

How do European Forest Owners perceive forest management?

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Motivations for this study

- In Europe, there are about 90 000 public forest holdings in contrast to **8.9 million private owners** in Europe;
- Ongoing **restitution process** in Eastern European countries;
- **Policy goal:** *“facilitating the incorporation of private forest owners into active management”* (State of Forests, 2015)
- **Assumption:** Forest owners do not actively manage their forests.

Research questions

- 1) Do European private forest owners share a **common understanding of forest management?**
- 2) Do European private forest owners **have a different level of economic expectations depending on their socio-demographic profiles?**
- 3) Do forest owners from **Eastern and Western European countries differ in their perceptions of forest management?**

Theoretical background

- Moscovici's **theory of social representations (SR)**
- **Definition:** Shared values, ideas, metaphors, beliefs, and practices held by the society we live in or the group to which we belong.
- SR are the **basis of social cognition:**
 - Help us to make sense of our world and “manage it”;
 - Facilitate communication between members of the group.
- SR are a semantic field relative to an object. In this case the object is “**forest management**”.

Methods

- **Survey in 7 countries in Europe:**

- United Kingdom

- Portugal

- France

- Slovakia

- Slovenia

- Czech Republic

- Romania

N=1,140

Questionnaire

In your view, forest management is:

For each of the sentences below please indicate your opinion with an X: from 1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree.

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Q1. The application of knowledge to managing the forest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q2. The management of capital/the management of an asset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q3. Making decisions on what, when and how particular forest stands should be harvested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q4. A good business opportunity because it provides good financial revenues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q5. Taking care of forest health and maintaining resilience of the forest (e.g. resist the impact of fire, storms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q6. Owning the forest, inspecting the area, taking care of the property and border stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q7. Preserving the forest for the future generations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q8. Good opportunity to earn additional money or to improve the family budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q9. Leisure and free-time activity in the woods instead of doing other recreational activities (e.g. hiking, going to the beach)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q10. Systematic continuation of the work started by our ancestors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q11. Imitating natural processes in the forest (e.g. leaving dead wood, snags, natural regeneration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Likert scale

Other variables:
age, gender,
education,
country, property
size

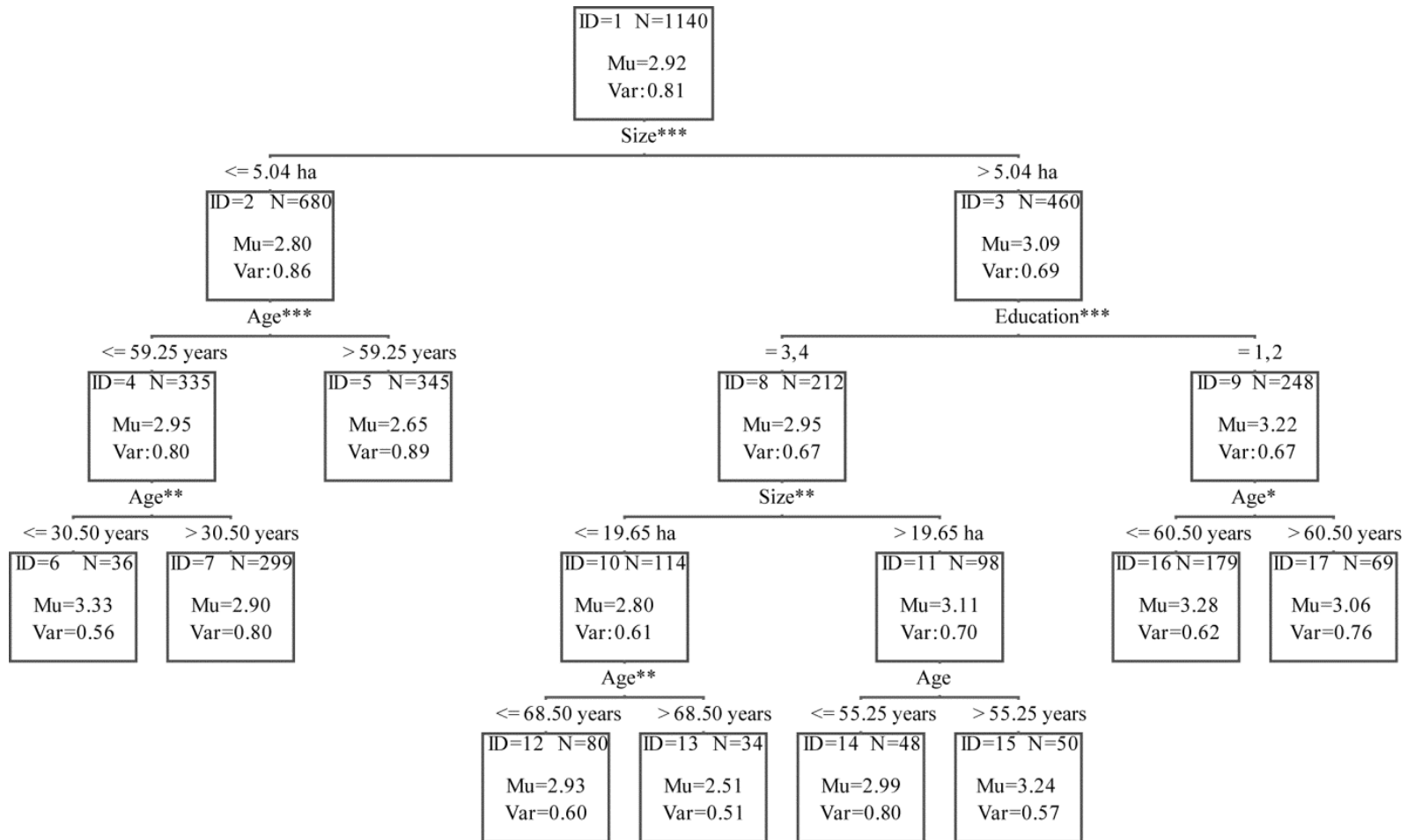
Methods

- The 19 statements were taken from **Ficko and Boncina (2015)** study: MAINT - maintenance forest management; EM - ecosystem-centred management and ECON - economics-centred management.
- **ANOVA** was used to compare the mean scores for the different forest management statements.
- **CART** were used to study the multivariate relationships between the major forest management concepts (MAINT, EM and ECON)

Forest owners perceptions on management (ranking of means)

Preserving the forest for future generations (1 st)	4.40
Taking care of forest health and maintaining resilience of the forest (2 nd)	4.21
Ensuring that the forest is not neglected and untidy (3 rd)	3.89
Undertaking forest operations (e.g. using a chainsaw, winch) (14 th)	3.69
A good business opportunity because it provides good financial revenues (17 th)	2.88
A good opportunity to earn additional money or to improve the family budget (18 th)	2.82
A source of subsidies (19 th)	2.44

Regression trees (ECON)



Results (for ECON)

ECON (Economics-centred management)

High

Medium-sized properties

Low level of education

Middle-aged owners

Low

Small properties

Elderly owners

Results

- Economics-centred forest management (ECON) ranked lowest among forest owners – making money is not the top priority;
- Challenge one-sided policies, based on subsidies (e.g. previous RDP) and the Renewable Energy policy (**Goal:** 20% forest increase and wood mobilisation);
- Challenge the definition of “active forest management/passive forest management”;
- ECON was more important to forest owners in Eastern European countries.

Possible explanation

- Barriers to the application of forest subsidies, (e.g. bureaucracy and administrative demands);
- Poor reliability of policy and incentive schemes;
- The loss of control over the property, and inflexible and restrictive land management regimes;
- Lack of income, low salaries, poor experience of forest ownership in Eastern countries.

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