



Tropentag, September 9-11, 2020, virtual conference

“Food and nutrition security and its resilience
to global crises”

Workers Map Social Landscape Values in a Colombian Oil Palm Plantation

ADRIANA GOMEZ, STEPHANIE DOMPTAIL

Justus Liebig University Giessen, Inst. of Agricultural Policy and Market Research, Germany

Abstract

Humans are participants in landscape-thinking, feeling and acting giving meaning to landscapes and places. Additionally, humans attach value to landscapes, even to highly modified landscapes, and possibly to an “already-created” landscape such as the oil palm plantation. Workers interact daily with the oil palm plantation and they could confer meaning and value to the natural habitats and the oil palm vegetation. For the present study, the landscape units refers to land covers present in the farm.

The natural habitats (e.g. gallery forests, natural savannahs) are embedded within the Macondo oil palm plantation. With this in mind, the present study evaluates whether workers perceive, value and use social landscape values in the plantation. To collect data, first, we conducted three focus group discussions to identify the social landscape values. Second, we applied 35 structured participatory mapping interviews to workers. Each worker registered on a map of the plantation the perceived social landscape values attached to the landscape units on a map of the plantation.

This article shows that workers perceive, identify and use social landscape values in the oil palm plantation. During the focus groups discussions, we identified the social landscape values to construct the participatory mapping interview guide. The 35 respondents mentioned 511 times social landscape values within the landscape units such as shade, food, fresh water, biological control, fauna, flora, beauty, soil, and leisure. The respondents mentioned more frequently shade (97), flora (79), water (66) and contemplation of fauna (60) within all landscape units. Furthermore, workers also perceived occupation risks such as fall accidents and injuries due to obstacles on the ground (e.g. leaves or trunks) or the inadequate use of machinery.

In general, the use of the participatory mapping proved to be a tool to identify and localise the values that the workers perceive, use and identify in the oil palm plantation. The participants highlighted the presence of natural habitats within the oil palm plantation, to observe flora, fauna, find fresh water and shade. These results demonstrate that the plantation provide several values and benefits for the workers beyond the economic advantage

Keywords: Oil palm plantation, participatory mapping, social landscape values