A Call for Special Issue Contributions

The European Landscape Convention at 20: Achievements, Progresses, and Opportunities

1. Background and justification of the SI

The European Landscape Convention (ELC), signed in Florence in 2000 (Council of Europe, 2000) and since then ratified by 39 Council of Europe member states, represents a major milestone in the evolving protection, study and policy for European landscapes. The ELC not only established a now widely shared definition of landscape, but also put forward new approaches to landscape preservation, protection, and management. The ratification of the ELC led to a significant boost in the protection and sustainable use of landscapes, now representing a prominent and widely practiced policy objective in Europe (Scott, 2011). The study of landscapes has thereby experienced a paradigm shift, evolving from conventional reductionistic and mechanistic approaches to more integrated approaches based on wholeness, connectedness and complexity. By proposing a concept of landscape as an interaction of different socio-ecological systems, the ELC has embraced landscape ecology theories and its manifold approach to landscape assessment, with the result of having also influenced a reform in national landscape protection legislations.

The ELC applies to all types of landscape and represents a holistic view of the sites and their surroundings. It emphasizes how people experience the landscape and highlights its social significance. It underlines the democratic aspect, i.e. the importance of giving people the opportunity to actively participate in the evaluation and management of the landscape (Council of Europe, 2012). The ELC has been designed to be applied at two levels: adhesion of the states and the establishment of common regional policies, strategies, and practices that share the values of local societies. A variety of national policies and planning processes are used to implement the ELC due to the different types of European landscapes, which cannot be planned in the same way at the various administrative levels (Zoido Naranjo, 2006).

In many European countries, the ELC has supported legislative change toward the promulgation of new measures for landscape protection (Scott, 2011; De Montis, 2014). From a planning perspective, the introduction of the new legislation for cultural heritage and landscape protection has produced a new generation of landscape plans with an increased attention to environmental issues of landscape conservation and integrated safeguard rather than conservation of individual historical sites or monuments (La Rosa and Martinico, 2013).

However, claims have been raised in the last years to move beyond the rhetoric of the ELC and to bring landscape more firmly and coherently into the landscape planning discourses and, at the same time, enabling positive and concrete results in terms of landscape protection (Sebo and Huba, 2013; Hernandez-Morcillo et al., 2017). This requires more research to promote and champion new forms of participatory landscape governance in order to overcome the inherent ‘fuzziness’ and elitism which still pervades many practices of landscape planning. Indeed, contemporary European landscapes face altered or new challenges, relating to multiple and often novel pressures such as growing peri-urban settlements (La Rosa et al., 2018), changes in agriculture as a primary driver of landscape development (Kizos et al., 2018), the need to strengthen the protection of the multiple landscape services (Albert et al. 2017, Mouchet et al., 2017) and to reform respective governance schemes and policies (Pedroli et al.
Furthermore, the worldwide cultural and societal trends and emerging concepts (i.e. Ecosystem Services, Green Infrastructure, metabolism) have pushed landscape planning and management toward more integrated, mature and holistic approaches.

Understanding the influence and impact of the ELC on landscape development in Europe is challenging, given that the ELC is only one of multiple societal, economic and environmental changes that drive landscape evolution. The interconnectedness of those trends make it difficult to find evidence of the actual impact of the ELC on the ground. Against this background, identifying, evaluating, and comparing experiences regarding the implementation of the ELC in different European countries could provide new insights. In particular, research that compares countries with different levels or kinds of implementation of the ELC could shed new light on ELC impact.

2 Special Issue aim and research questions

The aim of the Special Issue “The European Landscape Convention at 20: Achievements, Progresses, and Opportunities” is to synthesize experiences in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) across different European countries, planning systems, scientific disciplines and sectors of practice related to the conservation and sustainable management of European landscapes. We expect to gain new insights regarding the diffusion of theories and knowledge around landscapes in the planning and management of European landscapes and, at the same time, to identify options for improvement in the landscape legislation and regulation at European and country levels. Contributions to Special Issue will try to provide informed evidence on the efforts and attempts made by political actors and scholar-practitioners in implementing the ELC in different European or international contexts.

Contributors to the Special Issue are invited to provide reflections on one or more of the following questions regarding the governance context, implementation efforts, and impacts of the ELC:

- What have been constraints, possibilities and positive outcomes of implementation of the ELC in different European planning systems? Which commonalities and differences exist regarding implementation?
- What evidence is available concerning the ELC’s impact in improving the protection and sustainable use of European landscapes? To which extent can the ELC be attributed as a driver of such improvements?
- Which indicators and methods can be used to measure ELC impact?
- Which have been the main impacts of the ELC on the coupled socio-ecological landscape systems?
- Which findings and recommendations can be provided to policy makers regarding options for a further development and improvement of the ELC and its implementation mechanisms?

3. Affiliated symposium

As part of the SI preparation process, the Guest Editors organize a symposium at the 2019 IALE World Conference, to be held in Milan (Italy) from 5 to 10 of July, 2019. It is expected that authors will benefit from comments and suggestions from their peers, targeted at enriching the key discussion and conclusion points of their respective papers. The purpose of the symposium will be threefold: - providing an overview of possible contributions of the Special Issue, therefore promoting it to a larger audience of scholars attending the congress; - tuning and harmonizing the topics of the Special Issue and improving the way in which each
manuscript addresses the Issue’s key research questions; and
- identifying commonalities and differences between studies from different countries, and jointly
exploring synthesis findings and recommendations.

4. Abstracts and articles preparation and submission

Manuscripts may be developed in any of the 11 article types indicated in the inaugural SEPR editorial

Abstracts should:

- indicate which of the topics and research questions aim at addressing and choose an article
type;
- be limited to 700 (or fewer) words (information about author and affiliation not counted);
- be submitted by April, 15th, 2019 by email to the Guest Editors and Editor in Chief (see
contacts section).

Authors with accepted abstracts will be asked to submit a full paper through the SEPR editorial system.

5 Key deadlines

Abstract submission: April 15th, 2019
Acceptance notification: April 31st, 2019
Manuscript submission: October 1st 2019
Special issue paper Online First publication: shortly after manuscript acceptance
Special issue completion: March, 2020

6 The SI editorial team and contacts

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