

How are “farmers” adapting in Southern Portugal? Assessing land management typologies in a transition theory perspective.

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Abstract

European rural landscapes face today several changes due to market liberalization, price instability, energetic crisis, food quality and security, etc. Rural landscapes in the Mediterranean peripheric region of Alentejo (Southern Portugal) mainly managed under extensive farming systems are especially vulnerable to this global scenario, as farms traditionally base their income on production functions, unable to be competitive in this world market with the *commodities* they provide. These landscapes face severe threats of simplification and abandonment. But because of their extensive character and specific features, these landscapes maintain environmental and cultural values progressively demanded by society for *non-commodity* functions like leisure, nature conservation and identity. An increasing group of land managers (including full-time and part-time farmers, hobby farmers, business man or simply new residents) is emerging in these attractive areas giving expression to what some authors call the multifunctional transition bounded between a more productivist and more post-productivist management; or both, as they can overlap in time, space and structure. So, how are land managers adapting to society's demand and global changes? How can land management in these peripheric landscapes better adapt to the new requirements and survive in a globalized environment? What are the local requirements for these new management strategies and forms to survive? In this communication we intend to assess the different land management types identified in a protected area where the new functions related to the provision of public goods have already some expression, motivating land managers to adapt in different ways. The typology is anchored on the transition theory perspective and aims at identifying the possible innovative approaches for lands management in Mediterranean extensive landscapes.

Proposed parallel session:

Parallel session B: The ecological dimension of landscape projects and the contribution of participation to its recognition

This session will focus on the role played by specifically ecological or environmental concerns in landscape development projects and on how the stakeholders integrate these concerns into their projects. Papers should provide specific examples from which they will draw conclusions concerning the ability of participative procedures to integrate the ecological dimension of the landscape.