The local landscape attractiveness as the ground for innovative land management: acknowledging new place based interactions for resilient farm systems

Teresa Pinto-Correia and Carla Gonzalez
ICAAM – Instituto de Ciências Agrárias e Ambientais Mediterrânicas
Universidade de Évora
PORTUGAL
mtpc@uevora.pt

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Montemor-o-Novo
100 km east of Lisbon and 25 km from Évora
Natura 2000 site
new functions in old patterns
.... or changing patterns?
>> a mismatch
Changing modes of rural occupancy: an on-going dynamic process

What is driving the use of the rural landscapes?

Relative weigh of production, consumption and protection are being altered, and often re-arranged again >> contradictions and complex dynamics

New management models
Transition theory: the multi-level perspective

Landscape press the regime
Opens a window of opportunity: influence mediated by actors’ perceptions, agendas, negotiations

Regime fails to offer solution >> niches emerge

Anchoring of niche in regime > adaptative management
> change in regime > mainstreaming
Consumption as a driver of farm and farmland management

..grounded in a quest for rural lifestyle, healthy food, leisure, which may or may not be closely linked to production

Lifestyle farming: the income generated from agriculture is not the main motivations for the choices taken

- multiple new types of actors and interactions
- changed approach to farming and farm system
- innovation in land management paradigms

survey through semi-structure interviews in local area, to small scale farmers, and thematic coding analysis
REAL-ESTATE

AGRICULTURE

OPPORTUNITIES
Increased accessibility and mobility
“Green” and “good life” ideologies
Available land, surplus housing
New IT possibilities

PRESSURES
Declining small scale agriculture / Decrease in agricultural income and employment
Increasing attraction by urban users
Lacking farm successors

LANDSCAPE TRENDS
Increased societal amenity demands
Concerns with food security
CAP still favoring large scale farming
Globalization of markets
Economic Recession

LIFESTYLE FARMING

Employees and service providers
Farming sector

HYBRID AGRICULTURE PRACTICES

Employees and service providers
Farming sector

LEGAL FRAME

Real Estate Agents
Land markets

REAL-ESTATE

Settled residents

CONSERVATION

Public Agencies
NGOs

SMALL SCALE MOSAIC STRUCTURE
proximate to urban centers

COUNTRYSIDE CONSUMPTION

Lifestyle land managers
Hobby farmers
Urban newcomers
Returnees
Local families
Weekend house owners

Actor
Process
What is changing?

Many different profiles: mixed new comers + locals + returnees (local family roots)

*related with close society connections with the rural*

Reasons for coming:
Tranquility + landscape + healthy food and life

Reasons for staying:
Social network + agriculture + landscape

Interactions:
with neighbors + older local farmers for managing commons and for traditional knowledge and practices

with friends + with groups in the local town for professional and cultural interests, for recreation

with urban consumers for selling farm products

with urban citizens due to family links

No particular interaction with other lifestyle farmers

No particular conflicts
What is changing?

* Renewed living conditions (housing) and
* Innovation in production goals and system components: organic, permaculture, specialised niches, ...

* Short supply chains, local or with distant connections

But maintaining traditional land use systems and practices (olive groves, vegetables, small sheep herds, pastures) = landscape character
Heterodoxy in Mediterranean agriculture

...challenging what has been observed in other contexts, new contours of the countryside consumption effects:

Interaction of different social spaces in the same geographical space
  >>> leading to a new and reshaped community, new network relations, highly grounded in place bindings

Not less agriculture, but much more diverse and innovative production forms with multiple non formalized interdependencies across farms and translocal networks

Not a vanishing landscape, but as the farm mosaic and the traditional land cover is kept, the landscape character is maintained and taken care off

>> a place based process
...but still an unseen process and unseen farmers

* No interaction between the concerned regimes
* Real-estate regime: determinant role, but no connection to farming
* Agricultural regime: pressures from the landscape are deviated
  policies remain strongly focused on commercial production
  >> supported by equally focused analytical models
* No normative institutional anchoring:
  no formal or informal rules about what is desirable

An opportunity which is being lost:
Re-coupling farming with the local landscape and rural life
Attracting external investment and entrepreneurship
THANKS