

Project Title

Final Report

Enabling Societal Transformation in the Face of Climate Change (SOLSTICE)

1. Identification of the project

Project full title: Environmental justice analysis to advance rural landscape transformations in the face of climate change

Project acronym: Just Scapes

Starting date: 1st December 2020

End date: 30th November 2023

Project duration (months): 36

Reporting period of this report: mid-term

Project website: <https://just-scapes.uea.ac.uk>

Lead Project Investigator (name, title and affiliation): Prof. Adrian Martin, University of East Anglia

Project partners:

Dr Brendan Coolsaet, Lille Catholic University ESPOL - European School of Political and Social Sciences

Dr Zuzana V. Harmackova Global Change Research Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Department of Social-Ecological Analysis

Dr Cecile Barnaud INRAE UMR Dynafor

2. Objectives of the Project (max. 1 page)

The Just-Scapes project aims to advance our understanding of how to envision and enact 'Just Transformations' of European rural landscapes in response to climate change.

Project Objectives

1. Identify the portfolio of activities that make up proposals for transforming study landscapes.
2. Empirically analyse and map plural stakeholder perceptions of justices and injustices in relation to proposed landscape transformations.
3. Design and experiment with a transdisciplinary 'justice lab' approach to co-producing 'just transformation' manifestos.
4. Use research findings to support rural transformation practices in Europe.

3. Scientific activities and intermediate results (max. 1 page)

Please provide information on the most important scientific activities and technical results from the project, including any collaborations with other projects.

1. Review of rural environmental justice literature with particular focus on Europe. Review led by David Brown, UK PDRA. The findings are important because they characterise rurality as a social category relevant for environmental justice analysis and empirical study. This in some way predicted the rise of rural-oriented justice protests across Europe in response to e.g. the EU Restoration law and green deal.
2. Semi-structured interviews in each of the three case study sites. Main findings – mapping of main justice issues among local communities in relation to actions to respond to climate change and biodiversity loss. The cross analysis of the findings in the three case studies has been combined with literature review findings mentioned above to write and publish a paper in Journal of Rural Studies. Papers are also in preparation to present and discuss the findings from the semi-structured interviews in each of the case studies.
3. Collaboration with Edinburgh University (Janet Fisher lead, with Adrian Martin and David Brown) undertaking Q method survey in Scotland case study location. This has been combined with data from semi-structured interviews to understand the justice claims of different stakeholder groups and to consider how these relate to the formal justice concerns prescribed in Scotland's approach to 'Just Transition'. Importantly, we identify a range of justice concerns that are important to rural communities but that are under-represented or ignored in government guidelines.
4. Creative writing workshop held in each of the three country case study locations. This Work Package was led by Jean McNeil, with national facilitators employed in Czech Republic and France, with support from national teams. The outputs have been translated into three languages and published as an illustrated book.
5. Transformation labs workshops in each case location, employing visioning methods for multi-stakeholder co-production of just transformation landscape 'manifestos'. Three landscape manifestos have been produced, highlighting the importance of place-based transdisciplinary research, not only for empirical understanding of rural justice claims, but for galvanising collective action. The latter point is well illustrated in the 60m documentary *Demain, la vallee* that stands as a unique exploration of the nature of transformative research. An academic paper is also near completion, synthesising the content of the three manifestos through the lens of a 'leverage points' approach to understanding just rural transformations. An infographic video provides a very short (1m) summary of this work.
6. Survey. This aspect was initially delayed for scientific reasons, ensuring that the survey instrument was robust. Following pre-publication of hypotheses, the survey was successfully completed (N=6250) and findings show intriguing associations between beliefs about justice and support for sustainability transitions. Perceived *injustice in the world* motivates support for sustainable transformation as long as it is not matched by distrust in public institutions, but perceived *injustice in one's life* decreases support for sustainable transformation. This latter pattern seems very relevant to some current European politics in which socially marginalized groups become part of movements that oppose sustainable transformation.

7. Mapping of the legal-institutional landscape governing climate-related land-use change within the 3 countries; semi-structured interviews with local government officials and public servants within the 3 fieldsites (N=31).

4. Communication and dissemination activities (max. 1 page)

Creative Writing:

McNeill, J. (editor) [Letter to the Land](#), the Just Scapes tri-lingual anthology of creative writing

Just Transformation 'Manifestos':

Czech Republic: [Pathways to Equitable Landscape Transformation: barriers, opportunities & recommendations](#)

Scotland: [Socially Just Landscape Transformation in the Scottish Highlands](#)

France: [Pour des transformations justes de l'usage des terres face au changement climatique](#)

Films

[Demain, la vallée](#) (the Just Scapes France film, directed by Jérôme Prudent).

[Land Justice](#) (short video infographic)

Journal papers

Brown, D. et al. (2024) Conceptualising rural environmental justice in Europe in an age of climate-influenced landscape transformations, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 110, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103371>

Horcea-Milcu, A.I., Koessler, A.K., Martin, A., Rode, J. and Soares, T.M., 2023. Modes of mobilizing values for sustainability transformation. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 64, p.101357.

Coolsaet, B. and Deldrève, V., 2024. Exploring environmental justice in France: evidence, movements, and ideas. *Environmental Politics*, 33(5), pp.757-777.

Martin, A. Et al., 2024. Plural values of nature help to understand contested pathways to sustainability. *One Earth*, 7(5), pp.806-819.

Martin, A. et al. (2024) Sustainability Aligned Values, in press, *Ecology and Society*

Brown, D. et al. A just transformation of landscape in the Scottish Highlands: A case study of the Affric Kintail area, being finalised for submission.

Urban, J. et al. Preference of Sustainable Transformation and Beliefs in Just World: Three Country Study, being finalised for submission.

Martin, A, Harmackova, Z. et al. Place-based approaches to just sustainability transformation: learning from climate change and biodiversity interventions in rural landscapes, in preparation.

Darmet, L. and Barnaud, C. What is the future of pastoralism in the context of climate change? An environmental justice analysis of contested discursive justifications of livestock farming in the Pyrenees. Being finalised for submission to *Journal of Rural studies*

Conferences

- FLARE (Forests & Livelihoods: Assessment, Research and Engagement); European Rural Geography Conference; POLLEN (Political Ecology Network) - 2 panels hosted on Just Transitions and Rural Environmental Justice in Europe (8 papers presented); Transformations Conference; International Society for Ecological Economics conference.

Other

- Twitter feed ([@JustScapes](#)). Our audience is international (particularly strong in the UK, France, Czech Republic and wider Europe), and mainly composed of individual academics; research projects/institutions; and NGOs/civil society organisations working in the areas of Climate/Environmental Justice, with a portion specialising in arts-climate initiatives.
- Project website: www.just-scapes.com. And [French-language version of the Just Scapes website](#).
- Just Scapes is one of [ClimateUEA's flagship projects](#).
- The Czech team have blogged about Just Scapes on the SustainableCZ website ([sample blog here](#)). The posts are available in both Czech and English.
- In September to December 2021, we ran Environmental Justice workshops for young people as part of UEA's [Project Change](#) offering. Just Scapes was the main case-study for the workshop
- The UK team were commissioned by Conservation International to develop a Just Restoration curriculum. This is now being turned into MOOC and workshop-based training courses.

5. Comparison of the project progress with the original work plan (max. 1 page)

Please compare the implementation of the project with the original plans concerning the timing of work/work plan/milestones/personnel (researchers, postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, etc.). If applicable, describe difficulties encountered and solutions adopted.

The project work plan has remained quite close to the original. The main drive of the project – to understand and respond to concerns about the need to integrate justice concerns into responses to climate change in rural areas has remained unchanged. Further, this rationale has gained strength as we see increasing funds for 'ecological restoration' and related agendas (e.g. the new EU Restoration Law), often without due diligence for the social impacts and justice claims of rural people.

The main changes have been:

- The initial team meeting in France was cancelled due to Covid and was conducted online instead.
- Early fieldwork was delayed somewhat by Covid, leading to some overall delays in the project work programme. This led to no-cost extensions to project spending of 6 months in the UK (project completion May 2024) and 12 months in France and Czech Republic (project completion November 2024).

- The choice of case study in the Czech Republic changed. The original choice was the Šumava Mountains UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The new case study is an agricultural landscape in South Moravia. This change was made following consultations and was made prior to the project start date, ensuring there was sufficient opportunity to engage with local partners (local municipal governments) about project objectives and process.
- The Transformation Labs have broadly followed the original objectives although the specific workshop methods in each site have developed through our interviews and engagement in the field sites. In particular, we have found it important to address issues of justice less directly than initially planned, often discussing problems and challenges as entry points, arriving at issues of justice via topics of discussion that are initially more familiar and comfortable to participants. Whilst we have developed a web presence, including a French language version of the web site, the Labs process has not itself gone online in the way that was originally envisaged, primarily as this was not seen as the best way to stay in touch by participants. Thus we have continued to engage with participants via email.
- The sequencing of work has not been as ideal as planned, partly due to Covid, but more due to wider sets of determinants on timing of work packages, including the Creative Writing and the Survey. Nevertheless, regular online meetings as well as in-person team meetings have ensured considerable interaction between work packages and ongoing thinking about connections.
- As mentioned above, we introduced a new work package on policy mapping and analysis, in response to our evolving theory of change for the project. Thus we have put much more attention to understanding existing policy networks and to identifying and targeting particular entry points for influencing policy.

6. Social Sciences and Humanities (max. 0.5 page)

Please briefly describe how the inclusion of SSH is contributing to social change in the context of your project. How does this compare to what you expected prior to the project?

We highlight one element of our project – the inclusion of creative writing. The publication and the participatory processes that made it possible, consisting of workshops, conversations, activities and guided writing events, allowed a better grounding in the communities of our research aims. The writing produced by our community participants allowed us to discuss our research aims, and the context for the research in each community, with more ease and facility than in most quantitative and qualitative methods.

The publication is the first of its kind that we know of anywhere, one which draws together individual creativity across languages in order to explore issues of social justice and environmental transformations in the context of climate change, translated into three languages. It has been disseminated to local officials, policy makers, research bodies and institutional bodies in each research site country. It translates academic findings, through the creative mode, into ordinary language and daily public discourse.

The publication is mutually intelligible to our three research communities. It has fostered conversations and mutual awareness of similarities and divergencies in their structural positions. It links in our research in one place in the 'other' two landscapes. It is a lasting testament to the concerns of each participant, each community and each study area at a particular moment in time.

7. Pathways to impact (max. 1 page)

How would you assess the take up and use of your project's outcomes? Did the outcomes contribute to expected impact pathways?

Impact on the ground: the participatory process

France. The particular demographics of the French case site meant that the T-labs and the creative writing workshop offered spaces for exchanges and promoted mutual understanding among these different groups of people that do not often meet and speak with each other in everyday life. We witnessed the emergence of local initiatives during the workshop period - for example, projects bringing together farmers (market gardeners and livestock breeders) and food transformers around a desire to pool the transport of agricultural produce between farms, spaces to process food and points of sale. We also saw a strong local will emerge to use the co-created manifestos to feed into policy, particularly at municipal level. Our team met with departmental, regional and national policymakers to present the project and the manifesto (Departmental Council, Chamber of Agriculture, Community of Municipalities, Departmental mayors; Regional Council, Regional Directorate for the Environment, Land Planning and Housing, Members of Parliament, a Senator, Farmers & their unions, land development and rural settlement companies.). Finally, the documentary „Demain, la vallée“ is also a way to extend the impact of the project beyond the case study location. The film is a great success, with over 30 screenings already organised since January 2024, followed by debates with the public. The film has notably been selected in the festival [Alimenterre](#) which will organize dozens of screenings and debates all over France next autumn.

Czech Republic. The manifesto approach was appreciated (we received positive feedback from the village mayors, for example) and sometimes brought people together in unexpected ways - for example, one village started their own community shop with local produce; another village started their own sustainable land management adaptation measures. On a regional and national level, our approach also interested policymakers at the Brno municipality, who have since started closer collaborations with some of our research localities (collaborations on subsidies allocations, help with project proposals etc). Our Czech team made use of a think tank specialising in disseminating scientific knowledge to policymakers, with targets including the design of farm subsidies. They held partnership/open discussion meetings with regional policymakers in November 2022, and worked closely with their NGO project partner, Nadace Partnerství, to reach the highest governmental level at the Czech Ministry of Agriculture with our findings.

Scotland. The manifesto produced by our Scottish case team received a very positive response from the academic community via Twitter, and has been held up as an example of exemplary practice. Within the landscape, it has influenced our partner (Trees for Life) who are now looking at ways of ensuring improved distribution of costs and benefits and how to better integrate traditional land users. More widely, findings from the study were fed into a recently published [UK parliament briefing](#) on environmental targets and just transitions.

Impact on wider policy and practice

Our main academic outputs are just coming out although we see signs that our work is meeting a demand, including within conservation practitioner communities. A key example is the connection we have made between justice and ecological restoration. This has led to the commission to

produce a 'just restoration' training curriculum for Conservation International (mentioned above), but also for Adrian Martin to sit on a European task force on justice and restoration initiated by Birdlife International and the Cambridge Conservation Initiative. It remains too soon to report genuine impacts – i.e. changing practices bringing about societal outcomes. However, we can say that a step towards that has been taken, with research outputs being deliberated with some groups of practitioners and moving towards uptake.

8. Collaboration with non-academic stakeholders (max. 1 page)

Did the involvement of non-academic stakeholders change or improve your plans to address the societal impact of climate change? If applicable, please note any obstacles or challenges you encountered in this regard.

UK (Scotland). Work with the NGO Trees for Life has opened up suggestions and opportunities. For example, in partnership with the University of Edinburgh there is now a PhD student linked to the process for Common Ground on Sustainable Upland Deer Management.

France. Our partnership with the Parc Naturel Régional Pyrénées Ariégeoises has been key at the initial stages of the project to select a case study, adapt our research questions to local preoccupations and debates, and envision our pathways to societal impact. Participation of non academic stakeholders in T-labs have also allowed us to better understand the ways in which climate change intersects with other local issues that must also be put center stage if we hope to get stakeholders as involved as possible : for example, food sovereignty, land access, spontaneous reforestation, biodiversity conservation, agricultural subsidy distribution.

Czech Republic. Cooperation with Hnutí Duha NGO helped us to better structure and plan our project preliminary (and in future final) findings dissemination process and to reach the regional and national government policy-making levels. It also helped us to gain new perspectives and ways to gain new contacts and stakeholders to be involved. Also, the cooperation with Nadace Partnerství NGO, local action groups and the municipalities mayors and council members, as well as the consultations we had with them over our preliminary results helped us to explore and stay focused on the key justice topics in the area and to get better access to the case study research area.

9. Availability of new results (max. 1 page)

Did any third-party results become available since the start of the project, which proved relevant for the implementation of the project?

10. Outlook (max. 1 page)

Please describe your outlook on the future development of the project's research topic. This can include links with other projects or programmes, but also the sustainability of the network built during the project (including any potential actions you may be considering to keep connections active). You may also include any suggestions for JPI Climate in this regard and in the valorisation of research results from the project.

There are a number of strong themes that have developed during this project – these include research themes that were relatively novel at the time of writing the project proposal, but which have gained a lot of momentum since.

- *Exploring the role of justice in transformative change.* It is becoming almost ubiquitous to consider transformation to both sustainability AND justice, but our understanding of how to do this lags behind. Just Scapes has pushed the agenda in the context of rural restoration and responses to climate change. In particular, place-based studies such as Just Scapes help to reveal justice barriers to sustainability pathways, including the causes of conflicts between different stakeholder groups.
- *Interdisciplinary place-based study.* The combination of i) qualitative participatory research, ii) quantitative psychology survey research and iii) creative humanities research has undoubtedly contributed a unique composite understanding of how barriers and opportunities for sustainability develop in particular landscapes. This is also challenging and we see considerable need and opportunity to build on this experience and move towards more integrative, mission-oriented science for sustainability. For example, understanding resistance and backlash to environmental agendas is a key concern in Europe and worldwide.
- *Restoration and justice.* Whilst there had been a lot of previous work on conservation and justice, our Scotland and France cases in particular opened up particular questions about how we conceive of ‘just restoration’, including e.g. policies for destocking, reforestation and rewilding rural lands. This aspect of the work has somewhat taken off, partly triggered by December 2022 Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the subsequent, derivative, EU restoration law.

These are areas that the Just Scapes team will continue to work on, both collectively and through separate networks.

11. General comments

Please add any additional comments you may have. This can also include any positives or challenges that your project faced during its lifetime, so that we can improve in future activities.

Thank you. I really have only positive things to say about the JPI Solstice programme. The call seemed very well conceived with a strong briefing document. The support throughout has been excellent and I appreciate the particular encouragement to pursue impact alongside academic dissemination. I think that Solstice as a whole has contributed to understanding of the emerging idea of ‘transformative research’ or research for transformative change. If we were to do one more thing collectively, across the projects, that is probably what I would want to capture and synthesise.