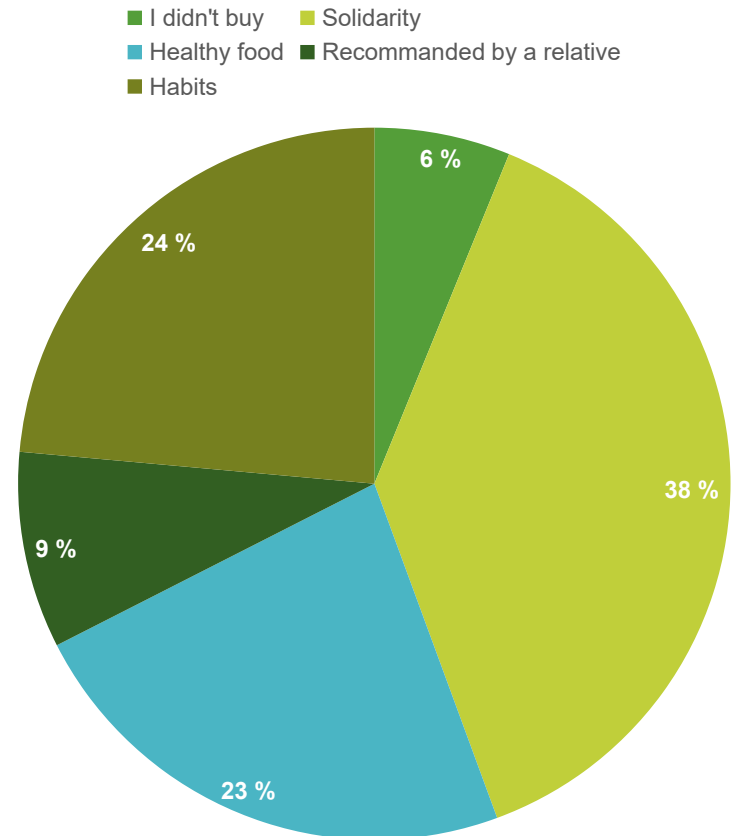
→ Where is it bought ? **From supermarkets to short circuits**

70% of consumers used to go to supermarket before the lockdown ; 40% during the lockdown

→ Why is it bought ? By solidarity

40% of consumers have changed their habits because of solidarity towards family farming producers

How did I buy directly ON a family FARM during the lockdown ?



2. Results : challenges to improve links between farmers and consumers

Why did consumers not buy to family farmers ?

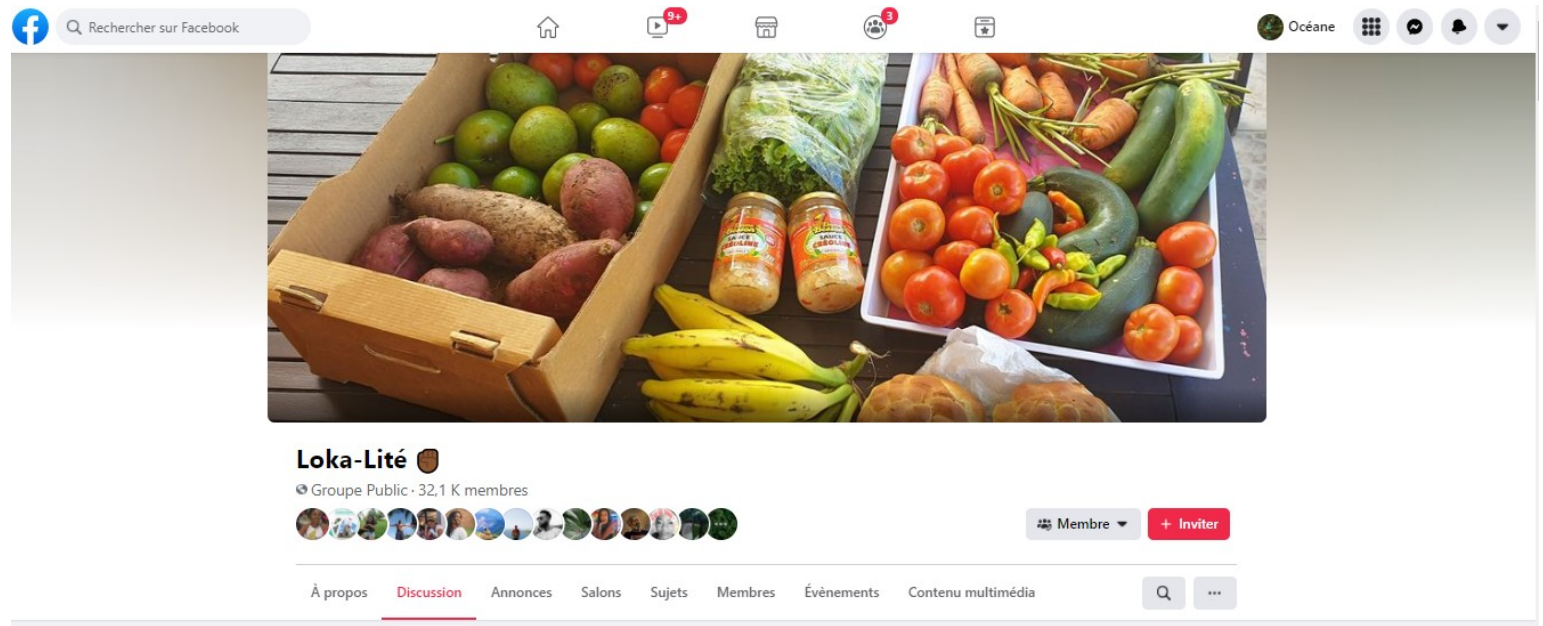
« Local farmers are way too far ! » : 35 %

... but a false argument ?

« I didn't know » : 30% → **LACK OF INFORMATION**

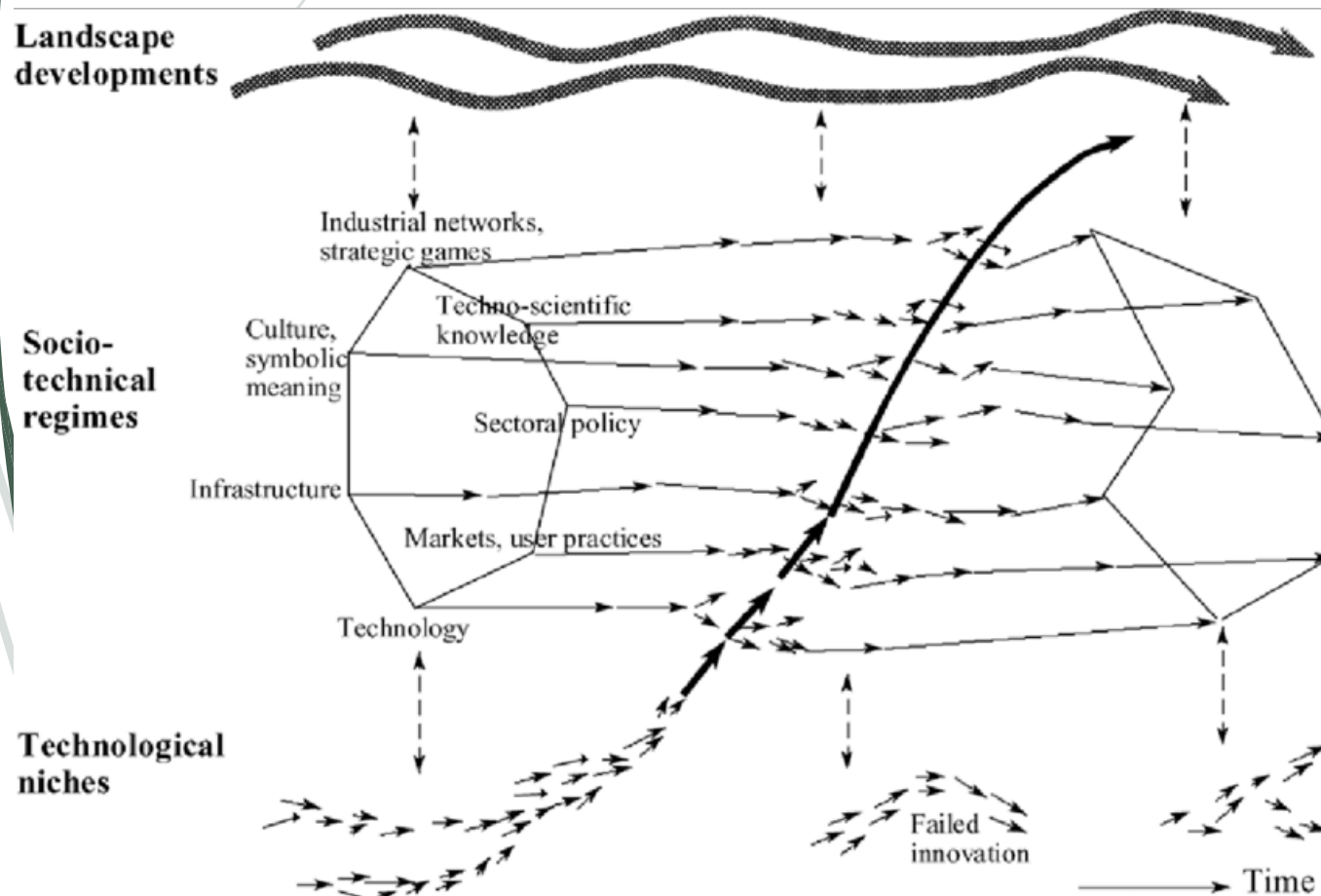
Besides an improvement of
information availability
according to consumers

→ **Massive use (75%) of
social networks** by
consumers in order to get
the information



3. Discussion : the Covid-19 crisis, an opportunity for an agroecological transition ?

Geels' model to understand transitions, through socio-technical systems grid



4 types of transitions (change to a regime from another),

... implying :

- different interactions,
- different actors,
- different temporalities

3. Discussion : the Covid-19 crisis, an opportunity for an agroecological transition ?

□ Are adaptations to lockdown innovative ?

« Technological niches form the micro-level where radical novelties emerge. These novelties are initially unstable **sociotechnical configurations with low performance**. Hence, niches act as '**incubation rooms**' protecting novelties against mainstream market selection. Niche-innovations are carried and developed by **small networks of dedicated actors, often outsiders or fringe actors**. » Geels and Schot, 2007



Spread of baskets :

- That are not new products
- Some farmers were used to use them
- Mainly agroecological ones
- Reserved to few consumers

→ An innovation from agroecological niche that spread into the regime ?




But dominant actors (farm cooperatives, conventional farmers,...) have begun to sell baskets during the lockdown.

To what extent baskets could remain agroecological instruments in order to change the regime and be part of a transition ?

3. Discussion : the Covid-19 crisis, an opportunity for an agroecological transition ?

□ « Use can not be understood without analyzing the way it is **split between : the technical disposal, the user, and the environment** » Akrich, 1993

| | Agroecological use | | Conventional use |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| Technical disposal | Adapted to farm productions Prices fixed out of the mainstream market rules |  | Adapted to consumer wishes Prices fixed according to the mainstream market |
| Environment | Taken away on farm | | Delivered at home |
| User | Accept uncertainty and learn Seek information | | Look for what they already know (receipes, products,...) |



4. Conclusion

- The lock-down and the Covid-19 have consequences on :
 - Farm selling
 - and consumption

- But :
 - changes are recent and are still on going
 - innovations are ambivalent

- Nevertheless :
 - baskets must be considered as important tools for the development of agroecology
 - Because it can be a powerful tool for agroecological knowledges and social interactions

Thank you for your attention !

