Spiritual Values and Sustainable Forest Management

Building a framework for research

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Content

- Sustainable forest management

- SFM and Spiritual Values

- Trends and developments

- Spirituality and forests

- Forest management practice

- Problem, research questions and methodology

- Results so far & beyond

Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)

- Deforestation – Conservation & Reforestation?

- Forest Management:

  - from Sustained Yield (timber)

    to Sustainable Forest Management:

    - Ecological (biodiversity, Ecosystems Services)
    - Economical (production, finance)
    - Social:

      1. Labour conditions etc.
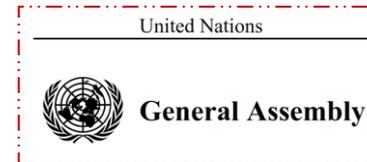   2. 'empowerment' of local people (Social Forestry)
      3. (Indigenous Peoples) → **Cultural & Spiritual Values**

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SFM and Spiritual Values (1)

Cultural (and Spiritual) values feature in major global forest sustainability strategies and principles:

- o Convention on Biological Diversity → Forest Principles

- o Vienna Resolution # 3 (Forest Europe) 2002 → C&I incl. Spir. Values

- o UN General Assembly 2008 → 7 principles of SFM / Cultural Heritage

- o UN Strat. Plan for Forests 2017 (concept) → Cult & Spir Values of Forests

- o Int. Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) (2016) → C&I incl. Cult, Spir, Religious and other non-material Benefits

SFM and Spiritual Values (2)

■ Indicators in major international forest certification schemes …

Forest Stewardship
Council (FSC) (2015)

Programme for the Endorsement
of Forest Certification schemes
(PEFC) (2011);

→ Not much explicit attention in practice (Agnoletti e.a. 2015)

Trends and developments: Indigenous Foresty

- IP first to advocate Spiritual Values in policies and C&I

- Mostly framed in context of land use rights & restoration

- Aboriginal forestry developed in North America, Australia, Brasil, Cameroon, Indonesia, etc.

- Spiritual Values explicitly mentioned (and documented) in indigenous forestry discourses and practices (Wyatt et al, 2008, 2012-2013; Trosper 2007)

  - → translation of SV in forest management practice

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Trends and developments NL (1)

Among the public:

- Public interest in spirituality increased:

  - over 31% of the Dutch population 'spiritual' (Bernts & Berghuis 2016).

- Nature experience conducive to spiritual enlightenment (de Hart 2014).

- Emotional involvement in nature often expressed in terms of spirituality (e.g., van Saane 2003)

- Spiritual experience in nature → environmentally friendly behaviour (Van Trigt and van Koppen 2003).

Trends and developments NL (2)

- Forest managers: Spiritual experience in nature
  → deep motivational driver (Terhaar 2005, de Pater 2008);

- Public involvement in nature & forest
  management increases (van Saane 2003;
  Buijs 2009, SBB 2015a,b).

- Forest managing organisations (State
  Forest Service (SBB), Natuurmonumenten)
  respond by making spirituality part of
  their governance structure (policies & strategies):

  - In 'sub-texts': 'experience', 'wonder', 'connection',
    'sublimity', 'purification', 'tranquility;

  - 'Soul and Business' (SBB business plan 2015-20):
    ➢ 'protect, experience, utilize'

- Government policies and communication on nature
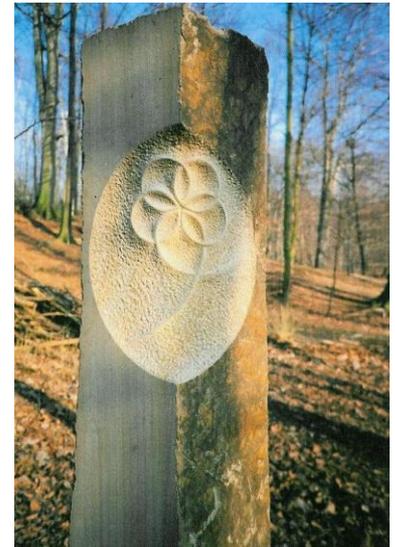 increasingly framed in 'religious subtexts' (Jansen 2017)
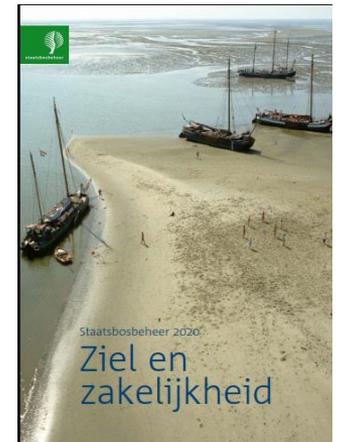
Research Objective

- To clarify whether and how spiritual values and concerns are taken into consideration in forest management practices
  - If so, what does it look like?

    (elements, dynamics)

  - To what extent? (regional variations?)

  - Useful and effective? For whom or what?

- Why important?

  - Critical reflection on the conceptualisation of SV of forests;

  - Critical reflection on supposed positive effects;

  - Enrich and underpin stakeholder dialogue on forestry issues;

  - Enrich forestry education (they ask for it);

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Spirituality

- 'Family resemblance approach' (Taylor 2016)

- No sharp distinction between 'spiritual' and 'religous'

- For analysis: 7 dimensions (based on Smart 2002):

  1. Emotional and experiential → 1a. Restorative;
     1b. Aesthetic;
     1c. Relational;

  2. Practical or ritual;
  3. Narrative or mythical;
  4. Doctrinary and philosophical;
  5. Ethical and legal;
  6. Social and institutional;
  7. Material and economic.

Description by Smart (2002)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in theory)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in practice): examples
1. Experiential/ emotional dimension		
The "food on which the other dimensions of religion feed" (p.14); various types, e.g. the numinous (Otto); Mystical experience, transcendent (towards the Other, the Spirit Realm) or immanent (towards the inner self)	• Nature/forests/ wilderness conducive to spiritual experience (Frederickson & Anderson, Williams & Williams, Van Trigt e.a. 2003) • Sub-dimensions:	
	1a. Restorative: tranquility, rest, contact with inner self	• Vision Quests; • Ecotherapy;
	1b. Aesthetic: Beauty, Awe, The Sublime, Fear, the numinous	• Wilderness experiences
	1c. Relational: Connection (with the surrounding world or with the Ultimate), Sense of Place, Meaning of life	• Education, e.g. 'Natuurwijs'; • Vocation to forest career choice (de Pater e.a. 2008); • 'Walks in search for Meaning of Life'

Description by Smart (2002)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in theory)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in practice): examples
2. Practical or ritual Dimension		
Prayers, puja, yoga, meditation; sacraments; emotion-evoking behaviour, often (not always) linked with ethical behaviour.	• Forests & trees as locus / object of ritual practice; • 'Vital energy' in forests & trees • Ancestral forests/trees	• Tree worship; • Healing Trees; • Shamanism; • Vedic rituals; • Geomancy; • Animal/ bird rituals & augury
3. Narrative or Mythical Dimension		
Myths, sacred texts (oral or written) e.g. creation, suffering, a Founder, saints, redemption, ethics, etc.	• Creation & cosmology; The Universe Story; • Forest & tree symbolism; • Sacred sites; • Worldviews	• Rituals to bring narratives & myths to life (Smart 2002)

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Description by Smart (2002)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in theory)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in practice): examples
4. Doctrinary and Philosophical Dimension		
Intellectual under-pinning & reconciliation with reality: theology, dogma, islamic philosophy, Eastern philosophy; in all world religions	• Envir'l theology (McFague, Boff); • Env'l philosophy & ethics; • Worldviews • Views on nature, e.g. – Deep Ecology; – Nature-based spiritualities', e.g. druidism; – Animism;	• Practices based on 'green' spiritual schools (e.g., bio-dynamic agriculture) • Trad. Ecol. Knowledge (TEK); • Reduced exploitation of old-growth forest • Selective instead of clearcutting
5. Ethical and Legal Dimension		
Religious Laws & Rules; may be detailed (e.g. Jewish and Islamic law) or more general (e.g. Christian charity)	• Rules for access & use of sacred forests & trees; • Arthashastra (Hindu books on agriculture/forestry/water); • Injunctions to conservation, tree planting, restoration; • (to a wider extent) food laws & taboos;	• Taboos on sacred sites • Chipko Movement • Movements for Indigenous Peoples' rights; • Earth Keepers Zimbabwe; • Spiritual Values of Forests in Sust. For. Mgt. certification schemes

Description by Smart (2002)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in theory)	Relation with Forest & Nature (in practice): examples
6. Social and institutional Dimension		
Religious organisation & communities from local to international level	• (Underlying) drivers of Community & Social Forestry and conservation movements	• Interfaith Rainforest Initiative; • Local spiritually inspired 'green' initiatives, e.g. Trees for Life (Scotland); • Franciscan Environmental project; • Spiritual Values of Forests as Ecosystem Services
7. Material (and economical)		
Art, buildings (e.g. temples), graves	• Sacred forests, rivers, mountains etc.; • totem poles & other sacred objects; • Forests as provider of sacred materials • Strong link with ritual dimension	• Pilgrimage to sacred sites; • Collection of sacrifice pole in Vedic rituals;

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Forest management practice

- <u>Forest management plan</u>:

  - translates strategies into practical prescriptions:

    - Objectives, interventions, timeframe, budget, etc.

  - usually made by profs, sometimes with stakeholders

- <u>The forest manager</u>*:

  - Implements the plan;

  - Dialogues with stakeholders;

  - Makes adjustments according to day-to-day reality;

    ❖*also communities, volunteers*

- (<u>Context</u>: policies, knowledge, economy, etc.)

Research Questions

Main research question:

- How are spiritual values (implicitly or explicitly) articulated and enacted in forest management planning and management practice?

  - *Sub-research question 1:*

    How are spiritual values articulated and enacted in forest management plans and planned interventions?

  - *Sub-research question 2:*

    How are spiritual values articulated and enacted in forest management practices? In this respect, how can the relation between plans, interventions and practices be understood?

  - *Sub-research question 3: "How do these patterns vary across the world?" (to be detailed)*

Methodology & Method

Practice-Based Approach:

- *Practice* = 'an ensemble of doings, sayings and things in a specific field of activity"…[;] incorporates … agency and action, discourse, knowledge, rules, non-human and inanimate entities (Arts et al. 2012:10);

- with more attn for emotions (Spaargaren 2011; Weenink & Spaargaren 2016)

- Logic of Practice: FMP = framework, but deviation is possible
- Situated Agency: Forest managers' behaviour = shaped in context of social practices
- Performativity: discourses (FM's) and knowledge constitute the reality they describe

Also:

- Interpretive research (Schwartz-Shea and Yanov 2012)
- Inductive (& deductive), starting from synthesizing concepts & working iteratively
- The researcher: part of the research practice

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Method

- Method:

  - Tekst analysis of forest management plans
  - Interviews (semi-structured) with the forest managers

    Cross-reference & analysis

- Selection of FMPs – principles *(t.b.c.)*:

  - Diversity of owners/organisations, forest type, region (spreading)

  - Start in home country (Netherlands), then adding contrasting plans from other regions/countries (worldwide) – appr. 4 x 4

- Selection of regions: by socio-economic and natural conditions: overall amount of forests, population density, legal foundations, religious orientations, conditions of access to forests (adapted from Pröbst et al. 2010)

Analytical framework (1)

REFERENCES TO SPIRITUAL VALUES												
Item/quote	Pag	Notes	Dimension of Spirituality									Indic. of SFM
			1a Rest.	1b Aesth.	1c Rel.	2 Rit	3 Narr	4 Doctr	5 Eth	6 Inst	7 Mat	
Tranquility												
Pressure of recreation appears to have increased…. Etc.	30		threat									IN2 threat
The dirt roads are open to the public and no speed limits are imposed … etc..	30		probl em Targe t grou p									

Analytical framework (2)

REFERENCES TO SPIRITUAL VALUES											
Item/quote	Pag	Notes	Dimension of Spirituality								Indic. of SFM
			1a Rest.	1b Aesth.	1c Rel.	2 Rit	3 Narr	4 Doctr	5 Eth	6 Inst	7 Mat	
Experiential values											
The characteristic ambiance of some coniferous forest stands will be maintained for preservation of characteristic bird and mushroom species. The visitor's experience is also enriched by a dark, evergreen piece of forest with tapestries of moss and the scent of conifers.	37	Here nature exp. is 1st (but after biodiversity)		Asset, intervention								+ IN2

Conclusion

- From NL:
- Spirituality still hidden in 'subtexts'
- but slowly surfacing lately in strategies & visions
- Some interventions specifically aimed at 'deep' experiences
- Term 'experience' has various meanings in the plans
  - when stretched, it may even contradict options for 'spritual' enrichment
- From Indigenous FMPs:
- 'The Spiritual' explicitly translated into forestry interventions
  - conditions: power, access, knowledge

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Thank You!

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