

BELGIAN RURAL ORDINARY LANDSCAPES SEEN BY BELGIANS

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Ordinary landscapes are worth to be better known not only because the European Landscape convention suggests it, but simply because they are the surroundings of more and more people in the European urban sprawl context. They are also the target of new developments such as wind energy.

The Lacsawep project (landscape capacity and social attitudes towards wind energy parks in Belgium) was presented at the penultimate session of the PECSRL in Lisbon. The results of the Lacsawep's photo questionnaire survey (n=1500) have since then been more deeply analysed from a cross-cultural and a sub-cultural point of view. Differences in the feeling of attractiveness have been found towards some types of landscape while towards other types a consensus seems to have been reached. To understand this, we analysed the content of those landscapes. Recurrent features in the discriminated landscapes were the basis of hypotheses on their influence on landscape attractiveness. For example, Flemings seemed to feel more attracted to typical Flemish landscape than Walloons; less educated people were more positive about "canalscapes" or modern agricultural landscapes; or country people felt better about large dark forests dominating backgrounds than city dwellers. There was a need to objectivise our hypotheses to build a new typology of the attractiveness of Belgian ordinary landscapes from the point of view of different individuals. Which landscape is better suited to whom? On what basis can we characterise landscapes so as to link them to the preferences of differing cultural groups?

We used our hypotheses to elaborate a new photo-questionnaire. Thirty photographs were selected to maximize the presence of hypothetic influencing features. Forty respondents were chosen according to their profile. They were interviewed in two phases. A first stage consisted, as in the previous survey, of marking landscapes on a Likert scale according to their attractiveness. The second stage consisted of a semi-directed interview taking the explanation of their choices as a starting point.

Thus it was investigated whether hypotheses deducted from a broad national survey could be further clarified and validated by means of qualitative research. Our research also lays the foundations of a new typology of Belgian ordinary landscapes.

KEYWORDS: ordinary landscapes, attractiveness, public perception, typology, Belgium