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# Which aspects are usually assessed by studies on ecological restoration of cultural landscapes?

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## Abstract

Ecological restoration has been experiencing a progressive integration of various disciplines (e.g. social, cultural and political) other than the initial ecological focus. This is likely due to the notion of how important other contexts are for the long-term effectiveness of restoration projects. Nevertheless, a new paradigm is necessary, especially in order to comply with recent ambitious targets promoted by international agreements on ecological restoration. When restoring cultural landscapes (i.e. landscapes shaped by long-term human activity and its relationship with the environment), several aspects could be involved and therefore assessed. Here, we performed a literature survey on studies linking cultural landscapes and ecological restoration and evaluated the number and type of aspects assessed in studies involving data collection (primary or secondary data). Two study types were considered: baseline studies (i.e. research on baseline for planned restoration) and studies evaluating previous restoration actions. We found 60 studies that fitted our criteria, ranging from 1995-2017. We categorized assessed aspects into ecological, landscape and people perceptions/cultural. Although ecological aspects are more commonly studied (e.g. vegetation/soil dynamics, biodiversity changes; 40 studies), aspects related to landscapes (e.g. landscape scenarios and connectivity, and land-use history) and people perceptions (e.g. general perceptions and preferences about ER) were significantly represented, with 32 and 17 studies, respectively. Only three studies involved aspects belonging to all three categories,

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and 23 involved aspects belonging to two categories. Studies were mostly on baseline for restoration (48). We suspect that restoration linked with a cultural landscape approach is not reaching the scientific arena, although it is most probably happening "on the ground". Hence, we now have undergoing research aimed at finding out if cultural landscapes are being considered by restoration practitioners in France and to what extent other aspects have been considered when developing restoration projects.