

Paul Laris

Department of Geography
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EDUCATION

- Ph. D. 2002 Clark University, Worcester MA 01610
Graduate School of Geography
Dissertation Title: *Burning the Savanna Mosaic: Fire Patterns, Indigenous Burning Regimes, and Ecology in the Savanna of Mali*
- M.S. San Jose State University
Department of Environmental Studies
- B.S. University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Engineering

APPOINTMENTS

- 2013-Present Professor and Chair of Geography & Director of Environmental Science and Policy, California State University, Long Beach
- 2011-Present Professor and Chair of Geography, California State University, Long Beach
- 2009-2011 Director, Environmental Science and Policy Program, California State University, Long Beach
- 2008-2011 Associate Professor of Geography, California State University, Long Beach
- 2002- 2008 Assistant Professor of Geography, California State University, Long Beach
- 2001-2002 Lecturer in Geography, San Francisco State University
- 2000-2001 Lecturer in Geography, Sonoma State University
- 1998.2002 NASA Earth Systems Science Dissertation Fellow, Clark University

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

- Savanna Ecology: impacts of fire regimes and agriculture on savanna vegetation, seasonal-mosaic burning regimes
- Biogeography: Tree/grass dynamics in semi-arid zones
- Landscape Restoration

- Land-Use/Land Cover change
- Political Ecology
- Remote Sensing of Fire

PUBLICATIONS

I. PEER-REVIEW PUBLICATIONS

Engelberg, K., **Laris, P.**, Nagy, B., and Eckardt, S. 2013. Comparing the Long-Term Impacts of Different Anthropogenic Disturbance Regimes on California Coastal Sage Scrub Recovery *Professional Geographer* (in press).

Laris, P., & Dembele, F. 2012. Humanizing savanna models: integrating natural factors and anthropogenic disturbance regimes to determine tree-grass dynamics in savannas *Land Change Science* (published on-line July 14, 2011).

Dallman, S., Ngo, M., **Laris, P.**, and Thien, D. 2012. Political Ecology of Emotion and Sacred Space: The Winnemem Wintu struggles with California water policy. *Emotion, Space & Society* (forthcoming).

Foltz, J.D., Aldana, U.T., **Laris, P.** 2012. The Sahel's Silent Maize Revolution: Analyzing Maize Productivity in Mali at the Farm-Level. NBER Working Paper Series, Working Paper 17801. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17801>. National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA.

Laris, P. 2011. Humanizing savanna biogeography: linking human practices with ecological patterns in a frequently burned savanna of southern Mali. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 101 (5): 1067-1088).

Laris, P. 2008. An anthropogenic escape route from the "Gulliver syndrome" in the West African savanna. *Human Ecology* 36: 789-805.

Laris, P. and Bakkoury, A. 2008. Nouvelles leçons d'une vieille pratique: Mosaique du feu dans la savane du Mali. *Bois et forêts des tropiques* 296 (2): 5-16.

Klepeis, P. and **Laris, P.** 2008. *Estancias*, Hobby Ranching, and Chile's Land Reform Legacy. *The Geographical Review*. 98 (3): 372-394.

Moseley, W. and **Laris, P.** 2008. Interrogating Past Lives: Questioning Environmental Narratives along the Transition from Development Volunteer to Academic. *The Geographical Review* 98 (1): 59-81.

Laris, P. and Wardell, D.A. 2006. Good, bad or "necessary evil?": reinterpreting the colonial burning experiments in the savanna landscapes of West Africa. *Geographical Journal* 172(4): 217-290.

Klepeis, P., and **Laris, P.** 2006. Contesting Sustainable Development in Tierra del Fuego. *Geoforum* 37 (4): 505-518.

Laris, P. 2005. Spatiotemporal problems with detecting seasonal-mosaic fire regimes with coarse-resolution satellite data in savannas. *Remote Sensing of Environment* 99: 412-424.

Laris, P. 2002. Burning the Seasonal Mosaic: Preventative Burning Strategies in the Wooded Savanna of Southern Mali. *Human Ecology* 30 (2): 155-186.

II. BOOK CHAPTERS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Laris, P. 2013. Chapter 3: The Biophysical environment. In Moseley, *et.al.*, *An Introduction to Human-Environment Geography: Local Dynamics and Global Processes*.

Laris, P. 2013. "Chapter 7: Environmental Justice: The Uneven Distribution of People, Pollution and Environmental Opportunity." In Moseley *et.al.*, *An Introduction to Human-Environment Geography: Local Dynamics and Global Processes*.

Kull, C.A., & **Laris, P.** 2009. Fire ecology and fire politics in Mali and Madagascar. *Tropical Fire Ecology: Climate Change, Land Use and Ecosystem Dynamics*. Mark Cochrane (Ed.) Springer-Praxis, pp.171-226.

Laris, P. 2006. Managing a burned mosaic: A landscape-scale human ecological model of savanna fires in Mali. In Jay Mistry and Andrea Berardi (eds.) *Linking people with nature: lessons from savannas and dry forests*. Ashgate Publishing: 155-186.

Laris, P. and Klepeis, P. 2006. Degradation Narratives. In Geist, H. (ed) *The Earth's Changing Land: An Encyclopedia of Land-Use and Land-Cover Change*. Greenwood Publishing Group (pp. 161-164).

Klepeis, P. and **Laris, P.** 2006. Land-Use History. In Geist, H. (ed) *The Earth's Changing Land: An Encyclopedia of Land-Use and Land-Cover Change*. Greenwood Publishing Group (pp. 370-372).

Klepeis, P. and **Laris, P.** 2006. The Pristine Myth. In Geist, H. (ed) *The Earth's Changing Land: An Encyclopedia of Land-Use and Land-Cover Change*. Greenwood Publishing Group (pp. 481-484).

Laris, P. 2004. Grounding Environmental Narratives: The Impact of a Century of Fighting Against Fire in Mali. In Moseley, W.G. and B.I. Logan (eds). *African Environment and Development: Rhetoric, Programs, Realities* Ashgate Publishing.

III. PUBLICATIONS IN REVIEW

Laris, P., & Foltz, J.D. Cotton as Catalyst?: The *Shifting* role of fertilizer in Mali's Cotton Belt. *Human Ecology*.

Dallman, S., **Laris, P.**, and Thien, D. 2012. Reinterpreting Traditional Cultural Properties: A Geographic Perspective.

Laris, P. Integrating land change science and savanna fire models in West Africa. *Land*.

IV. BOOK REVIEWS

Laris, P. 2008. A Review of *Suffering for Territory: Race, Place, and Power in Zimbabwe*. For *Social and Cultural Geography* 9(7): 838-840.

Laris, P. 2006. A Review of *French Beans and Food Scars* by Susanne Freidberg for *The Geographical Review* 96 (1): p167-170.

Laris, P. 2005. A Review of *Isle of Fire* by Christian Kull for *Environmental Conservation* 32 (2): 193-4.

V. PUBLICATIONS IN PREPARATION

Laris, P., Foltz, J.D. & Voorhees, B. Extensification *with* Intensification: The Shifting Practices of Small-holder Farmers in the Cotton Belt of Mali. *Agricultural Systems*.

AWARDS/GRANTS

GRANTS RECEIVED

P.I. 2013-2015. National Science Foundation, Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems (CNH). Coupling burning practices, vegetation cover change and fire regimes to determine fire emission dynamics for a savanna in southern Mali. \$249,000.

P.I. 2011-2012. National Geographic Society's Committee for Research and Exploration. "Humanizing fire pixels: Linking regimes of savanna fires to their human causes." Mali, West Africa. \$19,365.00.

Faculty mentor, 2008-2010, Geoscience Diversity Enhancement Project (GDEP) NSF: \$1,088,000.

RSCA Summer Stipend Award 2011: Determining the Causes of Vegetation Type-Conversion in the Santa Monica Mountains

SCAC Summer Stipend Award (CSULB) 2010: *Cotton as Catalyst?: The Sahel's Silent Maize Revolution*.

SCAC Assigned Time Award (CSULB) 2009: *Exploring the long-term impacts of mechanical disturbances on stands of Coastal Sage Scrub*.

SCAC Assigned Time Award (CSULB) 2007 (Fall): *Integrating long-term biogeographical research and undergraduate education*.

SCAC Assigned Time Award (CSULB) 2006: *Investigating the role of practitioners in California Coastal Sage restoration*

SCAC Assigned Time Award (CSULB) 2005: *Mapping the Biodiversity of Forest Remnants and Explaining their Origins in Savanna-Woodlands of West Africa*

CSULB College of Liberal Arts award for assessment procedure development for Geography Department (with Dr. Holmgren). 2006. \$5000.

SCAC Mini-Grant Award Spring (CSULB) 2004. *A Land Change History of Tierra del Fuego* in collaboration with Peter Klepeis, Colgate University. Current research activities include assembling and analyzing a series of aerial photographs and TM satellite images for the island of Tierra del Fuego. The project is jointly funded by Colgate and CSULB. CSULB funding is for a student assistant: \$3,400.

Enhancing Educational Effectiveness Award (CSULB) 2003-4: *Curriculum Development for Environmental Geography*

SCAC Assigned Time Awards (CSULB) 2003-4: *Linking burning regimes with soil/vegetation patterns in the Malian savanna*

Best Student Paper. Cultural and Political Ecology Specialty Group. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. 2001.

NASA Earth System Science Dissertation Fellowship. 1998-2002: \$66,000

Pruser/Holzhauser Graduate Enhancement Fund 1998

Fulbright Nominee 1998

Tuition Fellowship: Clark University, 1995-2002.

Merit Scholarship of Faculty Wives: San Jose State, 1993

GRANTS SUBMITTED OR UNDER REVIEW

P.I. 2012. *Creating Woodlands: Integrating Land Use Practices and New Savanna Ecological Models in Mali* National Science Foundation, Geography and Geospatial Science. *Under review*. \$385,000.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Laris, P. 2013. "Walking Through Fire." Los Angeles Geographical Society, Los Angeles City College.

Laris, P. 2010. "Humanizing Savanna Ecology: linking human practices with ecological patterns in a frequently burned savanna of southern Mali." Anthropology Department, University College London, London.

Laris, P. 2009. "Humanizing models of tree-grass coexistence in African savanna landscapes." Geography Department, University of London, Royal Holloway.

Laris, P. 2009. "Humanizing regional-scale studies of African fire regimes." IEEE International Geoscience & Remote Sensing Symposium - IGARSS 2009, Cape Town, South Africa.

Laris, P. 2007. "Fire and Domestication of the West African Landscape" Gamma Theta Upsilon Lecture. Colgate University.

Laris, P. 2006. "Criss-Crossing Research Boundaries". 25th Annual James C. Young Colloquium. University of California at Riverside.

Laris, P. 2005. "Exploring the Scale Issue in Nature-Society Geography through a Study of Mosaic Fire Regimes in West Africa." Tod Spieker Colloquium Series, Geography Department, University of California at Los Angeles.

REFEREED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Laris, P. and Foltz, J. 2010. "Cotton as Catalyst?: The Sahel's Silent Maize Revolution" African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.

Laris, P. 2010. "Domesticating Ecology": Situating humans within ecological models of savanna dynamics. Global Land Project Open Science Meeting Phoenix Az.

Laris, P. 2010. Revisiting Long-term Studies of Grassland/Woodland Boundaries: What can we Learn? Southern California Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting, Los Angeles.

Laris, P. 2009. "Humanizing regional-scale studies of African fire regimes. IEEE International Geoscience & Remote Sensing Symposium - IGARSS 2009, Cape Town, South Africa.

Laris, P. 2007 Conservation implications of the spatially explicit fire regime for the humanized savanna landscape of Mali. Paper presented at the Society for Conservation Biology 21st Annual Meeting Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Laris, P. 2006. "Good, bad or "necessary evil?": Reinterpreting the colonial burning experiments in the savanna landscapes of West Africa." Paper presented at the Science and Democracy Network Meeting, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Laris, P. 2003. "Missing the 'good' fires and detecting the 'bad' ones: problems with detecting patch-mosaic fire regimes using 1-kilometer data in savanna environments." Paper presented at the 30th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment, Honolulu.

Laris, P. 2003. "Seasonal-Mosaic Burning in West African Savannas: Linking Human Practices and Biogeographical Theory." Paper presented at the International Conference on Tropical Savannas & Seasonally Dry Forests, Edinburgh, Scotland.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (NON-REFEREED)

Laris, P. 2013. Incorporating fire into models of savanna land change science. Paper presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Los Angeles.

Laris, P. 2012. Untangling the factors that cause fire regime changes in West African savannas, Paper presented at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the AAG, New York.

Laris, P. 2010. Integrating biophysical and anthropogenic factors influencing tree regeneration on farmed savanna land in Mali, Paper presented at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Washington D.C.

Laris, P. 2008. An anthropogenic escape route from the "Gulliver syndrome" in the West African savanna, Paper presented at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Boston.

Laris, P. 2007. The 'legacy landscape' of fire and fallow in the Malian savanna, Paper presented at the 2007 Annual Meeting of the AAG, San Francisco CA.

Laris, P. 2006. "Biogeographical implications of indigenous burning regimes in southern Mali" Paper presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Chicago

Laris, P. 2005. "Three views of a burned land: how issues of scale and narrative affect mapping and monitoring anthropogenic savanna fires in West Africa." Paper presented at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Denver

Laris, P. 2003. "Patch-Mosaic Burning: Exploring the Linkages Between Human Practices and Biogeographical Theory." Paper presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the AAG, New Orleans

Laris, P. 2002. "Who Will Police the Savanna?: Environmental Monitoring and Fire Management in Mali." Paper presented at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Los Angeles.

Laris, P. 2001. "Missing the Good Fires and Detecting the Bad Ones." Paper presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the AAG, New York, NY.

Laris P. 2000. "A Political Ecological Analysis of the Fire Code in Mali." Paper presented at the 2000 Meeting of the African Studies Association, Nashville TN.

Laris, P. 2000. "Defensive Burning Strategies in the West African Savanna." Paper presented at the 2000 Meeting of the AAG, Pittsburgh PA.

Laris, P. 1995. "Men's Role in Women and Development Projects in Mali." Paper presented at the International Conference on Sustainable Development,

Washington D. C.

CONFERENCE PANNEL ORGANIZER

Symposium Organizer and Chair, Revisiting Long Term Studies of Coastal Sage Scrub/Grassland Boundaries in Southern California. *Southern California Academy of Sciences Annual Meeting*, Los Angeles 2010

Session co-organizer (with Chris Duvall) and chair, "Applied biogeography and cultural ecology in semi-arid Africa" *Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers*, Chicago 2006

Session co-organizer (with Bill Moseley), "New Perspectives on Environmental Narratives" *Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers*, Denver 2005.

THESES CHAIRED

- Michael D. Nichols. 2012. *Political Ecology of the Central Valley Project: Protecting Water Access in the Westlands*. (Co-Chair).
- Kyra Engelberg. 2011. *Anthropogenic Disturbance Regimes and Coastal Sage Scrub Recovery: Comparing the Long Term Impacts of grazing and Cultivation in Southern California*.
- Austin Beahm. 2009. *The Political Ecology of Tourism Development in the Ecuadorian Amazon*.
- Samantha Antcliffe. 2009. *Native Plant Restoration of an Upland Transition Habitat Following the Eradication Of Nonnative Tamarisk Within The Tijuana Estuary, California*.
- Lisa Wilkinson. 2007. *The Nature of Tree Preservation in Atascadero*.
- Scott Eckardt. 2006. *Wildfire Frequency and CSS Vegetation Dynamics*. (CLA Outstanding Thesis Award and CSULB nominee for Western Association of Graduate Schools Annual Outstanding Thesis Award, 2007)
- Colette Simonds. 2005. *Exotic plant species pattern in selected areas of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Member of the Association of American Geographers
- Member of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers
- Member of the California Geographical Society
- Member of the African Studies Association
- Member of the American Society for Environmental History
- Member of the National Peace Corps Association
- Member of the Southern California Academy of Sciences
- Member of Sigma Xi

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Councilor, Cultural and Political Ecology (CAPE) Specialty Group, Association of American Geographers
- Science Advisory Council Member, Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- Chair General Education Policy Committee 2012-2013
- Co-Chair University Sustainability Committee 2011-Present
- Vice Chair General Education Policy Committee 2010-2012
- Member General Education Policy Committee 2007-2013

JOURNAL REVIEWER

- Human Ecology
- Annals of the Association of American Geographers
- Remote Sensing of Environment
- Geoforum
- Geographical Review
- Society and Natural Resources
- Journal of Modern African Studies
- African Geographical Review
- International Journal of Wildland Fire
- PNAS
- Professional Geographer
- Journal of Arid Environments
- Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation

COURSES TAUGHT

100 Level

- Introduction to Physical Geography

300 Level

- International Environmental Issues
- Environmental Geography

400 Level

- Humans as Agents of Environmental Change
- Biogeography
- Field Methods in Landscape Analysis
- Landscape Restoration
- Environmental Science and Policy Capstone

Graduate Seminars

- Nature-Society Geography
- Introduction to Geographic Thought