

LOCAL BREEDS, PASTORALISM AND BREEDERS' WORLDVIEWS. RESISTANCE TO GLOBALISATION IN SOUTHERN FRANCE.

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ABSTRACT

In most EU countries, extensive livestock productions have historically been linked to local breeds. Both these productions and traditional breeds have markedly declined or even disappeared in some areas, as a result of global trends toward intensification, specialisation and abandonment of marginal areas. More recently, interest in the preservation of livestock biodiversity was revived. Concern over the livelihood of marginal rural areas and landscape management accompanied the political debate over rare breeds. Parallel to institutional activity, and in many cases as foregoers, social actors counteracted this tendency and undertook action that warranted that both breed extinction and the loss of pastoralist traditions be avoided. In this paper, after discussing these general issues in some detail, we present the findings of a case-study qualitative survey of local goat breed husbandry in Southern France. Non-directive interviews of extension experts and breeders of two local goats, Rove and Provençal breeds, have been carried out in Southern France. These revealed a strong link between the breeders' perception of local breeds and pastoralism and their broader worldview. Most of them belonging to one of the many "back-to-the-land" migrations, their choice to raise local breeds in the pastoralist way is linked to a vision of society (and resistance to a certain view of globalisation) as a whole. Their account is interpreted as the will to resist to mainstream discourse and practice of rural development in marginal areas. We analyse their discourse thoroughly and elicit some conclusions with an eye to possible futures of policy and practice.

INTRODUCTION

Marginal areas in Europe have known massive abandonment trends and more recently complex phenomena of what is commonly referred to as "rural restructuring". Specialisation of agriculture has led to intensification. Farms have undergone mechanisation and a shift towards livestock breeds that were more productive under controlled conditions. Land more difficult to cultivate mechanically has been abandoned. Under the dominant political discourse of "modernisation" that climaxed in the Sixties, local livestock breeds have disappeared at an increasing rate. More recently, both an interest in the preservation of endangered breeds and an attention to rural development in marginal rural areas have at least partly shifted the focus of policy and action.

Here, one caveat is necessary when it comes to the term "rural". This is a concept that recent literature and debate have somehow decried. It might seem awkward to use it. Indeed, as outlined amongst others by Frouws (1998), Halfacree (1993) and Mormont (1990), it has

become increasingly difficult to delimit what is "rural" from what is "not rural". Phenomena as "counter-urbanisation", or the pressure from urban areas on "rural" land, are well known and contribute partly to the larger and complex phenomenon of "rural restructuring". More and more people live in "rural" settings but work in town. City-dwellers increasingly own property in "rural" areas, for holidays stays and the like. We agree with the relevance of the issue. However, we resolve to using the term, implying we take it as a label for both (1) the geographical and agricultural sense commonly perceived in relation to landscape and agriculture and (2) the common reference for policies such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Rural Development Plans (RDP).

In this context, some caution is also needed in respect to the term "marginal areas". As Wright (1997) put it, the term is not defined precisely. Here, we assume that marginal areas are those where there are limited possible agricultural land uses because of altitude, short growing season, steep slopes, limited soil fertility and low productivity. These areas are mainly suitable for extensive livestock farming. Another term used in Council Directive 75/268/EEC is "less-favoured areas" (EEC, 1975). Our use of the former term should be intended to include the latter as well.

In European marginal rural areas as defined above, the following brief and simplified account can generally apply. After the massive exodus from these areas to major urban centres and from agriculture to industry, especially rapid since the end of World War II, a counter-exodus is observed more recently (Halfacree, 1994).

Policy choices investing in speedy long-distance travelling (e.g. high speed train or "Train à Grande Vitesse", TGV, in France) have enhanced mobility of people living and/or working in major city centres. Conflict over resources in marginal rural areas has often ensued, e.g. for access to land or other opposing uses. Sencébé (2002) cites results of surveys in France where 87% of interviewed people associated "rural areas" or "the countryside" with idyllic views of quietness, rest, beauty, nature, freedom, etc. Most people wanted to live in the countryside. The rural space was perceived as "an empty container", with only 9% of respondents referring to agricultural activities and most of them expressing a negative connotation (pollution, mad-cow, etc.). Significantly, only 1% of interviewed people associated the countryside with livestock.

THE ISSUE OF LIVESTOCK BIODIVERSITY AND MARGINAL RURAL AREAS

It is recognised that in most marginal rural areas pasture grazing is often the most appropriate land use, in some cases the sole possible. One factor that may partly explain abandonment of marginal areas could be linked to a dynamic common to many European countries, noticeably though not exclusively to more Southern ones, i.e. a large increase of instable type of animal rearing conditions. This increase has also been possible with policies that financed investments in infrastructures and mechanisation, and more generally with all market-distorting agricultural policy subsidies that have accompanied the development of intensification, specialisation and reduction in number of farms as well as enlargement in size.

Intensification of livestock production has meant a simplification leading to a high genetic uniformity of livestock. For example, most of the pigs reared under commercial farming systems in Europe and North America belong to two or three breeds. Ninety percent of all north American dairy cattle and 60% of all European cattle belong to only one breed, the Holstein.

Presently, a greater understanding of, and interest in, the preservation of biological diversity is gradually shifting the focus to the conservation of rare breeds. Moreover, recent literature on controlled comparisons of performance of "improved" breeds in more difficult environments, in

contrast to locally adapted traditional breeds, have proved that local breeds may be the best choice (e.g. Ayalew et al., 2003), when results are expressed in terms of net benefit per unit input of each major limiting resource.

The "discourse of modernity" in previous decades envisaged a drive towards more mechanisation, more industry and subsequently more services, increase of productivity and reduction of work force in agriculture. Larger farms and differential geographical development resulted, with farmers marginalised in areas that could produce less or needed extensive management or more manual labour. In what some have called the "discourse of postmodernity", marginal areas have known a revived interest, parallel to a different outlook on environmental issues, evolving gradually since the late Sixties. Thus, two main waves of back-to-the-land movements can be grossly distinguished, one in the aftermath of 1968, another one more recently and ongoing. Contemporarily, governments and institutions such as the European Commission have put a focus on "rural development" and the importance to protect marginal areas from total abandonment, on the one hand, and to preserve local livestock breeds, on the other hand.

Parallel to, and often prior to, governmental action, local actors have realised that certain breeds were endangered and have initiated actions aiming at their protection or recovery. This have been performed with some differences and some commonalties between countries. A country-based case study (Southern France) is presented, and the assumption is made that while certainly some aspects are relevant for Southern France only, others are either common to many other countries or even universally valid.

A CASE STUDY IN SOUTHERN FRANCE

BACKGROUND

The region of the case study is known as Provence and correspond roughly to the administrative region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, also known as PACA. Partly, our investigation has included some other geographically provençal sub-regions, belonging administrative-wise to Rhône-Alpes (Department of Ardèche) and Languedoc-Roussillon (Department of Gard). We have limited our survey to breeders in the area deemed to be the "traditional zone of breeding" of the two focus goat breeds, Rove and Common Provençal.

Our research question was initially the following: How to explain that in the same region, of two endangered goat breeds, one, the Rove, is the object of successful actions to preserve it, so that after declining to about 400 animals in the early Seventies, it has now revived to more than 5000 in 2001, according to the European Association of Animal Production (EAAP) database, and spread outside the original region, and the other, the Common Provençal, is still considered endangered, while some action is presently taken?

The Rove goat breed is a quite typical goat. Large (males' withers height is about 85 cm, and their weight is about 80 kg), with multicoloured coat and very large, twisting horns, one of its special characteristics is to have been used in transhumance in sheep herds. Farmers raising large herds of sheep in the plain usually kept some goats for their aptitude to guide the herd of sheep and adapt to harsh conditions from sea level to more than 2000 metres of mountain altitude. They especially kept castrated males called "menons" in French, with large bells at their neck, and these would be able to thrive on scarce food and pull the herd of sheep up and back down the mountains, including passing through snow, opening the path, as the snow glides on their hair while it would stuck to mutton wool freezing the sheep possibly to disease or even

death.

Perceived as beautiful, these goats are still proudly kept by some sheep breeders, despite they're less useful and even hard to manage now that transhumance is made by truck. This was one reason of endangerment of this breed. However, the breed was used somewhat differently elsewhere. The first researchers investigating on this peculiar breed even before it was considered as such, were told little about them except that they should go where the largest concentration was to be found, in the village of Le Rove, near Marseilles. The village eventually gave the name to this breed. There, its main use was to produce a particular kind of cheese, the "brousse", obtained quite uniquely by curdling milk with vinegar instead of rennet. The "brousses" were sold in Marseilles, by the breeders themselves, who went around shouting in the streets to call for customers. While no denomination of origin protects this particular cheese and you may buy cow-milk imitations, only one producer is still making it with this breed and in the traditional way in the village. Conversely, many newcomers have settled in several Provençal areas where they produce and sell various types of goat cheese.

The history of the Common Provençal is quite different. This breed is linked to the typical mixed farm of the past, with various type of cultures and many animal species on the same farm. There, it was mainly up to the women to deal with e.g. poultry and goats, while culturally "more manly" activities dealt with arable land and sheep raising. Specialisation, the disappearance of that type of mixed family farm and the cultural bias against goats were some of the drives that dramatically reduced the number of goats.

The revival of both breeds is largely due to a few distinct waves of newcomers, most of them neither of agricultural family background, nor originally coming from the region where they decided to settle as breeders. One important first wave of newcomers markedly happened in the aftermath of the events of 1968. Subsequent settlements in more recent years are not so noticeably spurring from one single event or period. In fact, they are ongoing, with young people presently undertaking to launch farms based on pastoralism and raising these breeds.

As far as the Rove goat is concerned, this breed was little known and particularly neglected at the administrative level. Having known the breed for the first time in 1960, A. Sadorge, a breeder and pastor, started undertaking personal initiatives, driving forces around him. In the early Seventies, the "Société d'Ethnozootecnie" founded by R. Laurans in 1971, assigned to J. Blanc a study on the situation of the breed, which revealed itself "desperate". Actions were undertaken, people interested, enrolled and mobilised (see Evans and Yarwood, 2000, for an account and an actor-network theory analysis of how a similar association of people around the issue of livestock breeds evolved in the UK). A. Sadorge was a key person, eliciting interest and enrolling important actors, including academic-level institutions as the national Institute for Agronomic research (INRA) and persons within such institutions as well as Universities.

OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND "SAMPLING" OF INTERVIEWEES

The general aim of this study has been to attain a thorough understanding of the drivers of breeders' choice and the importance of individuals and networks combining so as to make conservation of a breed successful. While some mainstream political discourse focuses on subsidies as supposedly necessary to overcome the differential lesser productivity of traditional versus so-called "improved" breeds, the assumption underlying this study was that perceptions and life choices of breeders are the most important factor, that marginal areas and less productive but less demanding breeds are reciprocally adapted, and that motives for breeders are inherently different than unit productivity of animals under controlled conditions.

In-depth, non-directive interviews were used to collect discourse, the approach being grounded in an interpretive epistemological perspective. A first wave of non-directive interviews formed the explorative phase and gave some hints for the very flexible structure of subsequent semi-directive interviews. While no qualitative research generally aims at representative sampling, we paid great importance to interviewing enough farmers from groups with slightly different characteristics. As far as the Common Provençal goat is concerned, all the very few breeders produce milk or cheese on the farm, and basically all of those raising the pure breed and being part of the association are back-to-the-land newcomers. The picture for the Rove breed is more varied. On one hand there is a lively tradition, amongst sheep breeders, to keep some goats. They may own as many as a few thousand sheep (the largest farm associating two farmers have 8000 sheep in common, but more ordinarily farms may have a few hundred sheep). Besides, they also keep a few goats (variable from just a couple to some dozens). However, they consume their goat produce and sell very little, they do not make cheese except for own consumption, and they have no significant financial gain from goats. On the other hand, there are goat breeders, mostly newcomers, that raise principally or exclusively goats. However, amongst them there are still some different subgroups: those selling milk, those producing only cheese on the farm, those selling kids (meat) and lastly those producing both meat and cheese. Another subdivision may be made on the basis of time of settling into farming activities, this happening either immediately after 1968 or more recently. We were careful as to select interviewees from all different groups.

THE DISCOURSE OF BACK-TO-THE-LAND BREEDERS

From the interviews it emerged a complex picture of the functioning of the two associations whose aim is to protect and develop the respective breed, as well as of the perceptions concerning, and interactions with, other actors and networks. It also appeared that almost all farmers for whom these two breeds are the sole or major source of income are newcomers, or "back-to-the-landers". These have pursued a precise life project, that was to move away from something they did not like, either town-dwelling or a given type of job, and come and raise goats "so to live in closeness with nature", as Farmer RB puts it. Farmer CJ says

"It was my objective, you see. I wanted to have a mixed farm, so I have now 42 goats, 20 sheep, six cows, about 500 meat-producing chicken and 60 egg-producing ones, as well as half an hectare of emmer. And I was lucky to find someone who sold 10 local does [female goats] which was my objective..."

Mostly, this process was initiated personally and in some cases against all odds. Raisers of both breeds describe the following situation: mainstream goat breeding is performed in-house, with large numbers of goats and large infrastructures; people who wish to revive a tradition of pastoralism are suspiciously looked at and they do not get credit easily. As Farmer RT— who when asked the initial question replies "welcome to the Middle Age" — explains,

"when I started, I had absolutely no funding. I live like it's Middle Age. I have no farm, I live here in this house and have to keep my goats in some fields at some kilometres' distance, there's no water, no light, nothing at all, and I have built some housing from scratch, on my own, but I'd need very little infrastructure, you know and I am tired of this because now I've realised I can really live of this, I wasn't sure, well, I didn't give a ****, it was a passion, but now I'd like to do better and I'd need little money you know, but if I asked — no way — and should I ask the same amount for a new car they'd give that immediately but for doing my job, no way!"

Later on he affirms "anyway if you want to rear the Rove you're a fool, an utopian". Another farmer, starting her activity more recently, had to attend an agricultural school so that she'd gain access to assistance and recognition as a farmer. She affirms "and when I said I wanted to start an activity with the Rove goat breed, they laughed at me, they scorned me and more than that they would not let me pass my examination anymore!" (Farmer RB).

However, these persons generally appear to be spurred from a strong inner motivation. They do not give in. They do not look for subsidies neither. They certainly do not subscribe to recent policy trends of "landscape management" as the main reason for their existence.

"They call us landscape managers now, we're not there to produce anymore, production should be in milk-factories elsewhere, I don't know, where they can force production to enormous levels per doe, it's horrible, I went seeing that in Poitou, 700 does, all attached to machines... but they want us to be there for folklore, whatever... They'd pay us to be there and manage landscape, we don't like that..."

"Interviewer: you mean you don't like subsidies?"

"We want to live with our own resources and sell our produce at a just price. No, we do not like subsidies, anyway we get very little, you certainly know that, a few big ones get 80% of the pie, don't they?"

While some aspects are common between the different "subgroups" of Rove breeders, namely the attitude towards subsidies and the love of the breed, perception was somewhat different amongst sheep breeders that raised the Rove goat in comparatively small numbers. Most if not all of them, in contrast to goat breeders, are sons and grandsons of sheep breeders. They keep the Rove goat breed more as a tradition:

"Well, I do not have much to say, I keep them, they've always been there, so, well, I also like them very much, they're beautiful, and they're for my pleasure, I actually do not live with them, but it's part of my farm, it's part of pastoral traditions..."

However, an interesting finding reveal that they are also sheep breeders as a choice, a strong identity with a given occupation, that of being a pastor and not a livestock breeder. Despite the apparent difference in being a sheep and not goat breeder, there's a lot in common in the type of link to the animals and to the land.

In substance, these breeders pose a strong choice, they want to raise a particular breed in a particular way. They choose a profession, that is not the same as farming in-house but is based on a different concept: pastoralism. In respect to this, as well as to their personal attraction for it, they explain their choice of the breed.

BREEDERS LOVE THE BREED

When asked to explain their choice of the Rove breed, almost all farmers give the same first answer: "because it's beautiful". Some Common Provençal breeders also say that, while most of them underline the importance it had for their choice the fact that they wanted to raise a local breed. Rove goat breeders often utter with emphasis "I love this goat. Does are gentle, beautiful, strong, binding" (Farmer R2T). When asked why things happened around this breed, what drove this action, they seem to voice that it is self-evident:

"Why something happened? Well, very simply, because there are breeders who love this breed, that's enough, is that not?" (C3)

After these initial statements about the beauty of the breed, Rove goat breeders particularly stress the rusticity and adaptation to harsh conditions. "These goats thrive on nothing at all. They can eat small branches of wood and still produce milk. Not enormous quantities, but well enough. And you know, what's interesting is, their milk, the fat content is extremely high. That's good 'cause you make great cheese with." (Farmer R11).

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD QUALITY AND THE "GOOD OLD TASTE"

Generally, explicit reference to environmental issues is rare. Even in relation to these rare breeds, the concept of biological diversity is not explicitly formulated. However, many breeders show some broad, imprecise apprehension about the world being globally in a bad predicament. A few of them go further and worry about the climate, etc.

One aspect that those amongst the goat breeders who produce cheese particularly stress is food quality. They are proud to speak up for their breed and pastoralist management as a way to "produce more in harmony with nature" (farmer R3):

"The elders say they find the good taste of their old times... we do not work with some Rhône-Poulenc additives!" (farmer RT)

"and there's also people coming to buy that say we do not ask enough for our cheese, and even one who paid us, er... we ask 1.60 he paid 1.90" [...]

and concerning more productive breeds

"because, the Saanen, the Alpine, in stabulation, you see, they produce a lot, but keeping producing more and more and more milk, you make water, you see these poor cheese floating in litres of water! [laugh earnestly]" (farmer RT)

Quality cheese is one particular combat. A difference is evident between the two associations. The Common Provençal breed society fought a long battle to get recognition of their typical cheese with a controlled denomination of origin (AOC, Appellation d'Origine contrôlée, in France): the Banon goat cheese. Wishing to link this to a pastoral or graze-management land use, they also obtained that this cheese be compulsorily linked to three breeds, the Common, Rove and Alpine, particularly excluding the Saanen breed, that is always reared in stabulation, "off-the-land".

The Rove breed is a dual- or even multi-purpose breed. We express here the empirically grounded theory that breeders of the Common and of the Rove approach two different "main" professions: cheese-makers and pastoralists, respectively. Whereas many Rove breeders are also cheese-makers, they especially choose a breed that is adapted for a pastoral lifestyle, and for grazing range and clearing forest undergrowth. Some of them do not even produce cheese at all. Despite their discourse also focus on quality, and for many of them cheese quality as well, their personal and collective combat is not in the field of denominations of origin. However, some of them have their own "private" label or other ad hoc marketing strategies.

LAND

One issue almost everybody raised was the problem of access to land. Some data show an impressive increase in real estate prices in recent years. Here is one answer to the question "would you tell me something about the difficulties someone wishing to start a pastoralist farm encounters?":

"The land! Here things are getting absolute nonsense. You know, you see this house, small as it is, well, with some land here and some poor buildings for the animals, well a correct price for someone who'd like to do this job would be about one million [French Francs, i.e. slightly more than 150,000 Euro] ...and then one day someone by mistake came here and he was looking for a house for sale, he offered two and a half millions! [French Francs, i.e. slightly more than 380,000 Euro] ...so, such a price is impossible for young people wishing to start as we did some years ago!" (Farmer C4).

When asked to tell more, most breeders explain about how infrastructures such as the TGV linking Paris to Aix-en-Provence in two hours and fifty-four minutes has made it easier for people to either buy second residences or even live there somewhat permanently:

"About five years ago we were 700 in the village, now we're 1400, we used to have a lot of land and let the goats graze freely now we can't do it anymore, all is fenced, trespassing forbidden... I don't know, they work in Paris, maybe some official or civil servant working two or three days, I don't know or getting some arrangement to work their 35-hour week on three days..." (Farmer R2T)

This is perceived like a problem that is out of control by most breeders. Many of them recriminate against this choice of society saying that all it's done for the sake of money and there is no perception of the importance of animal grazing, e.g. to avoid forest fires, etc. They

complain about "these villages that are becoming tourist deserts living a few months per year" (Farmer R8) and they advocate their permanent presence so that land is kept alive.

TWO (OR MORE) WORLDVIEWS

Overall, the aspects sketched above combined to suggest that a given and particular worldview explains the choice of pastoralism and of this breed, of life in sometimes remote marginal rural areas.

As it has been mentioned, a few different types of breeders can be identified and each group consistently show a given worldview. One group is formed by the sheep breeders. These come from a long family history of farming and they keep their breed for pleasure. Their worldview is conventional, and rural development the way it is intended in mainstream policies is more or less accepted, with the occasional criticism of subsidies and of the obstacles to the pastoral profession they're attached to, e.g. to the free movement of animals. Another broad group is constituted by newcomers, but these split in various subgroups. Thus, there's a part of them who chose the pastoral way of raising this breed in the specific marginal area as a personal combat against a certain way of conceiving economic development:

"There's those who shout in the street, go on TV, destroy McDonald's, I make less noise but this is my way, my personal fight, I try and do proper work with this breed,..." (Farmer RT)

In fact, these farmers affirm clearly their stance against a kind of "more technical" way of raising livestock:

"Technics is perverse, it ends up against a wall. It's a funnel, you push and push, and produce ever more ever more, it cannot but crash. One should see things more globally." (Farmer C1)

And this is clearly linked to the general perceived state of the world:

"Things are going very badly, we're going crashing against a wall" and "well, OK, I'm pessimistic, er... but you can't be optimistic when you see the way the world goes!" (Farmer RT)

"Why, everything is done for money and things are quite going badly, mankind don't care about nature anymore... For me it's spirituality, you may think I'm a bit crazy, sort of enlightened, but, well, it's all bundled together. For instance, my children are not vaccinated and I believe they're stronger because they're nearer Nature..." (Farmer R3)

Some younger breeders of more recent farm installation announce a slightly different motive, more personal:

"Well, we came here 'cause we wanted to live in this far-off area, and then I felt somewhat isolated and all this countryside, so I wanted to do something of it and I decided to get some goats" (farmer RB)

"Goats came later. We wanted to live here and get something done, work the land, we didn't know in the beginning, then goats came to our mind and of course it was self-evident that it had to be a local breed" (Farmer C4)

However, engaging further in the interview, underneath the will to live "a simpler life",

"And I love Nature, being there, guiding the herd and it's not my stuff to work all the time and certainly not in an office" (Farmer C4)

one could still get grasps of a worldview where organic farming, small-scale craftsmanship and phytotherapy completed the picture, respective to monocultural arable conventional cropping, large-scale industry and antibiotics.

Conversely, some younger breeders, having started their activity recently, and in some cases having the particularity of being "a son of the land", i.e. being native of the region although not of an agricultural family, showed another approach:

["would you tell me something about how it all began for you, why this breed, etc.?"] "Well, I wanted to be a farmer. [...] So why this breed, because it's quite in vogue, quite popular now, and I wanted to sell my cheese on the farm and also to selected restaurants and so it was good for marketing" (Farmer R9)

This choice is also consistent with the kind of occupation. Farmer R9 define himself as a farmer, mainly a breeder, but certainly not a pastor: "so my way of doing, you see, some do not like, they say it's not the tradition, they'd say the Rove should graze in free range but I plant some alfalfa and my goats graze there, in fenced pastures, I do not like guiding and following the herd! I just do not like it, you see, it's a personal taste, I need to be always on the move, I need to be doing things, well, sometimes I go out there in the wood with them, because they sometimes need more woody plants, but I don't like it, and I also cultivate some other things, it's a mixed farms, and I go selling my produce my own, you see [...]"

Consistently, a different worldview is explicitly uttered:

"[the other breeders] criticise everything, and they should use no technical advances, and their animals could not produce more milk, and they don't like it, but I am enrolled in the official milk control and I don't see why this breed could not produce some more milk!" (Farmer R9)

Strikingly, in some instances a direct and involuntary opposition is also found, as one farmer cited above declared himself against vaccination, while another belonging to this latter subgroup – drifting a bit outside the scope of the interview – narrates about its participation in a campaign of international aid where he "raised funds to provide refrigerators for Burkina Faso, so that they may correctly preserve vaccines".

FUTURE OF BREEDS

As far as the future of the breed is concerned, contrast is greater, with some breeders showing a certain pessimism about the future and considering themselves lonesome fighters that have been somehow abandoned even by the association of breeders. Others are more hope-prone and what is apparent is that it's those who are presently in the core of the association who are the most optimistic.

[Question: "How do you see the future of traditional breeds?"] "How do you see the future of cultural minorities all over the world in the future, it's me who'll ask you" (Farmer RT)

And talking about the way a breed should be:

"we shouldn't make of the Rove a goat of 4 litres a day, we must keep control of the breed! [...] And frankly, the future, I see it very dark. If the future of the Rove is to industrialise, that goes bad, well, I have nothing against *** but that's not tradition anymore!"

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEOPLE AND NETWORKS

Evans and Yarwood (2000) provide a synthesis of the process of network creation and

operation. They describe four overlapping phases: problematisation, interestment, enrolment and mobilisation; and they underline how a fifth moment of "dissidence" may happen, where some actors may no longer consider themselves in accord with the initiating actor(s) and this may lead to a collapse of the network, or at least to a major restructuring.

When asked about the single most important aspect to consider when attempting to preserve local breeds, extension experts generally agree: "you should have a solid unified group of innerly motivated, intelligent breeders who work together" (Expert E1). However, when questioned concerning conflict inside the Rove goat association as compared to the much smaller Common Provençal one, one of them explains that "goat breeders are independent. They're the less supported by the CAP and they're proud of their independence. But it's hard to make a collective-action group out of independent people. You see, I've done Genetics, but all the technical stuff here is very simple, I had done better had I chosen a Master's in Conflict management!" (Expert E1).

The main approach of our research was not historical, so that it's not an easy task of rendering the various stage of development of the two associations. However, some aspects emerged thanks to the non-directive aspect and the fair length (averaging two hours) of the interviews.

As far as the Common Provençal is concerned, the association is very small, young, and know almost no conflict at all. They affirm they were unified by their common struggle to get ruling in favour of a protected denomination of origin for a local traditional cheese (Banon). Historically, the Common goat population was not well described. Besides, the appearance being more common in respect to the Rove breed, this has supposedly influenced its attractiveness. As one extension expert puts it, "you need some more intellectualisation to love the Common Provençal, the Rove is very beautiful, it's easy to fall in love with it. Now, there's as many Common as there was Rove goats twenty years ago, but I am not sure we'll get to 4500 in twenty years time." In this association there's less conflict "because there's less passion, more reasoning".

As it has been summarised above, the initiator of the Rove goat breed society was A. Sadorge. He was very successful in the first phases and particularly at involving and enrolling people. Successful action and an expansion of the association was realised. The importance of A. Sadorge was regularly underlined by those among breeders who have been there since the beginning. As one breeder put it, "it was a great loss, 'cause he died and then the association collapsed!" (Farmer RA)

Presently, the association appears to be split in four subgroups. Of these, only one is active, the other pay their membership dues "to contribute, because it's important to support the breed anyway" but do not participate actively. One subgroup is made by the sheep breeders. They deem it's up to the goat breeders who really live of the breed. Besides, they disagree on the standard of the breed and the type and focus of selection: "well, we [the sheep breeders] like it red, one colour, or black, but they [the newcomers] want every colour, each of us has his own taste, then we're also far apart, it's not the same job, well, yes, it's OK we're part of the association but, well, we don't have much time to be active,..."

Another less active subgroup is formed by those that are too far apart, or just alright with the state of things, as well as those who are "young" relative to husbandry with these breeds. This group of people just in some cases utters the single comment about the "poor association which is a bit sleeping now", without showing signs of conflict or dissatisfaction.

The remaining two groups are those in overt conflict. Both are mainly constituted by long-

time members of the association. One of the two is formed by some of the "dissident" members. Conflict over certain issues and arguments have caused a sort of "imperfect" internal secession. While most of them are still official members paying their affiliation, they are no longer active. The other subgroup include some "ancient" members and a few young recent ones. Both subgroups overly explain their dislike of the other or their discord.

["would you tell me more about the association?"] "well, you see, there's been some stasis, then now there's this new president and I succeeded in having *** as vice-president and to have him come to Paris to the International Agricultural Show,[...] And you see, there's some breeders within the association, after these people put all that time and energy and they go to Paris to make the breed known, then some say, alright, you're going to Paris to sell your doe kids! But that's not true!" (Farmer RA)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Most breeders of the two local goat breeds are newcomers, or "back-to-the-landers". Motivation is strong for them to pursue a life project based on rearing these animals, mostly reviving a pastoral tradition. Collective action is the result of a few individuals determined to invest human capital into action to preserve and develop this type of husbandry. One of the most relevant obstacles these breeders face presently has to do with land, and is particularly accentuated by the phenomenon of counter-urbanisation.

The concept of counter-urbanisation often conveys a somewhat partial vision of the repopulation of rural areas. In particular, it tends to ignore or take little notice of less mainstream forms of "counter-migration". In this paper, we have focused on one such "alternative" form of counter-migration: back-to-the-land or "agricultural immigration". Paradoxically, we may in resume say that the conflict over land is intense between two groups of "newcomers" with different perceptions of rural development: the "idyllic" group people working in "urban" settings, migrating into a rural space where they simply do not imagine farm animals as a presence, and the "back-to-the-land" migration of those starting an agricultural (pastoral) activity based on extensive livestock management.

Another major hindrance is conflict within the breed society and/or conflict of worldviews relative to more global trends of society and of policy. Most breeders rearing these breeds share a worldview we have designated as "resistance to globalisation". We sum this up in a simplified, somewhat artificially dualistic way. On the one hand, globalisation is apparent in policies that aim at concentrating farming in large units in given areas and envision rural development in marginal areas as driven by tourism, recreational amenities and landscape management. In this perspective, markets are mainly supplied by large chains and uniformity of solutions is generally devised, e.g. standard "improved" breeds in stabulation. "Resistance" translate here into smaller farms acting for the revival of a pastoral tradition, a way of life and a profession. Most interviewed breeders envisage local food chains, quality food and a productive permanent presence on the land. Local, adapted solutions are looked for and individual choice is affirmed as the main motive that make it possible for marginal areas to be "re-colonised" in a different way than by second residences.

In reference to the recent social aspiration to preserve local livestock breeds, one aspect policy and future action should take particular heed of is the conflict over land. Access to pasture should be granted to breeders and herds. One focus could be put on education, as perception of pastoralism seems biased for most rural newcomers in the "idyllic" group.

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