



Landscape ecology should be more visible at the Global Landscape Forum

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Landscape ecology should be more visible at the Global Landscape Forum

We had the opportunity to attend the 2015 Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) in Paris and this experience drew questions about the place of landscape ecology in the current discussions about climate change and development. These forums combines into one event two of the world's most influential annual conferences on the role of forests and agriculture in mitigating and adapting to climate change: Forest Day and Agricultural and Rural Development Day. Held alongside the UN climate negotiations, these forums create a platform for positioning landscapes in the new international agreements on climate and sustainable development. Moreover, after Warsaw (2014, COP19) and Lima (2015, COP20), an invitation-only expert symposium was held in London (June 2015), involving experts on public and private finance to discuss opportunities and barriers to sustainable landscape investments. Finally, the third GLF held in Paris last December (2015, COP21) gathered together more than 3,200 participants. They came from all around the world and from all parts of the society: farmers, scientists, NGO's, entrepreneurs, and even bankers. Stakeholders, researchers, investors and donors had a vibrant debate on how best to meet the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with plenty of presentations where landscape was one of the most frequent keyword. Transcending sector-based approaches and enhancing

the integrated landscape management were clearly pointed out as the heart of the intertwined challenges associated with climate and development.

Surprisingly, despite this very strong focus on landscape scale and its relevance for many serious topics, landscape ecology as a science was very rarely cited and acknowledged. Landscape sciences was more often used as if landscape ecology was not sufficient to encompass all the questions they wanted to tackle. At the end of the forum, we wondered why such situation, why the frameworks, methods and tools provided by landscape ecology are not more mobilized to help in problem solving?

At least, it would be probably useful for IALE to follow these events and to see how our association could be represented as a contributor in the debates. But this would probably not be sufficient. Our feeling was that landscape ecology has things to say, but also things to hear from sibling social movements who explore other dimensions of our objects of study. Our landscape is probably not exactly the same as the landscape used by the participants of these forums. One key difference lays in the place acknowledged for humankind. In many landscape ecology studies, people are a secondary component of landscapes while in many presentations during the forum, people were in the foreground and

landscape was a resource and a production for and of their activities. One consequence of this point of view is that there were not one unique way for describing landscape, it was socially dependent. In landscape ecology we look for invariant properties from spatial patterns, while in the forum, the same patterns were not perceived the same way by different people, according to their culture, needs, social position.

We have learnt a lot from this forum. The scope of landscape ecology needs definitively to be enlarged and the next GLF could be a good opportunity to confront our approaches to others who try more pragmatic and human centered approaches.

More information can be found here: <http://www.landscapes.org/glf-2015/> by Marc Deconchat (INRA Castanet Tolosan, France) and Davide Rizzo (Institute of Life Sciences Pisa, Italy)