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Who Is Restoring Forest Landscapes? Analysis of Citizen Participation within the De-Eucalyptising Brigades in Galicia, Spain

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Abstract: The expansion of eucalypt plantations constitutes a growing source of landscape transformation in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. In this context, forest planning has failed to design forestry policies that consider the demands of the population as a whole. Among other consequences, in 2018 a group of activists founded a volunteer programme aiming at collective action against the expansion of degraded forests. By 2022, over 100 actions had been performed, mostly involving eradication of eucalypt sprouts, and 1000 activists took part in such programmes. Through participatory action research, this work explores the nature and functioning of this programme and discusses in particular the socialisation of landscape management. The results reveal a slight prevalence of an urban public participating in rural areas, so that activism against eucalyptus expansion conforms a centripetal force in the creation of new networks of actors that transcend the rural–urban dichotomy. It is concluded that the studied case can be taken as a model for public institutions aiming to reinforce citizen participation in forest landscape plans.

Keywords: eucalyptus; landscape; forest plantation; public participation; participatory action research



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1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of *Eucalyptus* spp. plantations constitutes the greatest process of contemporary forest transformation in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula [1,2]. In general, this expansion laid in the transition from a paradigm of public promotion of plantations to another more diffuse, subject to private initiative, and the development of market logic [3,4]. While data show that most of the current masses are essentially the result of individual initiative, collective questions around the governance of the forest space and the derived effects of monocultures arise. For instance, issues such as the concentration of the population in urban areas and changes in lifestyle have led to an increasingly absent forestry scenario [5]. In this context, both Portuguese and Spanish governments have recently promoted regulations to landowners and tenants regarding the afforestation with this genus. However, the efforts to revert the so-called eucalyptisation and diversify the forest space have been tagged as ineffective so far [6].

Evidence on the different impacts caused by the monocultures was previously addressed as an ecological, demographic, social, economic or political problem, among other topics [7,8]. In this article, we argue that the polyhedral condition of the eucalyptus monocultures is defined by the resulting landscapes. In fact, there is evidence that the social controversy associated with this process of expansion persists latently in peri-urban areas where eucalypt plantations are hegemonic in plantation forestry and, therefore, in forest landscapes. Given the collective dimension inherent to the notion of landscape [9], our hypothesis is that the social controversy derived from eucalyptus monocultures transcends the forestry sector and encompasses other groups of actors and levels of political advocacy. The objective of this paper is to analyse and discuss the implementation of a landscape

restoration initiative led by the civil society, namely the environmental grassroots. Therefore, the ultimate goal is to pose a set of recommendations in the field of sectoral forest planning towards the reinforcement of public participation in forest landscape plans. To do so, we will analyse and discuss public participation within the bottom-up initiative De-eucalyptising Brigades (“Brigadas Deseucalptizadoras”, in Galician language).

Aiming to implement a broad dimension of landscape in practice, the Council of Europe signed on October 2000 one of the largest contemporaneous conventions in the fields of social and natural sciences, the European Landscape Convention [10]. Since then, this framework states that the practice of landscape management should no longer be limited to ‘tangible’ attributes, given that the notion of the geographical space is also defined by the ‘intangibles’ [11]. This research is based on the conceptual nucleus of forest landscape, which has historically brought the notions of ‘the natural’ and ‘the cultural’ together [12,13]. The concept of forest landscape expresses, around the narrative of forests, fundamental tensions between the objective and the subjective, and between the material and the representational [14]. The construction of forest landscapes is, then, far from responding only to the materialistic and transformative initiatives of the forestry sector. It also responds to multiple stakeholders coexisting with past and present landscapes, potentially aiming for alternative mosaics of land uses in the forest space [15,16]. Therefore, we need to understand forest landscapes as an object in continuous dispute, in which divergent sensibilities towards forest covers are brought together on the one hand [17], whilst willingness on land-use might also shift, on the other hand [18]. Perceptual and emotional explorations of the forest space could enable us to arrive, in short, to the polyhedral condition of any form of landscape.

Degraded forest landscapes are often alleged as a result of abandoned monoculture plantation forestry, biased habitat fragmentation, biodiversity loss and the limiting of environmental services in forest governance [19,20]. Thus, degraded forests occur both materially, e.g., habitat destruction, and immaterially, e.g., aesthetic homogenisation of landscapes [21,22]. Forest landscape restoration is emerging as an integrated approach to address the negative outcomes of plantation forestry and promote governance across sectors, moving towards the understanding and resolution of forests’ degradation [23]. Often applied beyond site-based activities—that is, at a broad scale—forest landscape restoration emphasises the critical role of power relations in the forest space. This community of practice transcends, therefore, the policies of environmental management to include social welfare and improve the sustainability of livelihoods. As noted by Long et al. ([23], p. 58), the objective of forest landscape restoration is “not only to restore the ecological integrity, but also to improve the sustainability of livelihoods”.

The implementation of forest landscape restoration tends to be discussed under the logics of polycentric governance: a multi-scalar and multi-sector way of governing the forest space [24]. Therefore, this approach constitutes an alternative to the allegedly failed large-scale, government-led forest programs. Landscape restoration implies the involvement of new actors, networks and forms of knowledge in forest management. Aronson et al. [25] showed how non-state actors are more likely to adopt a proactive status, rather than playing a reactive role in restoration practices. Therefore, a variety of cooperative efforts may emerge derived from the interactions of the actors involved, so that the performance of polycentric governance may vary not only in time, but also in space and scale [26]. In this regard, questions around the relationship of established social networks with the geographical space arise, hence constituting an opportunity to discuss, for instance, the interactions between the urban and rural public in landscape restoration programmes.

2. A Geographical Review of the *Eucalyptus* Genus in the Northwest Iberian Peninsula

The *Eucalyptus globulus* Labill., commonly known as the Tasmanian blue gum, is currently one of the most relevant pulp wood plantation species in the world [27,28]. This forest tree, the native range of which corresponds to the island of Tasmania and

southern regions of continental Australia, is cultivated in temperate, sub-tropical areas of all continents, except Antarctica. The adaptation of the tree to different sources of water, its rapid re-growth capacity and the limited attraction of herbivores in its exotic range are three of the main conditions that facilitate the diffusion of the species [20,29]. Whilst in 1950 the global expansion of the *Eucalyptus* genus was estimated as under a million ha, it is estimated that at least 20 million ha of eucalypts are currently planted worldwide, with *E. globulus* being the dominant species. Beyond its material dimension, it is necessary to review the social interactions and aspirations derived from the diffusion of this tree to understand the implications of the eucalypt on a particular landscape.

The Introduction of the *Eucalyptus* genus in Galicia responds, in line with other temperate regions of Europe, to an accumulation of individual interests on the experimentation of a novel exotic species. Besides the debates around the first germination, currently dated in northern Galicia to ca. 1850 [28], aesthetic and therapeutic values proceeded any other productive purpose for a few decades. Such experimental cultivation was first led by wealthy families in their gardens, and later by the Government, which promoted public campaigns to socialise and diffuse the cultivation of eucalypts between 1900 and 1930. Paradoxically, at this point, the agreeable image that the eucalypts had among the local population shifted to a more critical one [30]. The main reason was, according to different analyses, the introduction of the eucalypts under the logics of an allegedly imposed public promotion of forestry, hence constituting not only a shift in the governance of the land, but also a significant expansion of the tree within Galician rural landscapes [31,32]. The initial diffusion of eucalypt plantations was developed over a territory in which rural-agrarian landscapes had traditionally been a cornerstone of Galicia.

Quantitatively, the greatest expansion of eucalypt plantations occurred in recent decades. Either by action or by omission, it is within the framework of post-Franco dictatorship when exponential growth happened. While in 1975 there were catalogued around 50,000 ha in Galicia, in 1998 the surface was of 174,000 ha, and of 422,000 ha in 2008 (Figure 1). Such process of exponential expansion is, in this region, comparatively more intense than in the neighbour territories of Asturias (ca. 60,000 ha PT) and the northern region, Portugal (ca. 165,000 ha PT), partly due to the accelerated de-agrarisation of Galicia in recent decades. Such exponential diffusion of plantations was sectorally prompted by the major Spanish pulp company, ENCE, that operates with eucalyptus masses in almost half of the Galician local government areas [33]. In terms of production, with an annual accumulation of 5 million m³, eucalypt plantations already congregate more than 50% of Galician forest-harvesting benefits [5]. Derived from this expansion, a massive process of land use change occurred in this region [34], hence incurring critical outcomes over landscape fragmentation [35–37].

In terms of impact, the FAO emphasised, in a monographic session dedicated to this tree, the recurrence of political and economic factors ahead of strictly ecological effects. Indeed, issues such as the shifts in land ownership, the rapid alteration of local economies, or the instability of woodchip prizes, are social factors that affect the propagation of negative perceptions towards this land cover. Whilst in Galicia many of these phenomena derived in recurrent controversies [38,39], it is key to note that there exist simultaneous, assimilable long-term conflicts in several regions internationally. For instance, rural areas of India and Brazil are today the scenario of social movements denouncing the historical dispossession of lands where industrial plantations were located [40]. In Kenya, Hohenthal et al. [16] revealed how large-scale monocultures were responded to by peasant communities concerned with the material and immaterial degradation of local landscapes. Similarly, in Chile, the arrival of multinationals aiming to locate large plantations in rural areas was rejected by indigenous communities [41]. In Australia, the fluctuation in the value of timber caused a substantial change in the attitudes of farmers towards eucalypt plantations [42]. At the heart of these controversies remains the notion of bottom-up processing in landscape management, allegedly limited in all the cases described.

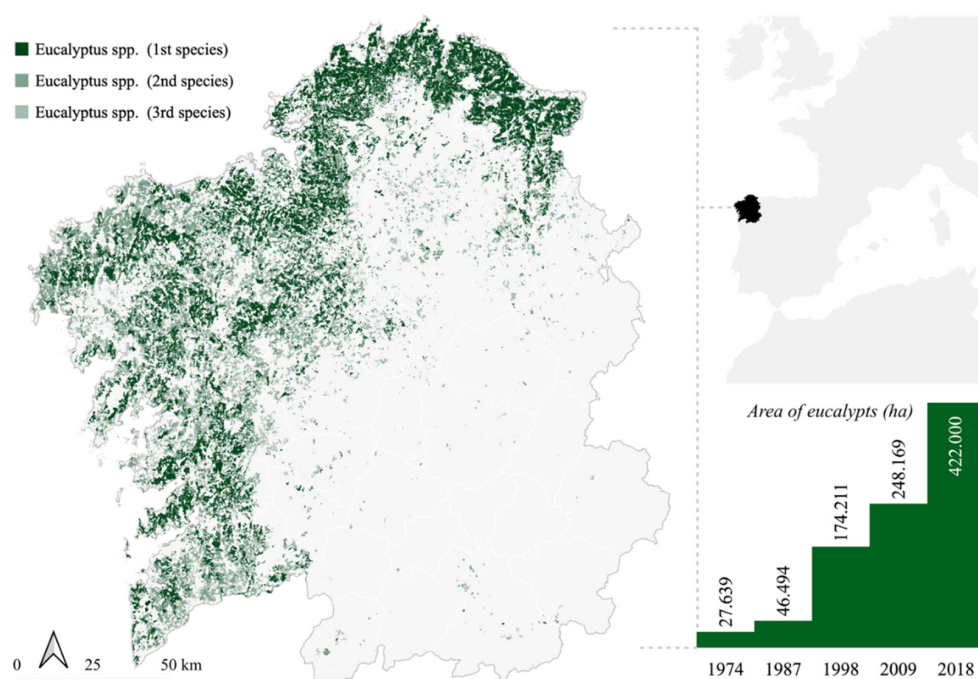


Figure 1. The contemporary expansion of eucalypt masses in Galicia, Spain. Map by Diego Cidrás with data of the Spanish Forestry Map (1:25,000).

Back to the northwest Iberian Peninsula, above any socio-cultural aspect, debates on the ecological impacts of monocultures have been the most recurrent over time [7]. The main complexity on this matter is that no species of the genus show comparable behaviours in each environment, nor does the same species show the same behaviour in different environments. The works of Calviño-Cancela et al. [36,37], Cidrás and González-Hidalgo [38] and Gil Sánchez [43] evidence how there is diverging evidence pointing to the invasive character of the genus in Galicia. In any case, matters such as the degree of water consumption [44,45], soil degradation [46] or the impacts of monocultures on native biodiversity [47,48] point towards an accumulation of negative impacts of eucalypt plantations on native ecosystems.

In this context, in 2021 the Galician government passed an updated version of its Galician Forestry Plan. Such document stated, for the first time, the need for immediate containment and long-term reduction (−5%) of eucalypt masses. This statement was justified either through strictly ecological arguments, namely soil conservation, or through arguments of market balance. Despite being a document that claims to be a forest landscape document, the Galician Forestry Plan supported such relevant measure on a framework of objective arguments, that is, dispensing with the landscape dimension. In fact, the framework of citizen participation of this plan is bounded by a single body, the Galician Forestry Council, made up for the most part of private companies of the forestry sector and, in the last instance, just by stakeholders directly involved in the sector. Therefore, on paper, this plan lacked the capacity to incorporate the demands of the population as a whole. In any case, at the time of this publication, and despite the allegations of non-compliance, there is an active moratorium of new *Eucalyptus* plantations throughout the Galician territory.

The Emergence of the De-Eucalyptising Brigades

In October 2017, a massive wave of forest fires affected large areas of western Galicia and northern Portugal, affecting populated areas surrounded by *Eucalyptus* spp. and *Pinus* spp. plantations, ultimately causing more than 100 deaths [49]. The immediate protests and demonstrations against the monocultures—one of the alleged sources of wildfires—were located mainly in urban areas, hence distant from the forest space [50]. At this point, an environmental NGO, Verdegaiia, reached out for a strategy to involve the civil society in the

restoration of native forests. This NGO contacted the Froxán Commons, a small community made up of five households, that one year before had started to organise calls for collective work in the forests—the “rogas”—followed by a feast in exchange for such work—the “albaroques”. Considering the great success that the collective work reported in terms of landscape resilience and social engagement [51,52], Verdegaiia and Froxán Commons together designed a pathway to spread the model in Galicia and potentially escalate it to a regional level.

Resulting from this collaboration, the De-eucalyptising Brigades were launched in April 2018, with a first symbolic action in Froxán. Since then, more than 100 actions have been developed through Galicia by over 1000 registered volunteers. Typically, working days consist of a variety of tasks, ranging from the logistic organisation and uprooting eucalyptus sprouts to consolidating natural regrowth of native species and exchanging operative methods and scientific information among the participant volunteers. Each organising community promotes and oversees the design of an action. At least since 2020, the De-eucalyptising Brigades are recurrently operating not only over abandoned eucalyptus plantations, but also over forests invaded by spp. *Acacia*. As a matter of fact, we can highlight the promotion of the first international action of the De-eucalyptising Brigades, located in the Serra da Estrela (Portugal), in the framework of the Erasmus + Programme “Vémonos no monte!” (2021-2-ES01-KA210-ADU-00004958), where a group of Galician activists collaborated in the control of invasive *Acacias* spp. In all, we can define the De-eucalyptising Brigades as a bottom-up initiative that seeks to mobilise and organise people with the purpose of eradicating eucalypts and other invasive species in rural spaces of Galicia and surrounding areas.

3. Materials and Methods

The empirical work was developed within a participatory action research (PAR) design. This experimental methodology implies the involvement of the researcher in the actions of a phenomenon to perceive in situ the practices, meanings and emotions inherent to the phenomenon [53]. Through this methodology, we would have not only regular access to the plane of actions and meanings inherent to the practices of forest restoration, but also the possibility of interpreting the new networks of action woven on the studied initiative. Between 2018 and 2021, we periodically took part in the different actions organised by the De-eucalyptising Brigades with the purpose of understanding and engaging with the direct action of uprooting eucalypts, while building relationships with other activists. Following the daily model of “rogas” and “albaroques”, three times a year our engagement shifted from informal participation to the conduction of brief seminars, in which data collection was developed. For this research, which specifically aims to understand who is participating in the brigades, we conducted a survey in collaboration with the Froxán Commons and semi-structured interviews.

Between March and July 2019, the survey was conducted right after the organisation of two simultaneous brigades that have been organised throughout Galicia ($N1 = 364$, $N2 = N1 + 35$). Therefore, the questionnaire was limited to active members of the group. As noted to the participant activists, the purpose of the survey was to understand the origins and motivations of their involvement in the De-eucalyptising Brigades. Namely, the survey consisted of four blocks that aspired to fulfil the following objectives:

- Exploring the values that the activist assigns to the forest space.
- Knowing the degree of linkage of the activist with the forest space.
- Discern the motivation of the activist to mobilise themselves against the eucalypt.
- Link the three previous points to the geographical information provided by the activist.

In line with the objective of providing a collective picture of public participation in the De-eucalyptising Brigades, our aim was also to explore the narratives that shape an argument in relation to the involvement in this movement, as well as the contextual elements that influence the desire to participate. Therefore, complementary personal interviews were carried to reinforce the ethnographic exploration of the case. After different

working days, we conducted eight semi-structured, in-depth interviews, all of them with active members (4 men, 4 women) of the De-eucalyptising Brigades. Criterion and snowball sampling were applied with the purpose of achieving a diverse understanding of the sources of motivation to take part in the brigades. Differently to the survey, this method did not focus on choosing a representative sample of the whole population, but rather “to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives” ([54], p. 22). Interviews were recorded with permission and later transcribed anonymously. Therefore, a set of numbers (i.e., “(I1)”) will be used in the results section.

On the one hand, 166 surveys were returned and analysed. Responses were analysed quantitatively and represented graphically through the open-source software RAW-Graphs [55]. Such analytical process involved a triangulation of categories from which we aimed to infer information related to the research question. The resulting graphics are represented in the results section. On the other hand, interview data analysis was carried out with NVivo 12, employing a descriptive coding technique [56] that was later followed by an aggregation of such descriptive codes into themes [57]. The main inferences from this method will be illustrated with vivid examples or extracts.

4. Results

The De-eucalyptising Brigades act as a centripetal force in the creation of new networks of actors within the forest space, that is, “gathering critical perspectives on the forest space together” (I2). In the eyes of our interviewees, the brigades “provide us the possibility of being part of this [project] in an organised and productive way, being able to ultimately intervene in the landscape” (I7). Regarding the profile of participants, our quantitative results show, in the first instance, that the social involvement in this movement is dominated by young adults (25–45 years), is gender-balanced (53% men, 47% women) and is diverse in terms of origin. In fact, activists stand out for coming from different territorial realities. Whilst most common lands that are involved in the project are located in rural, even remote areas of Galicia [58], the participating activists proceed dominantly from either urban or peri-urban areas: “Many of us are urbanites... Our relationship to the land has more to do with enjoyment than with labour” (I7). Such dominance of an urban public is more significant within younger age groups (16–25, 25–45), in which more than three-quarters of the involved activists revealed an urban origin (Figure 2).

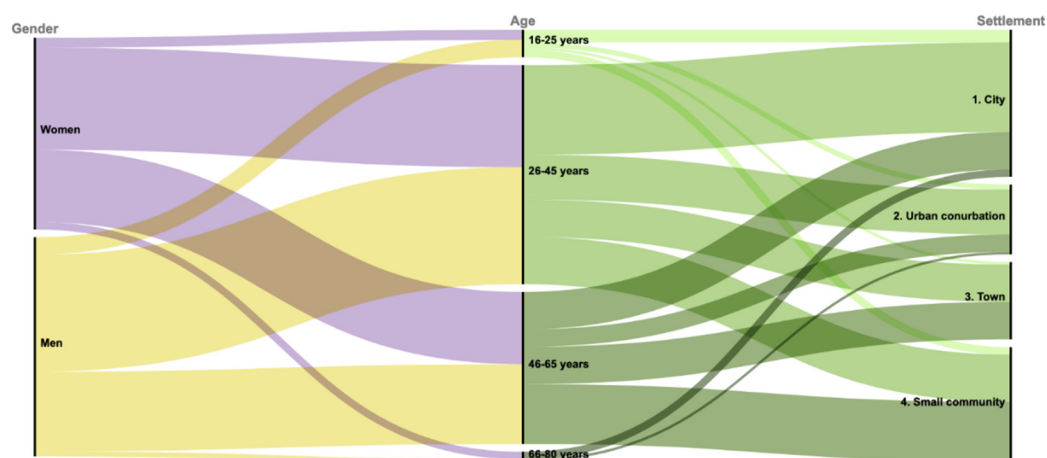


Figure 2. Representation, through an alluvial diagram, of the correlation between gender, age and place of residence of the participating activists. Each rectangle represents a unique value in the selected dimension, and its height is proportional to its value. Figure produced with RawGraphs.

The diverse profile of participants implies a relatively wide range of formal and informal relationships with the forest space. A first inference is that more than 85% of the involved actors are not commoners, that is, they lack involvement in common lands of Galicia. Therefore, the De-eucalyptising Brigades constitute a gate to the universe of

the commons. This is the case of (I1), for whom the brigades offered a primarily practical experience in the forest space: “[...] it’s like [...] suddenly, you feel part of a new reality”. In a similar line, (I8) states that “working with commoners is something that I would have found quite difficult, agh [...] or distant, if I were out of these brigades”. Besides such synergy, two of the main trends are illustrated in Figure 3. On the one hand, a limitation of urban activists’ relationship with forests mainly for recreative purposes is seen. On the other hand, activists whose place of origin is in the rural space reveal more consistent and formal relationships with the land. In fact, most of the involved activists from small communities are formal members of common lands in their place of origin. Far from being a limitation, this pluralism is valued to distribute the training roles and tasks in the project: “Some of us are *uprooters*, others coordinate the removal of the branches [...] then, for example, there’s always someone who cares to graphically document the changes [...] it’s like a huge chain” (I4). As noted by (I3), “perhaps what differentiates us the most from traditional NGO’s is this variety of profiles we have here”.

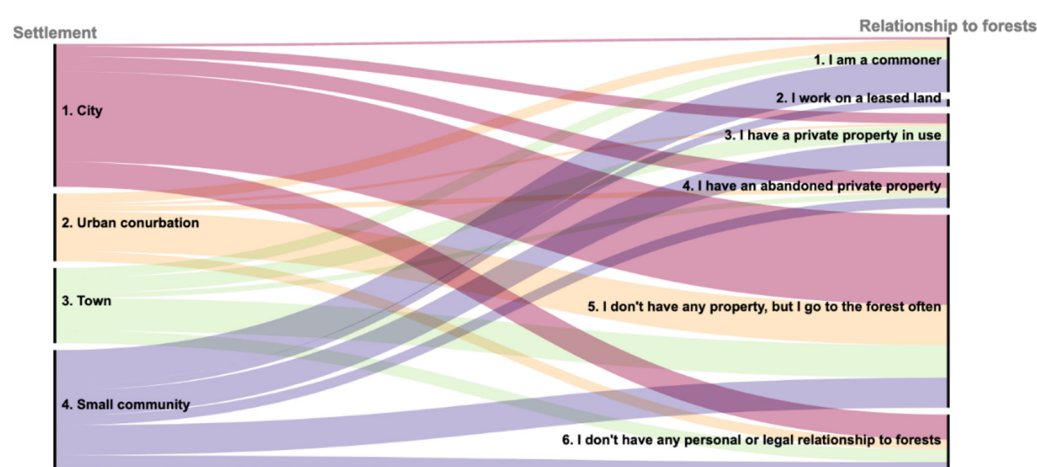


Figure 3. Representation, through an alluvial diagram, of the correlation between the place of residence and the relationships with forests. Figure produced with RawGraphs.

Conversely, the factors that motivate the involvement of activists in the De-eucalyptising Brigades respond to a common pattern. Participants reveal a homogeneous understanding of the causes and their degree of influence in expanding and consolidating eucalyptus masses in Galician landscapes. The presence of the ENCE wood pulp factory constitutes, for all groups of activists, the main concern in terms of sources of expansion (Figure 4). Additionally, different structural factors, such as the lack of spatial planning in general, and forest planning in particular, facilitate such diffusion of eucalyptus plantations. In line with the lower and shifting relevance assigned to climatic conditions, the critique assigned to the current system of land ownership, allegedly problematic due to the hegemony of smallholdings, is more consistent within urban activists. Nonetheless, participants argue their involvement under a call for transformative practice in the forest space. That is, an opportunity to collectively turn complaints into positive action on the landscape: “I’d say, that [...] deep down, we’re pretty tired of complaining [...] We feel better transforming things with our hands, you know?” (I3). Ultimately, performing the restoration of forests is eminently seen as a way of “unloading the stress of the week, and [...] also the anger of seeing so many eucalypts standing” (I8).

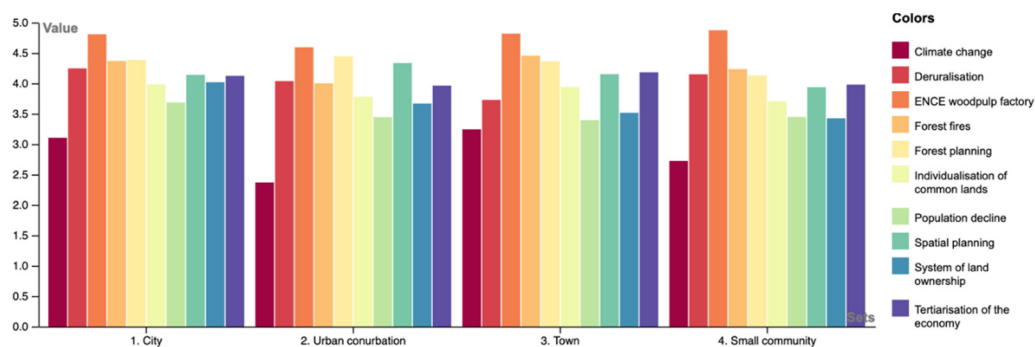


Figure 4. Bar chart displaying, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “irrelevant” and 5 “crucial”, how activists rate the relevance of contextual factors on the expansion of eucalyptus plantations. Figure produced with RawGraphs.

5. Discussion

The public policies of dissemination of the *Eucalyptus* genus constituted a central process of forest landscape transformation in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. In this paper, we first documented the stages that articulated the expansion and consolidation of eucalyptus plantations in the Galician forest space. There is no doubt that eucalypt masses acquired a central place in the regional forestry sector and that, consequently, their exploitation is *de facto* widely practised by small landowners. However, the process of expansion coexists with an increasingly absent forestry scenario. Logically, the changes in the territorial system have led, particularly over the last 50 years, to a framework that has been in line with an economic activity that can be carried out through consortium or lease contracts. In this process, the eucalypt brought new capital flows into a forest that was increasingly specialised. This is how the so-called eucalyptisation of Galicia was theorised in this work as a symptom of landscape homogenisation over the territory in general, and over the forest space in particular.

As a result of such process of aesthetic dilution, we have characterised the emergence of a socially based and reactive movement in response to the eucalyptisation. Our empirical results show that citizen participation within the De-eucalyptising Brigades responds to a call for collective action in terms of forest transformation. The aversion towards the *Eucalyptus* genus transcends the framework of the environmental or ecological plane, in which the conflictive condition of this tree is usually projected [7]. Stating that the eucalypt is socially rejected because of its exotic nature, its impact on biodiversity or its alleged pyrophyte status would be inaccurate or, at the very least, incomplete. Instead, the involved activists illustrate a cognition of the political and structural effects that derived in such process of forest homogenisation, hence revealing an awareness of the anthropic factors that influence the dissemination of this tree. Such congregation of “the natural” with “the cultural” is consistent with the conceptual nucleus of forest landscape, namely the approach adopted by Gómez Mendoza [13,14].

Citizen participation within the De-eucalyptising Brigades has been characterised as slightly urban and diverse in terms of age and access to land, among other aspects. We observed multiple stakeholders coexisting around a transformative initiative aiming at the diversification of land uses in the forest space. This community of practice is consistent with Long et al.’s [23] notion of forest landscape restoration, given that the improvement of social network livelihoods within the woods is central to the diffusion of the movement. It is also strictly polycentric since each local community interested in participating needs to coordinate the governance of the event. However, whilst the implementation of forest landscape restoration is often discussed under the logics of cross-sector governance [24], our studied phenomenon currently dispenses with any formal bond with the public institutions in charge of forest planning. From the margins of current institutional planning in the forestry sector, the brigades constitute a form of collective

management on different territorial realities. We are therefore talking about actions placed at the micro-scale but articulated at a regional level.

In any case, the existence of factors that go beyond the ecological plane is evidence that the controversy associated with the eucalypt transcends the intrinsic condition of the tree. In this sense, we highlight that contextual elements, fundamentally public policies, influence the articulation of citizens' perceptions and attitudes towards forestry plantations, ultimately incurring a desire to participate in forest management. Factors ranging from the micro-scale, e.g., the weakening of neighbourhood networks, to a macro-level, e.g., the lack of spatial planning, as well as perceptions of high-impact aspects such as forest fires, complement the social reading of the tree. In line with the work of Calviño Cancela and Cañizo Novelle [36], the preliminary exploration of perceptions let us address the allegedly negative outcomes of plantation forestry. On this matter, we infer that we managed to arrive at the polyhedral condition of the eucalyptus question through a perceptual and emotional exploration of its attributes.

The methodological approach adopted in this paper was, as noted above, participatory action research (PAR). Through continued inclusion and participation in the De-eucalyptising Brigades, we not only had regular access to the plane of actions and meanings inherent to the practices of forest landscape restoration, but also the possibility of interpreting the contextual networks of action woven on the other side of the brigades' framework. Unlike other types of observation methodologies, PAR allowed us, in line with Kindon et al. [53], to actively explore and understand the significance assigned to a forest restoration project. First with a questionnaire, and later through in-depth interviews, in the manner of a snowballing approach, PAR enabled us to progressively broaden our view of the phenomena we were trying to understand and, through direct experience, to ascertain the scope of a de-eucalyptising panorama that exceeded our predictions at the start of this research.

6. Conclusions

The objective of this paper was to analyse and discuss the implementation of a landscape restoration initiative led by the civil society. The empirical work revealed a latent landscape conflict that transcends forest management and encompasses other levels of action or political advocacy. Around a common denominator, as is the call for a transformative practice on the forest, we characterised a landscape restoration programme aimed at limiting or eliminating eucalyptus masses in the Galician forest space. On this matter, we conclude that decades-long conflicts such as the one analysed in this work require specific treatment by the institutions responsible for developing forest management instruments. In this sense, we recommend the design of a system of participation open to all citizens, which seeks to integrate the actors who are a priori more reactive to current forestry development. This exercise would enable, in addition to a more solid notion of forest governance, the creation of a forestry policy that is sensitive to the demands of the population as a whole.

Under the logics of such a call for public participation, we would recommend that apart from the ongoing function of bottom-up initiatives such as the one discussed here, a reinforcement of institutional systems of public participation that go beyond panels of experts is needed. A policy that is meant to be about governance and sustained social participation should not limit citizen participation to a single body made up, for the most part, of experts and companies with interests in the sector. This is the case of the Galician Forestry Council in relation to the Galician Forestry Plan. Restricting the sectoral planning of an area that represents a significant portion of the territory to a body to which the public has no direct access disqualifies, on paper, any diagnosis of the forest in general, and of its landscape condition in particular. Additionally, we recommend opening the process of reviewing and evaluating forest planning instruments to the public. Long-term planning requires the development of mechanisms that facilitate the monitoring of programmed actions. This issue gains relevance in those cases where the renewal of the budget allocation is conditional on the results of the evaluation processes. On this matter, the design of

monitoring measures should include, at least every five years, a public consultation on the perception of the degree of compliance with the planned interventions. The reading of forest landscapes changes over time and, in this sense, the readjustments of a management plan should consider the perceptive aspect of the population. In this way, by facilitating participation in all forest planning processes, the so-called notions of governance and social participation in the forest space would be consolidated.

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