

Title

Agricultural land: from an economic asset to a common resource for local food supply. How collective action developing around agricultural land serves objectives of territorial transitions? Insights from the Isère County in France.

S22. Commons as enablers of territorial transition: evidences, assessment and theoretical perspectives

Key words:

Bundle of rights – common resource– local food supply – agricultural land – collective action

Extended abstract:

Food relocation, defined as the possibility of cities inhabitants' to consume food products issued from a perimeter close to their living space, is a strong component of territorial transitions. The Covid-19 crisis, following many other sanitary crisis, exacerbates the dependence of food systems to international provisioning and urges for the development of public policies in favor of local food production and consumption (Chiffolleau, 2020). The rise to prominence of food relocation is shedding light on their "reservoir", meaning agricultural land. Food relocation objectives are thus added to the multiple expected uses of agricultural land: industrial human and animal food production, environmental protection (biodiversity and water), leisure activities but also urban development.

Food relocation objectives can be in tension with these uses, which mainly considers land as a simple economic asset (except for environmental protection use). For example, farmland use dominated by industrial food production coupled with farmland expansions is in tension with food relocation objectives. To illustrate, the French agricultural census of 2020 estimates the average size of a French farm is 69 hectares (ha) in 2020, 14 ha more than in 2010 and 27 ha more than in 2000. Food relocation objectives add complexity to land use allocation.

In this context, alternative farmland management serving food relocation objectives are developing (Baysse-Lainé et al., 2018). Local authorities and civil society associations are participating to collective land procedures aiming food relocation. It is the case for example of collective farms. The aim of this paper is to study if collective land procedures can participate to the resolution of collective action problems¹ related to farmland management: farmers' installation, land fragmentation and wasteland development.

It focuses on four case studies from the Isère County in France. The choice of Isère County is justified by the development of many local experimentations aiming food relocation, such as the territorial food project of the alpine region. Case studies focused on two collective action problems: installation of farmers supported by the agricultural land grouping of Chartreuse

¹ Collective action is here defined as individuals making choices in situations of interdependence (Ostrom, 2010). Collective action problems appears when there is tensions between individual and collective interest.

and the collective farm *La Clef des sables*; development of wasteland supported by the agricultural land association of Crolles and the pastoral land association of Vaulnaveys le Haut. Land rights attributed to stakeholders involved in these procedures were analyzed.

To do so, we conducted qualitative field interviews with different stakeholders participating to these procedures: Chamber of Agriculture, project leaders, president of association, etc. The aim of these interviews was to understand the organization of the collective land procedure: stakeholders, rules definition, tensions or conflict, power structure, evolution of the procedure, etc. The data collected was then analyzed using an updated framework of property as a bundle of rights.

Farmland management is generally governed by the property-use relationship where landowners transfer their land rights to farmers following a contractual agreement (Léger-Bosch et al., 2020). Land procedures emerging at the local level highlight an alternative way to farmland management where a large circle of stakeholders is grafted around the traditional property-use relationship.

In this research, land is pictured as a resource system (Cole et al., 2012). A resource system is defined as the environment where resource units are located or produced (del Mar Delgado-Serrano, 2015 ; McGinnis , 2011). Land have the particularity of having heterogeneous resource units to be extracted, and these resource units depend on the land uses that are privileged. Thus, land is considered as a resource system serving different uses defined by human activity.

The framework of property as a bundle of rights is particularly adapted to study how stakeholders manage competing land uses. The procedures analyzed highlight a new distribution of land rights shared by a large diversity of stakeholders. However, the initial framework developed by Schlager et al. (1992) needed to be adapted in response the growing complexity characterizing land management. The framework was subject to diverse adaptations related to the object studied (Allaire et al., 2018, Galik et al., 2015), the territorial context of the study (Lavigne-Delville, 2011). In particular, Sikor et al. (2017) proposed an updated framework of the bundle of rights that takes into account the growing complexity characterizing the management of resources: the right of indirect users to the resource and the right to indirect benefits to users. This updated framework is of particular interest to study the evolutions brought about by collective land procedures: it helps characterizing the dynamics observed in the study cases. We slightly adapted Sikor et al. (2017) framework to shed light on the specificities of agricultural land in the French context: the institutional regulation framing agricultural activity, the multiplicity of direct and indirect users of agricultural land and the numerous uses of agricultural land. The following table sums up this framework (Table 1).

Use rights	
Access	The right to access agricultural land, gradient of access rights defined
Use of direct benefits	The right to obtain direct benefits related to agricultural land : salaries
Use of indirect benefits	The right to obtain indirect benefits related to agricultural land : in-kind support
Control rights	
Internal management	The right to regulate uses of agricultural land
Transaction	The right to determine the activities for the realization of benefits
Monitoring	The right to monitor agricultural land : benefit uses and state of agricultural land
Inclusion	The right to attribute use rights to stakeholders
Alteration	The right to transform durably agricultural land
Authoritative rights	
Definition	The right to define the discretionary space for control rights
Allocation	The right to attribute control rights to stakeholders

Table 1: Property as a bundle of rights, updated from Sikor et al. (2017)

Our preliminary results suggest that the studied land procedures participate to transform agricultural land from an economic asset to a common resource serving food relocation objectives. Food relocation is not only presented as a new land use that leads to the redistribution of property rights over agricultural land, but it also helps reconciling different land uses of an agricultural plot. For example, the project of la Clef des Sables shows how collective action concerning farmers' installation not only serve food relocation objectives, but also combines different land uses such as environmental protection and recreational activities. Said otherwise, collective land procedures can help (re)connecting agricultural activity to territorial projects and thus participate to territorial transition.

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