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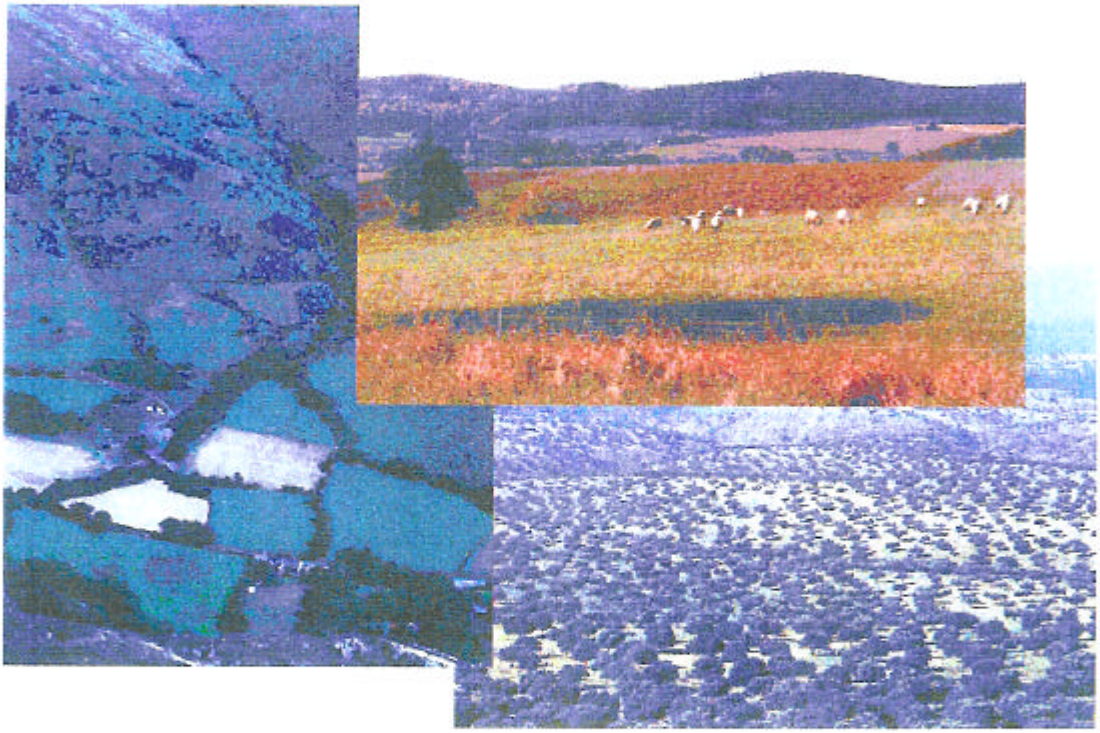

Landscape Planning in Europe
Landschaftsplanung in Europa

Report
International Conference 27.09.1999 - 01.10.1999
In memoriam Prof. Dr. Hans Kiemstedt

Niedersachsen

An Opinion on Landscape Planning in Europe

In memory of Prof. Hans Kiemstedt

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Introduction

In the last decades, the activity of landscape planning has become more important all over Europe. The potential for challenge is great, in particular if one considers the open, integrative planning approach which is oriented on the solution of practical problems including the necessity to enhance planning over spatial and time scales. Landscape planning encompasses diverse tasks, each of which attempts to make a conscious change in the natural surroundings. I believe that a region, an area or a town square can be described either as landscape, space or environment. The way in which I choose these terms is a question of taste (or of education) and these terms can be substituted with each other. Planning describes all activities, which are oriented towards future interaction and also include past development. This is sufficient to the point where thoughts about the future halts. The development of landscape planning education and the roles of landscape planners I consider to be problematic. The practical activity differs from the landscape planning education. Equally important are a retrospective glance, where art and system were unified in the education, and a new beginning, in which landscape is assessed in conditions of complex, large scale and long term research. I would like to address both of these points in the following discourse.

European landscape planning

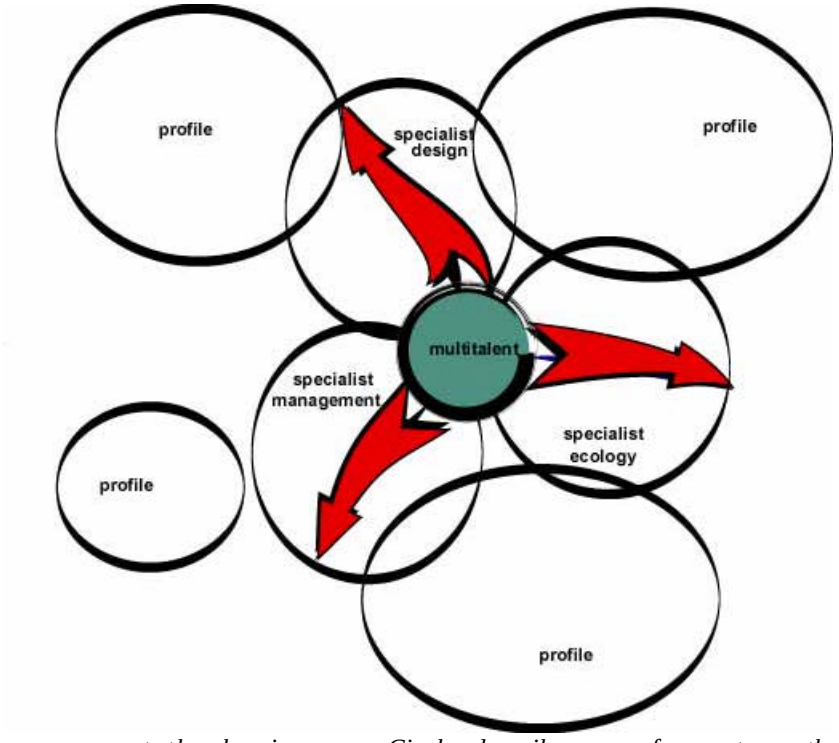
Today, European landscape planners have to consider ecological, economic and social goals, while in previous times landscape planning was synonymous for ecological planning, which contributed as a sector to overall planning. The publishing of the Brundtland report (World Commission of Environment and Development, 1987) and later the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio (UNCED 1992) with the insist for sustainable development brought a major change in public attitude. This promoted landscape planning as an instrument of integrative, open planning. There, after 1992 “ecology” was substituted by “sustainable development”. This concept addresses a broader scale of planning contents. The concept does not exclude anyone, and therefore, provides opportunity to improve the planning by increasing citizen participation. The concept equally addresses short, middle and long term planning as well as local, regional and global planning. However, most people understand something different under sustainable development and a proper working definition is compulsory for practical projects.

In an open, integrative planning approach, the conceptual aspects turn out to be more significant and consume considerably more time than a legally predefined planning procedure. Team work with other professional groups and the resulting communication process becomes more important. The old barriers of sector planning become softer and are difficult to recognise. Landscape planning is not only the task of landscape planners, but also the task of other professional groups. More educated landscape planners work in other professional fields and generate a general understanding of landscape planning (which is not

necessarily the same all over Europe). There is now a mixture of positions, which was unthinkable 20 years ago.

The new situation confronts the profession of landscape planning. Most important are possible solutions to a practical problem, but not the authority of professionals. There are many ways of how to solve a problem and new approaches of landscape planning are required, regardless from where they come from. It is understandable that there is resistance to an open planning approach, especially by those groups with a well established, legally regulated field of expertise. The construction industry is one of these regulated areas and efforts are going on to regulate more areas. Even when the regulated kind of planning appears to be expanding, it will become less important in relative terms. In previous times one professional group was elected as expert for something, now we find several professional groups with competing techniques. At current, European countries have diverse procedures and legal frameworks for landscape planning. The intended European harmonisation can lead to a deregulation in single member states. The future requirements of planning will be another reason for the increased importance of open planning. Many new problem situations impairing environmental quality – especially in the area of large scale and long term change – can not be regulated in a reasonable amount of time. An open planning concept– despite the lack of legal commitment – can accomplish more.

Figure 1: The planning arena with open and regulated planning

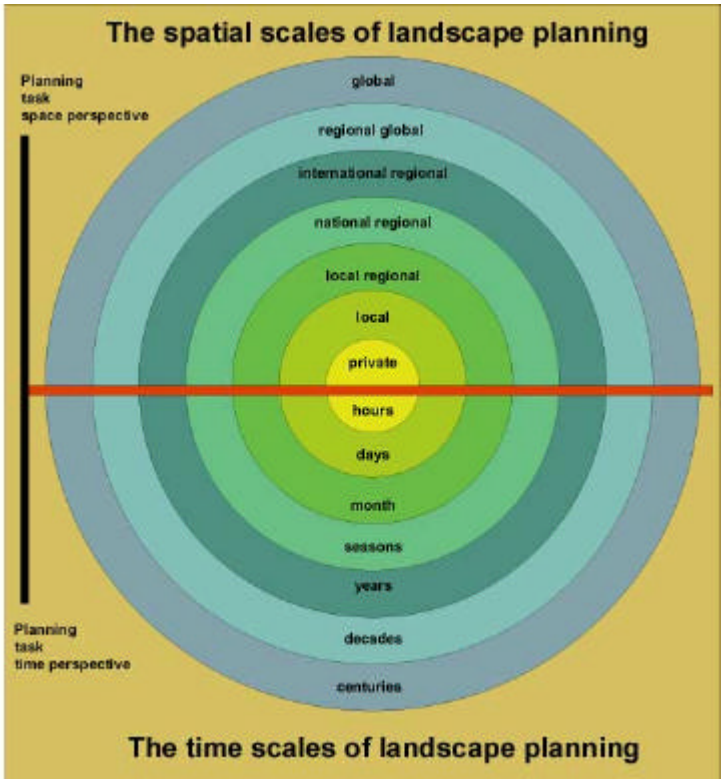


The total area represents the planning arena. Circles describe areas of competence, the empty area outside the circles the lack of competence. The small green centre includes the regulated core competence of landscape planning. Specialist areas – partly regulated - develop from here, symbolised by the red arrows. Some required planning profiles lay outside. Here open planning applies.

The tasks of landscape planning are expanding in the content, the geographical coverage and time dimension. The delineation of new regions which extend over state boundaries contain a number of new tasks, e.g. the Öresund region in the north or the Alpen-Adria region in southern central Europe. In fact today, the entire EU can be considered to be the planning

area: How should agricultural areas of Europe be administered? How shall future transportation links in Europe be organised? In order to make such a planning possible, the administrative boundaries within the European Union have been co-ordinated and unified in NUTs (National Unit of Territory, e.g. NUT1, NUT2, NUT3). Other problems, such as, climatic changes, destruction of the ozone layer, acid precipitation, chemical time bombs, and more have hardly been addressed yet. What effects will these problems have on regional and local levels? Is it likely that there will be surprises we can not imagine today? Interdependences are complex, abstract and partly unknown. Change is likely to manifest in different directions, advantages for some regions and disadvantages for others. The known pattern of landscape will be modified, either actively by man or passively by natural forces. Long term processes of today may become short term in future. A set of appropriate methods and approaches to assess these changes does not yet exist. Here I identify a huge planning deficit which is a great challenge for future planners.

Figure 2: Definition of the space and time borders of a planning task



What processes and what area we do consider with our task? Each planning task has a particular space-time extension, symbolized by the black line on the left corner. By identifying the borders, we explain others more about our way of thinking.

European Landscape Planning Education

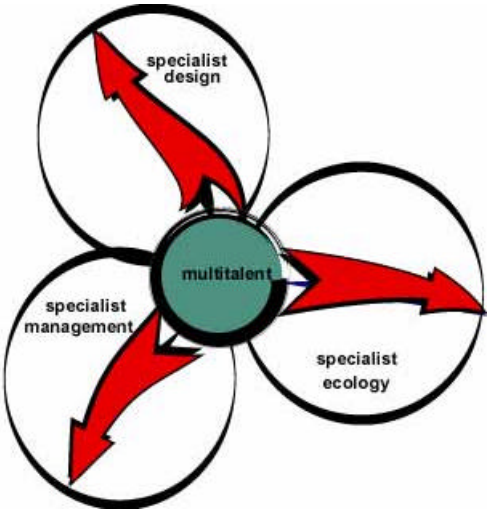
In at least half of the European countries landscape planning exists as a recognised course of study lasting at least for four years. Generally speaking, dynamic individuals were responsible for initiating and developing these programmes. They came from various departments such as horticulture, architecture, geography, biology, fine arts and others. This group realised relatively early the importance of integrative planning. In Hannover, Prof. Kiemstedt was one of the pioneers who was known far beyond the borders of Germany and in whose memory we come together here in Hannover. The number of students has multiplied many times since those pioneer times. Landscape planning has become increasingly more important as a

profession. On the other hand, this situation has led to unemployment for many colleagues. The traditional areas of landscape planning are full and new areas of activity must first be developed. Competitive new skills for the job market are lacking. But how can teachers of the landscape planning education offer this competence?

The emphasis on art and system is equally important in landscape planning education, although in many European countries the emphasis varies. Due to the different weight of art and system, some countries make a distinction between landscape architecture (emphasize on design) or landscape ecology (emphasize on natural sciences). I dislike this separation and consider landscape architecture and landscape ecology as integral parts of landscape planning. Passion and logic have both driven the development of landscape planning. Art attempts to create and preserve something unique. It tries to touch the observer emotionally, to excite or also to provoke. In contrast, system research attempts to represent reality in quantifiable terms and to formulate predictions based on measurable data. The system should become transparent, general rules should be derived and strategies of action developed. Both the art and the system remain only a part of the reality in which we live. They exist in relation to the unknown or that which is ignored. The unexpected happen because we can perceive our tasks only from a subjective point of view, no matter how many factors we consider.

In Europe landscape planning began as a successful and innovative course of study. The dominant planning practice of the 60s, 70s and 80s was dominated by sector plans. The ecological content of landscape planning successfully contrasted these plans. In Austria, but also in Sweden and other parts of Europe where I could not follow the details, landscape planning has been sub-divided into specialist disciplines when university departments reached a certain size. The original unit of art and system has for the most part disintegrated. The new "specialists" of landscape planning stand on a weaker foundation than the specialists of other disciplines which have a longer tradition. With the emergence of the concept of sustainable development in the 90s every type of planning became interdisciplinary. There is no longer a distinct comparative advantage of the landscape profession as a whole. In some places in Europe, the landscape planning education receives too few fresh impulses, at worst it becomes limited.

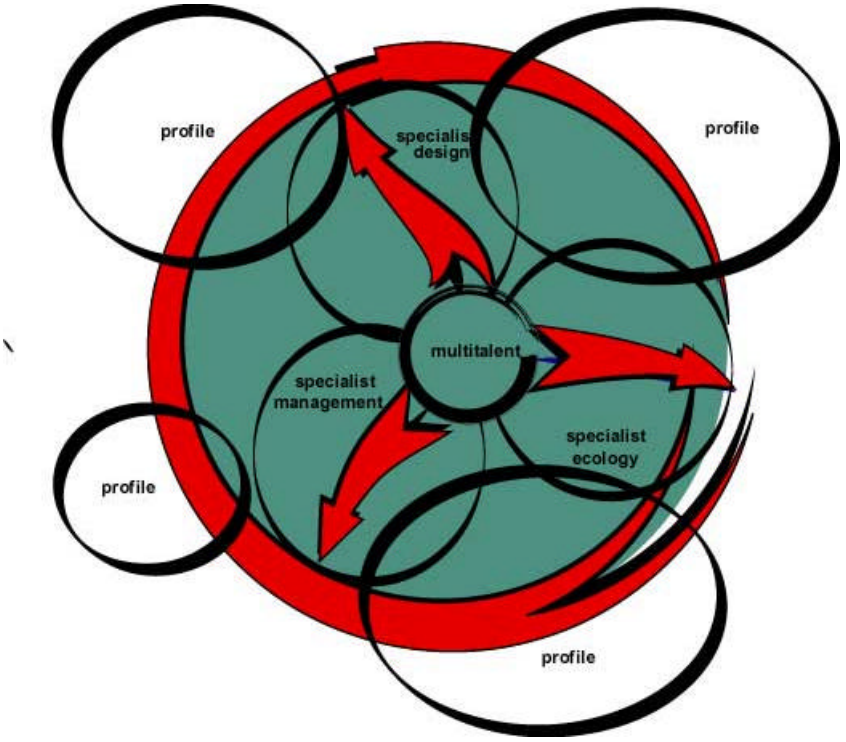
Figure 3: State of landscape planning today



This model applies for countries that found support to develop their curriculum, almost everywhere in Europe. The original unit of the founder was inherited by more successors with different specialist disciplines.

I consider a reorganisation of European universities teaching landscape planning as a major responsibility of the coming decade. Teaching carries more importance in Europe than research. The danger exists that the content of the curriculum will be soon out dated. When there is little or no research, or the students are not involved in research, then the profession suffers. The means and the methods of problem solving remain the same. It must be the main concern to change the learning universities into research universities. The integrated approach which made landscape planning was so successful in the past, must reach a new level. The individualist of many talents who once showed us the way, is no longer sufficient. The message he had to give is widely understood today. Teams are required to go further and exceed current planning horizons. The specialists of sciences, social sciences and arts are needed: such as mathematicians, physicists, chemists, doctors, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, jurists, painters, sculptures, musicians are important for this venture. Individualists must be integrated into teams, which can study a topic over many years and go into adequate depth. Only in this way can the planning practice obtain substantial, new realisations. This impairs a clear division between university research and project work undertaken by private offices or public administration. The first has to provide the basis for the improved planning performance of the latter.

Figure 4: The possible future: reintegration and profiles



In contrary to the situation in figure 1, the altered level of the competence in landscape planning – indicated by the green area - will allow several of the emerging new profiles to settle within the landscape planning profession. A cooperation between European universities will support this process.

The reunification of the various departments would be advisable in order to re-establish more breadth within the profession. The European scale co-operation offers important possibilities for reunification of specialist disciplines on an advanced level. The European scale cooperation is of utmost importance in this context. It is usually easier to work together with a foreign partner on common projects. The battle for scarce university resources as well as internal competition – two main problem according my experience - do not exist here. Large departments can hold a broader basis and have therefore better chances to develop particular competence profiles. The heterogeneous character of European landscape planning education

institutions would in principle allow the crystallisation of many profiles and thereby enrich the variety within the landscape planning education. Ideally these profiles are complementary on the European scale and stimulate the exchange of students, teachers and researchers. The competitiveness on the job market of young graduates can be altered in this way. A problem of some countries is a missing university status due to the distinct practical character of schools and/or the absence of research as a whole. If they can not obtain such a status, other partners with research competence will overtake their role.

In conclusion, landscape planning can still be a growing discipline, but the role of the individual is less dominant than previously. Questions of organisation, integration and cooperation can be more important to meet the future requirements. We have to take this challenge in a team effort like Prof. Kiemsted took his one some decades ago. I am optimistic that we can succeed.

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