Ph.D Position: Degrowth, Adaptation, and Coordination of Beef Value Chains – A Comparative Territorial Analysis between France and Québec.

Abstract:

The decline of beef production in both France and Québec is affecting the current functioning of the value chain (slaughterhouses, upstream and downstream services, producer organizations) and generating repercussions in terms of agglomeration economies and the provision of territorial services (landscapes, water, food, employment, etc.). Moreover, this decline contributes to an increase in transaction costs, particularly in extensive livestock territories, where spatial dispersion and geographic location strongly influence strategic choices and economic decisions made by stakeholders.

However, to our knowledge, the impacts of the transition of beef cattle production systems in a context of climate change and economic uncertainty have not yet been examined by considering the coevolution of the different segments of the beef value chain at the territorial scale. This PhD project is part of the RED-BOVIN project (*REsilience and sustainability of Declining BOVINe farming areas in a context of climate change*), jointly funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ). The project is led in Québec by the Institut de recherche en agriculture et agroalimentaire (IRAA) at the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT), in collaboration with the Engineering school VetAgro Sup and the Joint Research Unit (UMR) *Herbivores* of the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE).

The overall objective of the project is to understand the ongoing decline in two beef-producing territories—the Massif Central in France and the boreal region of Québec (Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean)—by analyzing interactions among the different segments of the beef value chain. The project will also explore pathways to promote the coevolution of these segments to support a resilient and sustainable beef value chain, as well as the territories associated with it.

These two regions are particularly relevant for comparative analysis, as they share common characteristics while also differing in terms of pedoclimatic conditions, population dynamics, agricultural policies, and socioeconomic contexts, thus offering valuable opportunities for comparison. This PhD research is grounded in the theoretical framework of New Institutional Economics (North, 1981; Williamson, 1994; Aoaki, 2001) to analyze coordination dynamics as well as the individual and collective strategies implemented by territorial actors within beef value chains. Beyond organizational dynamics, it will also seek to understand the spatial and temporal dynamics of these value chains in response to changes in their political environment. Finally, the research will employ a quantitative meta-analysis (Sudarsono & Wandebori, 2023), as well as a qualitative meta-analysis (Khan et al., 2021; Laroche, 2015; Fendt, 2023), complemented by random forest methods, to identify, rank, and integrate strategies and policies that have proven effective in similar contexts.

PhD Research Objectives: The PhD project aims to understand the dynamics of change and the reorganization of beef value chains at the territorial scale, and to propose effective support strategies and policies. More specifically, the objectives are to:

- Analyze individual and collective strategies, as well as coordination mechanisms within the beef value chain, in relation to adaptation to climate change and socioeconomic challenges.

- Propose strategies tailored (e.g., public policies, actor coordination mechanisms) to the specific characteristics of each territory to support the transition of the beef value chain in these two livestock regions.

Location: The selected candidate will be based at the Institut de recherche en agriculture et agroalimentaire (IRAA) of the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT). The IRAA is located at UQAT's Témiscamingue Centre in Notre-Dame-du-Nord, approximately 45–60 minutes from the main campus in Rouyn-Noranda. A research stay of several months in France is planned.

Financial Support: The selected PhD student will receive a scholarship of CAD $25,000 per year for three years. Travel and accommodation expenses for the research stay in France will be covered. Financial support for participation in conferences and scientific meetings is also provided.

Candidate Profile: The candidate must hold a master's degree (M.Sc.) in agricultural economics or economics. Strong analytical, synthesis, and academic writing skills are required, as well as initiative, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity. Experience in conducting surveys and structured interviews with key stakeholders, as well as in the use of quantitative and qualitative analysis software, is considered an asset. The ideal candidate should be autonomous and able to work within multidisciplinary research teams. Applications from individuals belonging to underrepresented groups in research are strongly encouraged.

Project Start Date: May 1, 2026

Contact Persons:

Please submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and academic transcripts to:

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