

# Mining activity in rural areas: permanencies, ruptures and social transformations of livelihoods in New Caledonia

**Séverine Bouard<sup>1</sup>, Christine Demmer<sup>2</sup>, Mathilde Baritaud<sup>3</sup>,  
Louise Decottigny<sup>4</sup>**

**IAC, Institut Agronomique néo-Calédonien, Équipe TERAU “Territoire, acteurs et usages”,  
Centre de recherche Nord – Thierry Mennesson, Pouembout, Nouvelle-Calédonie**

**<sup>2</sup> CNRS, Centre Norbert Elias, Marseille, France**

**<sup>3,4</sup> étudiantes respectivement des universités de Bordeaux et de la Sorbonne Paris**



# Introduction

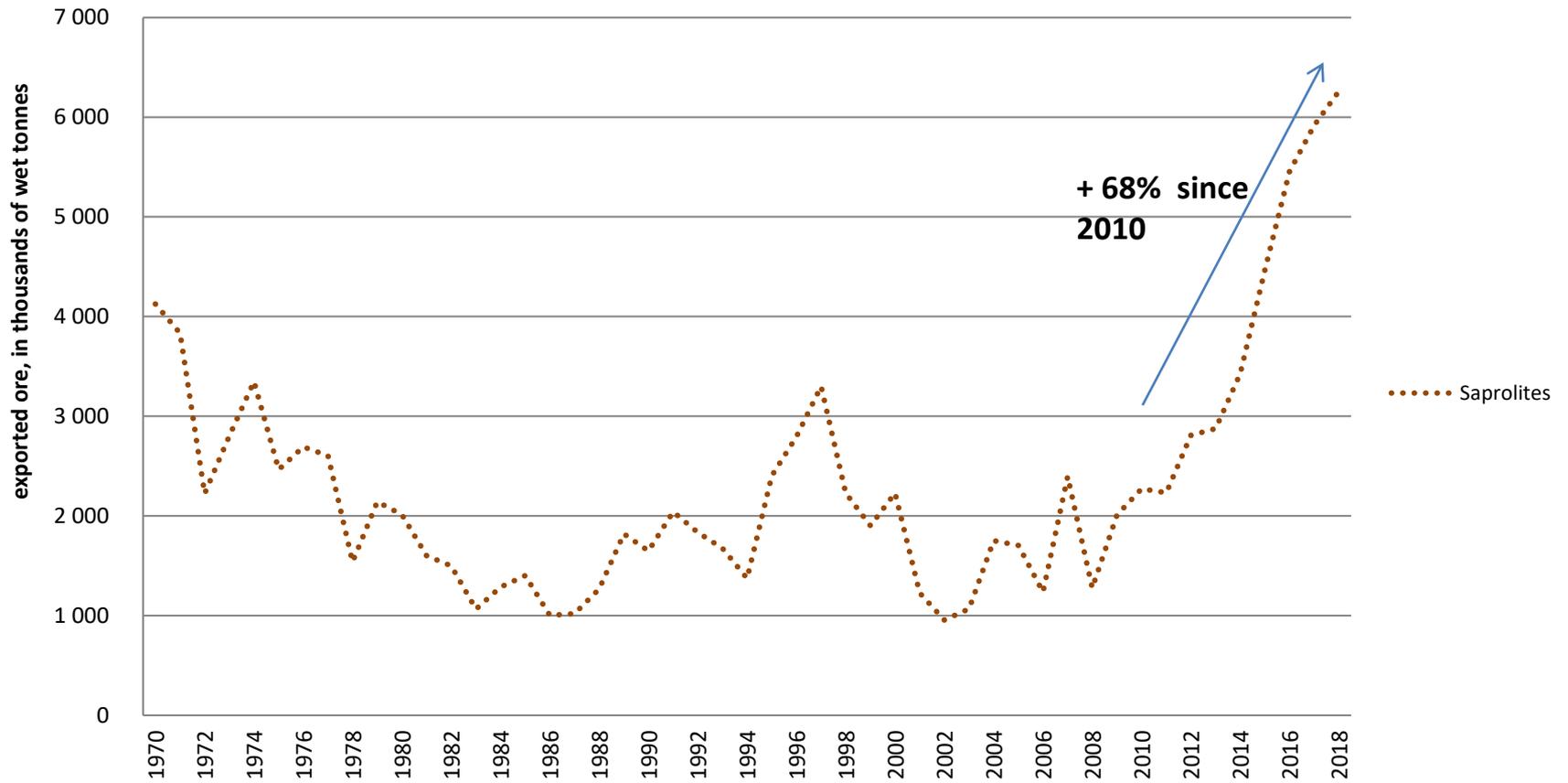


- Nickel mining is a structuring feature of New Caledonia colonial history and political economy
- Nickel mining is a structuring feature at the household level too
- and an increasing feature with deep transformations



# Introduction

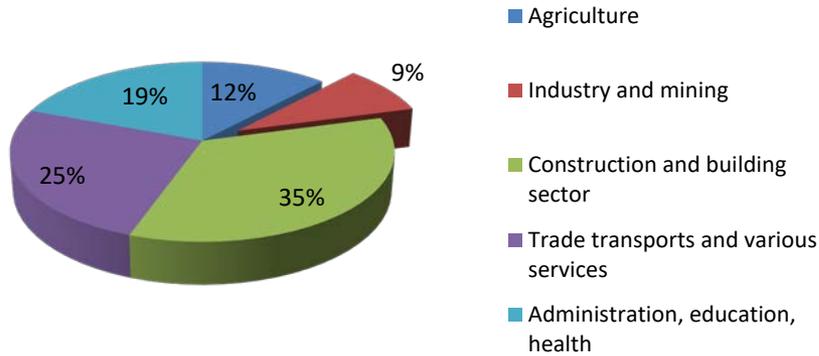
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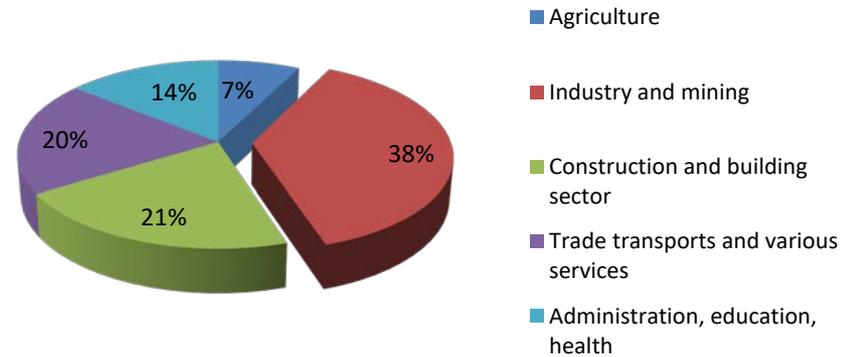


# Introduction

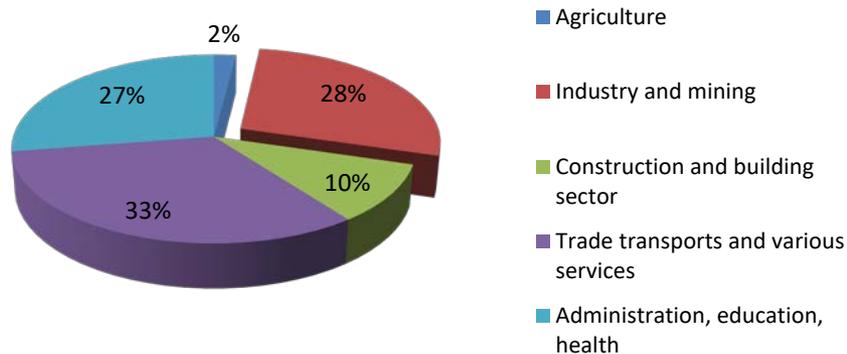
**Population aged 15 and over employed, by sector of activity VOH - 2009**



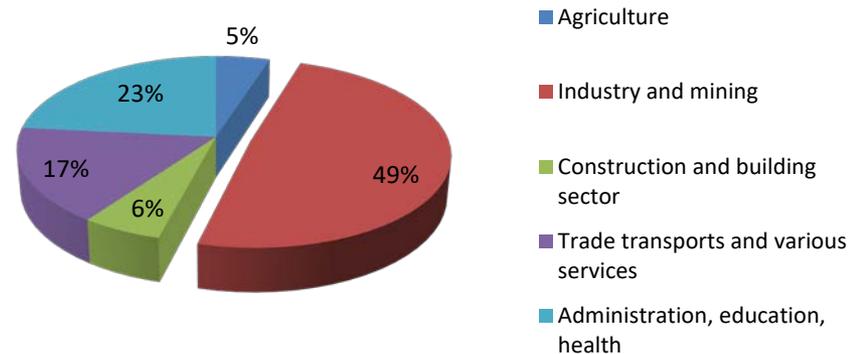
**Population aged 15 and over employed, by sector of activity VOH - 2014**



**Population aged 15 and over employed, by sector of activity Yaté - 2009**



**Population aged 15 and over employed, by sector of activity Yaté - 2014**



# Introduction



1. Relationships between mining and agriculture in rural territories on the long run
2. Recent impacts of mining development on livelihoods strategies and the strong impact of organization of working time on the ability of households to maintain agricultural activity
3. What working to the mine "does" to Kanak people and more especially Kanak women ?



# Empirical basis



1. A qualitative study on the relationship between mine and agriculture on the long run.
2. A large comprehensive survey project realized in 2011 on the significance and functions of tribal agriculture
3. Mineral project on the labor question in mining corporation in New Caledonia → transformations with the development of women employment in mining corporation and enterprise

# Relationships between mining and agriculture in rural territories on the long run



1930      1940      1950      1960      1970      1980      1990      2000



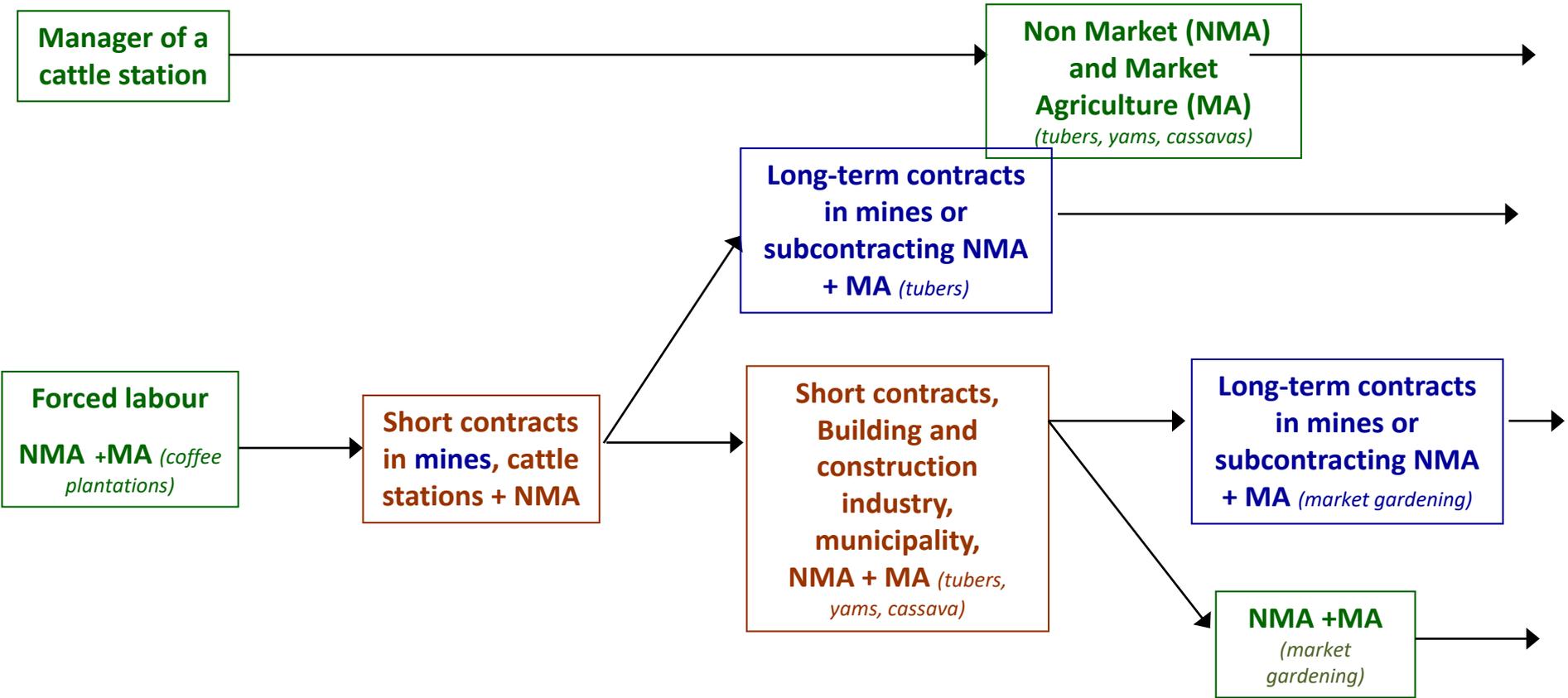
Events

Land reform

Thio

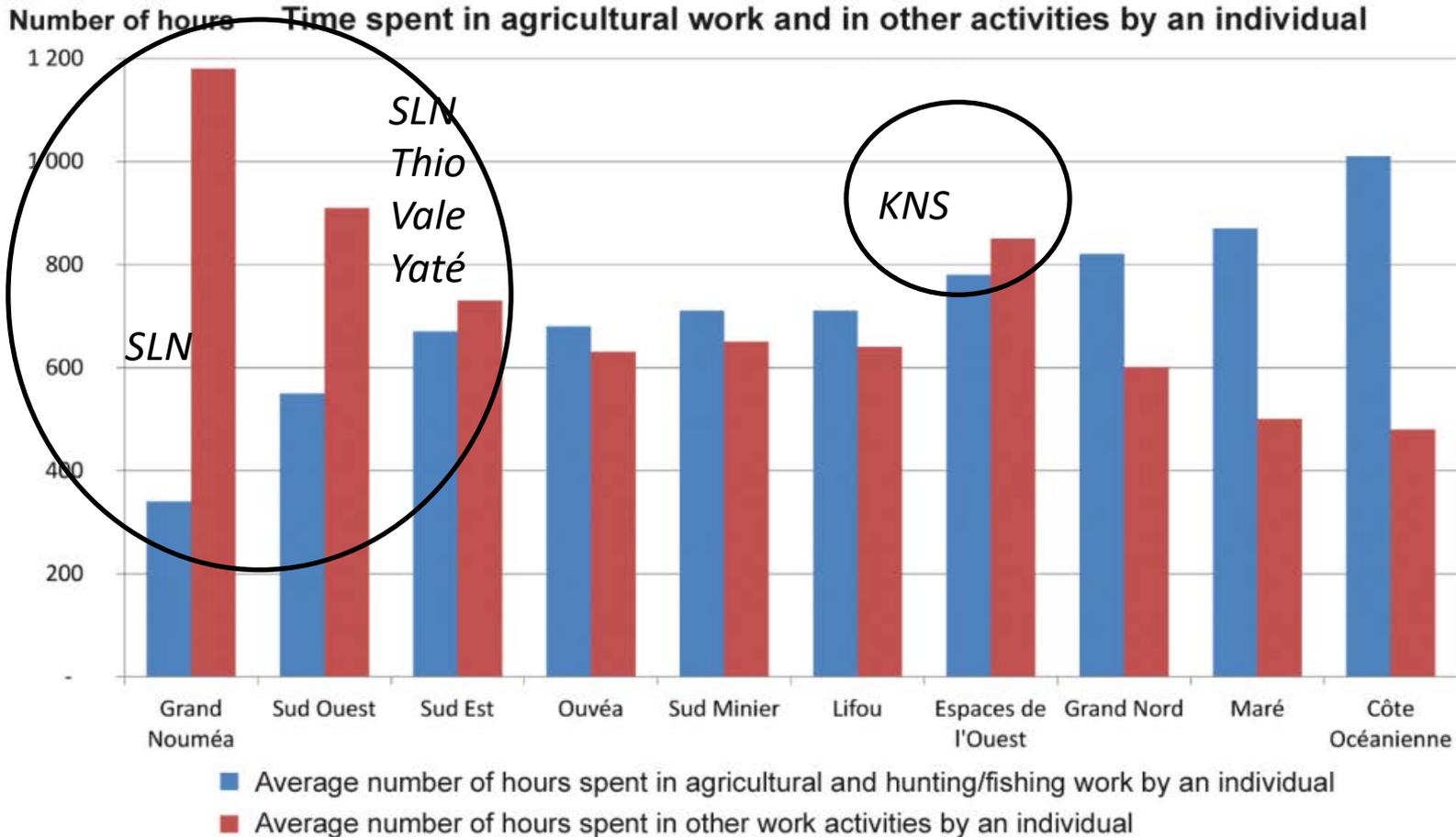
Kouaoua

Boom Ni



Kanak's trajectories in Thio village (source : Gaillard, 2009)

# Impacts of mining on livelihoods strategies: working time and the ability to maintain agricultural activity



Time spent on agriculture impacted by economic development except in Espaces de l'Ouest  
 But, today, in 2018, is there any major changes and ruptures with acceleration of mining activity?



## Impacts of mining on livelihoods strategies: working time and the ability to maintain agricultural activity



More recent studies showed that mine workers always go home in tribe for the week-end or at least for mourning, weddings:

- They go back to do some farm-work, "*the field reminds us who we are*", need to calm down, recharge their batteries, bring back and share tribe products with colleagues, seems still very important in the every day life of workers
- Depending on work schedules and organization, employees are more or less able to articulate working time with agricultural, fishing and hunting activities
- but is there some breaking points? On the agricultural calendar, it seems difficult to maintain a compatibility between the yam calendar and some work schedule...

New data collected in early 2019 but not yet analysed... Forthcoming

# What working to the mine "does" to Kanak people?



- Working to the mine to earn money, but they doesn't want to stay
  - Tension and complexity of actors' logics: between daily life and an activity perceive as destructive of their cultural and natural environment can be difficult
    - *"Before it was a fishy river[...] It's like I'm destroying my own country. [...]"*
    - *"mining is not my thing. Even until now, it's not my thing... I don't want to destroy my country, you know? I don't want to destroy my mountain because my mountain makes me live too, because the water flows and the trees so we have to deal with it, right? "*
- The perception of the damage they caused forge a negative representation of their work. On a daily basis, this perception erodes self-esteem by losing the meaning of what they do.



# What working to the mine "does" to Kanak people?



- Refusal of digging, refusal to use the excavator
- The preference for the truck

*"I've always been in my truck and I'll always stay in my truck. [...] I don't have want to destroy.... I don't want to break everything. I don't want to. I don't want to.*

*[... ] but if I wanted to, I could have changed. but no, no, no. I'd rather stay in my truck, I'm quiet. " (Interview Marie, op.cit)*

- Prevalence of the lexical field as "I don't want" that reveals the contradiction between their work and their values.
- People try to find compromise between their values and their work by driving only the truck



What working to the mine "does" to Kanak people  
and more especially Kanak women?



- Why do these women work for KNS?
  - The proximity & one of the unique way to earn money close from where they live
  - Imaginaries of big machines, the dream of driving a very big truck → father job reproduction & not staying at home as mummy
  - Proud to working at KNS, a project for Kanaky, and acknowledge from parents & the clan



# Gender socialization and mining work: how to get in the game today?



- 2 strategies
  - Men's language: to accept vulgarity and to use itself, to make joke on the radio, to make fun of colleagues.
  - To make "the mother for the men's colleagues"



# Conclusion



- Interest of focusing on changes in rural households impacted by mining activities, on the long run and more recently
- Data in New Caledonia but need to deepen analysis with qualitative studies on changes with households and statuses of members
- Need to compare with other regions in the world



# Gender socialization and mining work: Changes for men

- At the work place:
  - No space for women: from the formation center to the mine
  - collective or personal harassment
- At home: permanent negotiations (jealousy, difficulties in domestic task sharing)