

Public policies creating tensions in Montado management models: Insights from farmers' representations

Teresa Pinto-Correia; Carla Azeda

The Montado is the silvo-pastoral land use system dominant in Southern Portugal, and similar to the Dehesa in Southern Spain. These systems combine an open tree cover of cork and holm oaks with grazing in the under-cover. Despite the acknowledged value of these systems due to their adaptation to the scarcity biophysical conditions of Southern Iberia, the uniqueness of cork production, the biodiversity values and the support of multiple public goods and services, in Portugal the area of the Montado is declining every year. It has been shown before how this decline is related to increased grazing pressure and use of inadequate soil mobilization techniques. Supported on social sciences theoretical insights, this paper focus on the farmers decision process, and the representations that support their decisions. The analysis is grounded on a large scale survey followed by in-depth interviews to Montado farmers. The results show that there is an underlying conflict between farmers representation of the Montado and the practices they are applying in their everyday management. Dominant representations of the Montado by farmers rely strongly on the tree cover and the forestry component of the system. While their management is strongly focused on the livestock and grazing resources. Farmers are abandoning a resilient thinking of their farm system considering the factors internal to the system, to adapt an external, driver oriented representation of their farm system. CAP coupled payments are seen as the main cause of this change. If the policy construction remains in its present state, the resilience of the Montado as a complex socio-ecological system is threatened in the very short term.

Key Words

Montado; Management; Decay; Representations; Farmers; Conflicts

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2017.02.029>

Pinto-Correia T. and Azeda C., 2017. Public policies creating tensions in Montado management models: insights from farmers' representations. *Land Use Policy*, 64: 76-82