

Multifunctional landscapes

perspectives for the future

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MULTIFUNCTIONAL LANDSCAPES – PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

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In essence, landscapes can always be considered multifunctional. However, different disciplines and professions dealing with landscapes interpret landscape functionality in different ways corresponding to different definitions of landscapes and related purposes of landscape studies. Dealing with the study of multifunctionality of landscapes it is proposed to distinguish between ecosystem functionality, land use related functionality and social functionality. Central issues include the question of scale, and the employment of information on land attributes (in particular

land cover) in the operationalisation of functionality. Emphasis will be put on consequences for design and implementation of landscape monitoring programmes and related strategic goals for landscape development.

The present growing interest in landscape multifunctionality among international landscape scientists is not based on theoretical arguments, but related to the fact that much modern industrialisation through one-sided land use has produced monotonous landscapes giving rise to a variety of landscape ecological problems. Especially many agricultural landscapes have been burdened to this trend. Since the 1980ties however, some trends, that might counteract this landscape monotonisation, have been seen, related to very different characteristics such as changes in agricultural production and policies, farming techniques, global food regimes, involved actors and ideology. This has been theorized into a so-called post-productivist transition that might follow a former productivist period developed mainly since the 1950ties. Further, the transition has also been interpreted as a transition toward a growing landscape ecological sustainability.

A critical review of such a theoritisation will be presented, questioning the underlying unilinear concept of social courses to landscape development. Rather than a general transition from productivist to post-productivist agriculture, it has been suggested that the so-called post-productivist transition should be interpreted as a step towards a 'multifunctional agricultural (or land use) regime' with a growing variety of agricultural and non-agricultural activities, developing parallel at very different spatial levels.

Since a 'post-productivist transition' presupposes a period of productivist agriculture (and a corresponding characteristics of landscape development) a major question rises whether less industrialised countries, characterised by traditional, often highly multifunctional orientated agricultural systems are supposed to follow this trend or if they can adapt a direct transition towards a multifunctional agricultural regime in a strategy for sustainable development.