Why are there so many small woodlots in southwestern France landscapes?

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Take home message

- In some temperate landscapes, small woodlots (forest fragments) are kept,
- despite unfavorable policies,
- and managed in traditional ways
- producing a diversity of structures
- support for ecosystem services.
- Theories on social and ecological co-evolution explain the resilience of this systems
Small fragmented forests

- Long Term Social & Ecological Research platform (LTER-Europe) in south west of France.

Map showing locations of Auch, Toulouse, and St Gaudens.
Ordinary rural landscape
The foresters / farmers are not rational?

- What are the determinants of forestry activities that seem to be in opposition with usual recommendations?
Ethnographic approach: how to listen what the actors said (or not)

- 2 years in 2 small villages
- Interviews
- Direct observation of the practices
- Social context
- Relationships between actors
- Historical depth
History of forest fragmentation

Army's map 1860

Cassini's map 1750

current map
Land diversity maintained at village scale

1820  2004
History of forestry in traditionnal farming
The traditionnal House centred social system

- The House (land, building, forest and social status) is transmitted to the oldest heir son (even against the law!)
- High social value of the forest: rarely sold
- Forest outside the main economical development
Farmers looking for self-sufficient farms

Légende:
- Limites patrimoine
- Bois de chauffage
- Espace / gibier
- Pâturage
- Bois d’œuvre
- Champignons
History of forest management

forestry practices and rural policies

Cutting history since 1942 and edge management
Woodlots as a source of ecosystem services (A Roume PhD)
Higher density of ground beetles in edges, with more predators

2014 ground beetles collected, from 48 species
Conclusions

- Actors are coherent with their own social system and values
- Social system leaves footprints on the landscape
- Ethnology for in detail investigations

Human ecology, G Marten, 2001