Assessing the capacitity of landscapes in providing public goods based on the social demand

Sónia Carvalho Ribeiro, Maria Luisa Paracchini, Teresa Pinto Correia

The goal of this paper is to define, assess and geographically delimitate the public goods related to amenity and recreation provided by the agriculture and agro-forestry land covers in the context of the Alentejo landscape in Southern Portugal. Assessing and mapping the recreational public goods rural landscapes are able to provide can be dealt with at different spatial scales, e.g. from the European to the local scales. However, these assessments often rely on different data and methodological approaches. At broader spatial scales, a common procedure is to use proxy indicators, derived from European datasets such as Euro Stat, being those indicators often integrated into composite indexes deriving recreation through the demand and consumption approaches (e.g. number of beds in touristic areas) , while at the local and regional scales landscape preference surveys are operational thus, a straightforward manner to directly gather data on the most preferred landscape components for recreation, this way focussing on the supply approach. The problem is not only to gauge whether or not those assessments deliver comparable results but as well to critically analyse how these top down and bottom up approaches can be reconciled in order to comprehensively tackle recreation public goods in such a way this can inform policy making at different scales of governance. It is acknowledged that integrated multiscale assessments are inherently more complicated and often more expensive than assessments at single scales but efforts have been made in order to derive a simple and operational frameworks for comprehensively tackle a multiscale assessments. The work developed throughout this paper addresses this issue by identifying, assessing and mapping the areas likely to fulfil different types of recreational needs at the regional scale in Alentejo and further explores ways forward to upscale the results to the European scale.

Based on Cassatela (2011)