

## URBAN FOREST VALUES – TAXONOMY AND CASE STUDIES FROM NORWAY

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### Abstract

Almost 80 % of Norwegians live in urban areas, making urban forests highly valuable. The multitude of values assigned to those forests creates conceptual challenges, especially incorporating humanistic and existentialistic views of man. The aim of this presentation is to propose a value taxonomy for urban forests that takes such views of man into consideration, and to suggest how this can be useful to managers. Methodologically the taxonomy is developed through a literature review of environmental philosophical and recreation management literature, and then tested through qualitative interviews with selected stakeholder groups in urban forests near Trondheim, Bergen and Oslo.

Through the literature review *demand* values, *instrumental* values and *constitutive* values were identified as key categories. Demand values are utilitarian values appreciated for their own sake, while instrumental values are valued as means to get other values. Such concepts are used in philosophy by Ariansen (1997) and psychology by Rokeach (1973). Constitutive values are genuine non-utility values contributing to our *deep felt self understanding*, often subdivided into ethical, cultural identity and religious – spiritual values. Introducing constitutive values may help avoiding the trap of the "*commodity metaphor*" in the often utilitarian oriented management literature. Through our interviews we found visitors to value forests as a totality, embracing all three types of values. People's relations to forest could be described as a relationship where forests, as part of their lifeworld, are part of their understanding of their self and their place in the world. Even if utilitarian values are important, only constitutive values can fully incorporate this existentialistic bound. This has in addition management implication. Even if manipulations of specific forest elements are important, one can not ignore the holistic bounds between forests and people.

### Key Words

Urban forests, forest values, Value taxonomy

### Key References

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