Landscape : from plans to reality
The English version: 9 articles

Understanding

Understanding landscape as an object has considerably progressed over the last 20 or 30 years. The matter is therefore not to go back to this knowledge, but to pinpoint the new questions that it raises and the stakes that it makes appear. What are the new looks, the new landscapes and the new actions that are undertaken? In a plural society, how can looks that are sometimes contradictory, and each of them legitimate, coexist? What landscape and what society do we wish? What relations between places, between people, between places and people? Landscape is a social reality; as such it is a part of one of the three pillars of sustainable development: the social. Landscape, as other facts of society (ways of living, roots, commitments, sexuality, family, politics, religion…), being more and more a choice rather than something given, it is important that this choice be informed. The goal remains sustainability –neither a static society nor static landscapes, but taking their evolution into account.

Taking action

In order to make landscape studies more effective, with regards to their objectives, it is useful to know the conditions of the implementation: how are the knowledge tools mobilised? What actual impact each tool has had? How is the passage from thought to action, from design to reality? Some projects make this link visible. Large enough to have an effect on the landscape, beyond their setting, they may be achieved by a sole owner, but also be managed by multiple stakeholders, who must find the ways of a common management. Those projects must be considered as places of experiment, bearing lessons for other territories, and not as exceptions, even when they benefit from special attention and means (regional natural parks, "strategic sites", greenbelt, and places of high heritage value, such as the plain de Versailles…). How can the limits of the project be overcome? Among the ways of achieving this are: revealing the unique characters that are gathered under the name of *genius loci*: taking the "long time" and the evolving character of a place into account; conducting a "landscape approach" that integrates and unites scattered projects, whether former of newer.

Anticipating

"Landscape" means an area, "as perceived by people", states the European Landscape Convention, adding that its "character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and –or human factors". Landscape is therefore not a mere image: it is a place of living, and beyond the highlighting of good examples, it is important to ask "a landscape, for whom?"; it is shaped by people, and beyond what is seen, it is important to ask" a landscape, by whom?" This section identifies some examples of new practices that give courses of action for the future, answering either "for whom?" with the attention to inhabitants and users, or "by whom?" with projects of rural and urban planning stakeholders, and with awareness raising and training of tomorrow's actors. A landscape cannot be conserved without conserving the activities that produced it and the people who practised those activities. A landscape cannot evolve in a satisfactory way if those activities are in jeopardy. Beyond professionals and decision-makers, the entire society is concerned.

Changing views?

Nicolas Laruelle
IAU île-de-France

Recent technological advances have brought us new experiences of real, virtual or hybrid landscapes. By turns, they sharpen or dull, but always change our perception of landscapes. Time for a closer look.

In his work *Paysages en mouvement, Transports et perception de l'espace*, XVIIIe-XXe siècle (*Landscapes in motion, Transport and the perception of space, 18th-20th centuries*), Marc Desportes demonstrated how technology, and especially transport technology, played a role at least as important as painting in the formation of the Western landscape: how each new transport mode suggested and often imposed on the traveller new ways of doing, seeing, feeling and finding ones bearings – a new take on the landscape. For example, in the middle of the 19th century, rail travel forced the traveller to look ahead into the distance. The dizzying new speed made it impossible to take in the sights whizzing past next to the tracks. The railway landscape with all its variation was born.

Real landscapes

Over recent years, transport technology has progressed hand in hand with paradoxical urban changes. In the centres of major cities, new glass-panelled tramways and cycle lanes are a break with the staccato rhythm and ultra-low view of cars. Users experience a more laid-back, almost aerial view of the world, no doubt idealised by some "urbanophile" thinking[1] as a city finally at one with itself.

Further out, the increasing number of bypass ring-roads has, in rare cases, afforded a more sweeping view of the city. Mostly, however, they have brought an exponential rise in the number of roundabouts that blot the motorist's horizon propelling him like a spinning top, disoriented, into the ever-expanding near suburbs.

But, rather than these vehicle and infrastructure changes, it has been more so the explosion in mobility that has changed our view of the landscape. The increase in daily travel, both in frequency and distance has broadened the extent of landscapes encountered everyday, often out of necessity, blurring our ability to get a fix on the changes as they happen. At the same time, increasing access to air travel has perhaps afforded us a new take on everyday landscapes: "viewed from high above, who can say a vast suburban area isn't as captivating to the eye as the most picturesque alpine valley?[2]". We can see the school recently build beyond the road that, until now, had marked the edge of the urban area, or the electricity pylon that contrasts so sharply with the patchwork farmland.

Virtual landscapes

The chance to float freely over the landscape was the key to the success of *Google Maps* or *Google Earth* that is now equipped with a

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[1] See the reading note on *Antiurbain, Origine et conséquences de l'urbanophobie*, by Joëlle Salomon Cavin and Bernard Marchand, 2010, in this issue of *Les Cahiers de l'IAU*, Sept. 2011, p. 92.

[2] Serge Briffaud, « Le monde vu d'en haut. Une histoire de la vision panoramique » ("The world viewed from above. A history of panoramic vision"), *Paysage et aménagement* (*Landscape and planning*), no.31, June 1995. Quoted by Laurent Perrin, « La ville panoramique, Évolution des regards aériens sur Paris et sa banlieue » ("The panomaric city, Changing aerial views of Paris and its suburbs)*, *Les Cahiers de l'IAURIF*, no.120, January 1998.

flight simulator. These online platforms offer multiple and contrasting viewpoints and even allows us to take a virtual stroll down an urban street or a country road with *Google Street View* (and in 3D for some areas). Here is perhaps something remarkable about recent technological advances: virtual worlds are seen less often as alternatives or substitutes for the real world, but rather as tools that enhance our ability to look upon this real world.

Advances in the representation of real landscapes have been impressive. For example, children travelling through a town for the first time with their parents are quite able to give them directions as they have already been there in video games such as *Midtown Madness*. The views of Paris in the game are incredibly realistic, with its Haussmanian buildings, RATP buses and characteristic green and grey building site fences! A video-game reviewer was so impressed by how Manhattan was rendered in the latest *Spiderman* game that he recommended his readers take a break from the game and enjoy a stroll along its streets as a taster for their next weekend trip to New York – a trip enhanced rather than replaced the virtual New York. Developments in video games also seem to be moving more and more towards *serious games*, which are primarily educational and offer virtual situations that allow gamers to understand real situations better.

Against that, *Second Life*, an entirely virtual world, has been on the decline since 2009 with its main continent even beginning to empty – this despite the absence of a competing platform. The use of images from *Second Life* in the film *The Dubai in me* has an interesting resonance here: by overlaying virtual landscapes, promotional property videos and real landscapes, the German documentary film-maker Christian von Borries seeks to condemn the dehumanising of the real world in the emirate state.

Augmented reality

Fifteen years ago, Paul Virilio envisioned a dangerous separation of the world of the senses into real and virtual. However, it now seems we are witnessing a blending of the real and the virtual in an *augmented reality*. This new reality heightens our perception of the landscape while at the same time limiting the impact of signposts, "you-are-here" maps and interpretive billboards on the landscape. It calls to mind the quote from Paul Éluard: "There is another world, but it is within this one".

The explosion in the use of *smartphones* has led to the development of themed audioguides (e. g. *ZeVisit*), the ideal accompaniment to a visit to the landscapes of Mont Blanc or to a wine-tasting trip around Bordeaux. The invention of the accelerometer that detects a screen's orientation has recently spawned new applications that show information superimposed on the screen when it is pointed towards a landscape (*Layar*) or even towards the sky (*Skypix*). We can access information on how an historic building was constructed, on the history of an ancient tree or on how far away a star is.

We will soon be seeing this information on the lenses of a pair of glasses or on a car's windscreen, a project under development at General Motors. The car manufacturer plans to integrate not only SatNav information into the windscreen (via a virtual cable the driver can follow) but also, for example, the equivalent of our so-called "brown signposts" with cultural and tourist information, customised to each person's individual tastes: major jazz artists, industrial heritage, etc.

That said, Paul Virilio's prediction is not without resonance: in the future, holograms will be developed that can hide a power line or make a castle destroyed many centuries ago reappear: an over-augmented reality that could reignite the tensions between the real and virtual worlds.

Identity of territories and units of landscape

Pierre-Marie Tricaud
Corinne Legenne
IAU île-de-France

When it comes to landscape, identity is a frequent expectation. What shapes this expectation? Is it able to define territories as the *Atlas des paysages* (landscape atlases) try to do? Territories have long histories and their identity is not simply a product of their landscapes or activities. But identity is always an important component of the feeling of collective belonging and therefore of the social and community fabric.

In the current context of industrialisation and globalisation which tends towards uniformity, the assertion of identity is even more pressing. It is a question faced by individuals, peoples and territories. Our analysis focuses on the last of these dimensions, but the identity of any territory and the identity of its inhabitants have a reciprocal influence. At first defined as that which is identical, identity became to mean that which is singular, since it is the same criterion that allows us to declare some objects identical and to distinguish all of them from others. Identity can be defined as all the traits that make individuals or countries what they are and not something else.

Identity card

Everything we need to identify an individual is listed on what we call his *identity* card: a face, shown on the *identity* photo, a name, address, date of birth, height, distinguishing features. And we can transpose the elements detailed on the identity card onto a region: a recognised name – a real sign of identity when the inhabitants can be described by an adjective derived from it (which allows them to use their place's identity as a part of their own); an address, that is a location; a size, that is an area; a specific history, if not a date of birth; distinguishing features, which give it its geography; a face, that is to say landscapes; it can also have symbolic attributes – emblems, a coat of arms, logo, flag, anthem, motto, etc.

Identity and landscape

Landscape studies and projects draw heavily on the concept of identity – even if they are not alone in doing so, as a region's identity greatly outweighs that of its landscapes. This approach is encouraged by the European Landscape Convention, which invites each signatory State "to *identify* its own landscapes throughout its territory" (art. 6.C.1.a.i). Well before this convention, the *Atlas des paysages* (landscape atlases) have been drawn up for around twenty years in French departments or areas such as natural parks, identifying landscape units and describing the characteristics that make them unique.

The search for identity is not always explicit, as landscape units are defined more by their homogeneity, as per the official method of the Environment Ministry (Luginbühl, 1997). The units are nonetheless identified in this process, most often using a name or the boundaries that mark the changes in geomorphology or land use. The name is often an indicator of the strength or weakness of the units delineated in this way: Some atlases show incongruous names that simply reflect how the landscape planner felt on the day he visited the area. These names have little or no connection with local history and are used likewise elsewhere. This gives a sense of how identity is much more than just homogeneity or what a person might feel on a given day, but it is rooted in a

long history and shared relationship with the local people.

Identifiable territories

Landscape units are not only defined by purely visual criteria. The perception of landscapes is also linked to their use: those that are frequented on a daily basis are more strongly felt as belonging to a single unit rather than those that are not. A "population basin" (an area where most of the people spend most of their lives, such as a town and its satellite villages) therefore acts as an important criterion in identifying units, even if there are no visible limits or differences in the landscape. The best examples are where the "population basin" can be superimposed over a unit of relief or land use, or even both. The ideal case is where there are view points from where the whole unit can be viewed in one glance[3]: this occurs in places such as Mantes, Meaux, Melun and Montereau, which are both geographical and population units.

However, no one method of delineating landscape units can take precedence over another: the perfect delineation does not exist. Landscape units are rather a knowledge tool, to be utilised by projects that are likely to have a direct impact on them. For this reason, even if a *Schéma de cohérence territoriale* (or *Scot*, French regional strategic plan) is operative only within its boundaries, it should also take into account what is beyond them, across the entire area of all the landscape units affected. A readily identifiable landscape unit such as the *plaine de Versailles* (Versailles Plain), is more difficult to manage when it is shared between several municipality associations[4]

Territories that stand the test of time should be built around a strong identity, whether landscape is a strong marker of this identity or one marker among others. The so-called *territoires de projet* (project territories) only apply for the duration of the relevant project, much shorter than the life of institutional divisions (as of today, 220 years for the French departments, 150 years for Paris within its current boundaries). If inter-municipal bodies (in France, *communautés urbaines*, *communautés d'aglomérations* and *communautés de communes*) are to stay for that long, they should as well have an identity. In regions other than Île-de-France, inter-municipal bodies have been naturally established around the immediately identifiable entities that are the urban areas around the main cities. In the same way, in rural areas, inter-municipal bodies have been drawn upon cantons, which are not only electoral constituencies, but reflect an ancient structure of village satellites of a market-town.

In Île-de-France, as the inter-municipal bodies that first arose were too small (sometimes just two municipalities!), there has been a shift towards much larger groupings, which are often not focused around a central town. Even in places where there is a centre, the name doesn't always make reference to it (*Plaine Commune* rather than Saint-Denis or *Grand Parc* instead of Versailles). Other names are just as lacking in originality: *Deux Fleuves* (Two Rivers), *Étangs* (Lakes), *Boucle de Seine* (Seine Loop), etc. Because the name encapsulates the identity, an unoriginal name reflects a weak identity (as for a grouping of unrelated entities) or an unaccepted identity (as for a refusal to recognise a centre's predominance).

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[3] See the article by Jean-Christophe Bailly, "La ville entière" (The whole town), in the eponymous issue of *Cahiers de l'École de Blois* (Journal of Blois Landscape School), March 2010, pp. 6-9.

[4] See the article by Marie de Naurois, "La plaine de Versailles «entre projet et réalité»", *Les Cahiers de l'IAU*, no. 159, 2011, pp. 52-53.

Furthermore, local communities that reflect clearly identified entities are a major issue for local democracy. The turnout at canton elections is always higher in rural areas as the canton is centred around its principal market-town, whereas in urban areas, the canton is a mere constituency. Can the inhabitants build an identity for these new groupings that can inspire a sense of belonging?

The issue of regional identity can be felt as passionately as that of peoples or individuals. Knowing how many wars and conflicts can be attributed to identity[5], some are wary of defining identified territories and prefer "project territories" that are more consensual because of their greater flexibility. Violence, however, has always come from the idea of land as property. However, if we chose to consider that it is the inhabitants who belong to the region, strengthening its identity could help newcomers integrate better without having to relinquish that which makes up their own identity.

Landscape units in Île-de-France

The Île-de-France database of landscape units is part of ongoing work to identify and describe landscapes (just like the departmental landscape atlases), encouraged by the European convention.

There is no ideal subdivision that would match with a large landscape unit. The "departments" are arbitrary subdivisions of French territory and their origins have little to do with landscapes; the French "regions" are similarly lacking identity, being collections of departments rather than geographical or historical entities: the Paris basin is much larger than the current Île-de-France region, and the former Île-de-France province extended further north and not as far to the east). The region has the advantage of being a larger area than the department, hence with fewer units overlapping its boundaries. In addition, the database is not simply a compilation of departmental landscape atlases – this compilation being a State's ongoing project[6], not only in Île-de-France, but also across the entire country.

Initiated during the drawing up of the regional strategic plan[7], the database of landscape units benefited from input from the Departments, Regional Nature Parks, the CAUEs (architecture, planning and environment advisory bodies) and State and Regional offices. This collaborative work the various subdivisions (there is no one ideal method), in order to converge them or to agree on why different subdivisions would be kept. The database represents one layer of the regional geographical information system. There is a guide available that describes how it was created and offers the content in maps sorted by the various attributes of the units (see Tricaud, Legenne et al. in the bibliography below).

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5 See Lothar Baier, "Irritante identité" (The trouble with identity), *Études*, October 1994, pp. 313-317.

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6 See the article by Jean-Luc Cabrit, "L'État et la préservation du paysage francilien"; *Les Cahiers de l'IAU*, no. 159, 2011, pp. 30-32.

7 See *Carte des entités fonctionnelles et paysagères* (Map of landscape and functional entities), pp. 118-119 in the Sdrif (Île-de-France strategic plan) adopted in 2008.

Unlike the atlases, this database did not go as far as including an illustrated description of the approximately 900 units identified. It did, however, incorporate the notion of identity by seeking to subdivide units by the identity factors outlined at the beginning of this article rather than by homogeneity. In particular, the existence of a recognised name was a determining factor. The methodology was guided by the following principles:

Levels. Three nested levels were established: the "small units" level highlighted local places, "terroirs", prominent sites; the "large units" are generally well identified groupings, somewhere between local and regional size (plateaux, valleys, towns, etc.); the "country" level divides Île-de-France into a number of very large, well known, structural and/or historical units that overlap the regional boundaries (traditionally referred to as *pays*, *i. e.* "countries": Brie, Beauce, Vexin, etc.).

Topology. At every level, each point of the area belongs to one and only one unit in the database (even if in reality the boundaries may be vague and the point may belong to several units). Every attempt was made to keep units in one piece without any enclaves, but this principle could not be adhered to in every case.

Boundaries. The delineation was not designed to create frontiers in the landscape, but to identify, in addition to the units, interfaces or transitions that also play an important role: boundary lines, ecotones, water divides, watercourses, linear infrastructure, urban edges, etc.

Naming convention. As the name is considered here to be the embodiment of all the other attributes, the goal was to find names that best expressed identity and were the most easily recognised and shared. Unoriginal names are avoided as they are shared by too many places. In the absence of a specific name, valleys were generally named after their watercourse, and centred units, be they urban (towns) or rural (plains, plateaus, clearings, etc.) by their central town or village.

Attributes. "Country": structural relief (plateau-plain or valley); "large units": one attribute only, combining relief (large or small valley, plain or plateau) and land use (urban, agricultural or forest); "small units": dominant relief, dominant land use (whether it is exclusive, predominant or just significant), but also the relevance of the name.

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Landscape following in the footsteps of Human Rights

Anne-Marie Chavanon[8]
IAU île-de-France

The European Landscape Convention is the first international treaty to focus exclusively on all aspects of European landscape. In a very short space of time, it has transformed our view of land. It has given landscape the value of a shared public asset, of a resource inextricably linked to human rights. It removes political and cultural lines and offers citizens a leading role in shaping their environment.

On October 20th 2010, in Florence, the Council of Europe celebrated the 10th anniversary of the opening for signature to member states of the European Landscape Convention. In the space of just ten years, this text, designed to promote the protection, management and development of European landscapes, has been able to attract the interest of governments, as we were reminded at the event by Gabriella Battainai-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. This convention has been signed by 38 of the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe and 33 have ratified it. Its influence has extended beyond the borders of Europe. It has inspired non-member countries

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[8] Anne-Marie Chavanon is chair of the Sustainable Territorial Development Committee of the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe and a jury member of the European Landscape Award (in 2009 and 2011).

of the Council of Europe and serves as an example on other continents. Many hope to take up its principles at global level.

Inscribing a new shared asset

The European Landscape Convention has profoundly changed our vision of land and how it is managed. The technical and political approach has undergone a paradigm shift. Unlike earlier policies that were too centred on inheritance and protection, defined only by experts at the request of one policy-maker, the text offers a progressive vision of landscape that derives its source and value from the viewpoint of the inhabitants. It encompasses all the various tangible and intangible elements that make up the living area of populations. It no longer seeks to line up a series of outstanding physical features, but adopts instead a holistic approach, be it at local or pan-European level, tied to all the resources and needs of human life. It represents a «shared asset of collective interest».

Incentive actions and mechanisms

The European Landscape Convention owes its success to five key factors:

1. A formal national commitment, through the signature and ratification of the treaty.
2. Theoretical, methodological and practical implementation tools, contained in the appendices of the Convention[9], that are, above all, non-normative, allowing each State to govern its own policy and freely define its own landscape quality goals.

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[9] *Guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention*, CM/REC(2008)3.

3. Shared technical and scientific assistance through the provision of a common database, accessible on the Council of Europe website[10], and by organising regular international workshops on common issues.

4. A standing invitation to improve education on the values of landscape. The Convention bodies require the Parties to promote awareness among ordinary citizens, private organisations and public authorities about the value of landscapes, their role and their transformation. With the combined help of the States and the NGOs, they encourage the training of specialists and associations. They encourage the promotion of "school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values linked to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and development".

5. A new and effective awareness tool: the Council of Europe European Landscape Prize. This prize was established by the treaty and constitutes an educational tool with a cascade effect: more and more States have set up their own national prizes under the European Landscape Convention, so they can submit their winner as a candidate for the European Prize. The result has been a growing understanding of landscape factors as promoted under the Convention.

Furthering democracy and the protection of Human Rights

The most innovative aspect of this Convention is, without doubt, the place it gives to citizens with respect to the principles defended by the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

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[10]http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/default_fr.asp. See also http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/La-Convention-Europeenne-du.html

Like the Rio and Aarhus Conventions before it, the Florence Convention makes a substantial contribution to democracy. From the definition of landscape to its management, the inhabitant is tied to each step of the decision-making process.

The Convention makes an even clearer statement on Human Rights. Designed to respond to the transformations that regions undergo, it invites States to "recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity" (art. 5a). In addition to the appearance of the environment and the harmony rightly sought after, the fundamental living conditions of inhabitants are now taken into account: chief among them, the right to security. The protection and restoration of ecosystems, the reduction of pollution and threats from natural and industrial risks and the health of the habitat are all key considerations. The landscape of experts has given way to that of users.

The "social demand of landscape", as analysed by Yves Luginbühl, one of the experts behind the Convention's main concepts, meets these various expectations, be they aesthetic, cultural, economic, social or environmental. Expectations that should be, for the most part, inalienable rights.

A mechanism that promotes social cohesion

These second-generation human rights come with responsibilities for each of the landscape stakeholders. Here we find, paradoxically, the seeds of social cohesion: such cohesion is only possible if everyone takes responsibility for and a position to cooperate, without guilt, over a defined region that is not subject to prejudice.

In this respect, the European Landscape Convention offers, in my view, one of the most promising avenues of committed action at local level. The framing of landscape "as it is viewed by inhabitants" goes much further than "the voice of the inhabitant" and principles of good governance. Its approach is to draw on the "collective intelligence[11]" and bring to fruition a merging of parallel and even conflicting interests – an idea that would be improbable in other sectors. It encourages research with a common focus, essential in a multicultural context. It helps foster the cohesive identification with a place as this place now has a real sense of value. This last point explains the success of the landscape designers in completing work as "brokers"[12] in some deprived urban areas. Two good examples of this are in Pau[13] and Cenon in the Southwest of France.

Finally, this channelling of energies towards the improvement of our surroundings contributes to a "new landscape culture" as advocated by the Convention drafted by the Council of Europe on behalf of its main founder members.

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[11] Jean-François Seguin, chair of the Conference for the European Landscape Convention, representing France.

[12] Association «Passeurs» (Antoine Luginbühl et Rémy Bercovitz),
http://assopasseurs.blogspot.fr/

[13] Agence nationale pour la rénovation urbaine (National Agency for Urban Renovation) (ANRU), Pena and Peña landscape archiects, « Projet Parc-en-ciel, Pau, Quartier du Hameau, Les habitants imaginent leur parc (Park-in-the-sky Project, Pau, Hameau district, Inhabitants dream up their own park) » http://www.anru.fr/Pau-Quartier-du-Hameau-Les.html

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The European Landscape Award

This biennial prize is awarded by the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe to local or regional authorities, or to an ONG proposed by a State that has ratified the convention.

Competition rules

The project, one per State, must have been open to the public for at least 3 years and meet 4 criteria:

- *Sustainable development.* It should be part of an overall policy and "demonstrate environmental, social, economic, cultural and aesthetic sustainability; counter or remedy any damage to landscape structures; help enhance and enrich the landscape and develop new qualities".
- *Exemplary value.* It should set an example of good practice for others to follow.
- *Public participation.* It should involve the active participation of all the stakeholders.
- *Awareness-raising.* It should promote awareness among ordinary citizens, private organisations and public authorities about the value of landscapes, their role and their transformation.

The international jury is composed of 7 members and presents its proposal to the Committee of Ministers, the executive body of the Council of Europe. The inaugural Prize took place in 2009 and 8 entries were submitted to the jury (Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Turkey). France's proposal (Parc de la Deûle) was awarded the top prize. In 2011, 14 entries were submitted.

Landscape research – Why is it important?

Caroline Briand
Seine-et-Marne departmental council (Fr)
Lucie Le Chaudelec
Gâtinais français regional nature park (Fr)
Magali Laffond
Vexin français regional nature park (Fr)

Lanscape research opens our eyes to our landscapes and creates the basis for a shared culture that allows us to understand their profound value. To ensure this research is utilised properly, it must serve as a springboard for landscape policies and action. A departmental council and two regional nature parks present their know-how in the leveraging of knowledge through action.

The Seine-et-Marne departmental council and the Gâtinais français and Vexin français regional nature parks felt the need to conduct landscape research: the council drew up an Atlas and the two parks prepared landscape charters. The goal was to understand the distinguishing features of the landscape and share them with stakeholders. Since their inception, these documents were to be reference works for the understanding of these regions, but also for the undertaking of concrete projects. This was reflected in an exhaustive assessment of their scope of action, with the same focus applied regardless of the status of the various landscapes encountered: this was done in one go for the department's Atlas and over a more extended period for the two parks, so their scope could be covered by a complete mosaic of landscape charters. Descriptive input and recommendations for development in the region highlighted the main issues (both weaknesses and strengths), the areas in need of continuous attention, etc.

These guidelines were used, honed and developed both in large-scale landscape policies and in development projects designed to transform the landscape for new uses.

The Landscape Atlas: a new reference work for road-routing

In Seine-et-Marne, the Landscape Atlas was approved in December 2007 and drawn up jointly by the departmental council's road service and the Council for Architecture, Urban Planning and the Environment (CAUE). This situation might seem a little strange, but it simply reflects an operational reality: the road service needed a tool like this and so was keen to participate in its creation. At the end of this four-year experience, the Landscape Atlas has indeed become the reference work for the road service's landscape policy. This applies both for carrying out roadworks and for the more specific consideration of green roadside verges, where one of the main outcomes was a voluntary policy in favour of planting trees alongside the road. The Atlas very clearly identified this plant structure as a major feature of landscapes. In this way, it boosts the importance of and need for ambitious action on this topic and also outlines the technical principles. Next, the Roadside Tree Plan is drafted as a direct offshoot of the Landscape Atlas; the roads are essentially lines cutting across landscape units and the detailed knowledge from these units allows the tree-planting to be carried out very accurately. Seeing the roads move from one landscape type to another offers a first glimpse of the route's various transitions; in the process, highlighting these major thoroughfares and the advantages they all possess for the planting of long lines of trees, an iconic motif of the department and of a large part of the Paris basin. At the scale of the landscape entity, it is the importance of the roadside trees at local

level that is revealed: are they part of the identity of the place? can they or should they be a major motif? how do they interact with agricultural land or boundary lines? It is this information, used in each of the preparatory stages, that highlights the importance of the Landscape Atlas for projects with multiple spatial planning activities.

The Atlas is just as effective when it comes to designing new infrastructure. A comparative analysis of several potential routes can be made by overlaying them on the landscape map: this highlights the number of entities crossed and the position of the alignment through the entity (along the edges or through the middle) shows very quickly the impact of the road on the area. This allows the various proposed routes to be assessed objectively. Then, to define a landscape scheme, the knowledge of the various entities guides the landscape planner by highlighting the landscape motifs on the ground, providing the basis for a balanced project in the process.

The Landscape Atlas as a vehicle for establishing cross-project development principles

All development projects in places that enjoy regulatory protection are subject to a very close assessment of their consequences on the area. In this context, applicants are aware of the site's status and design projects more carefully from the outset. However, regular landscapes with no special status are more at the mercy of developers. For these places, the Landscape Atlas is often the only leverage to ensure well-located, well-designed projects. This is a particularly sensitive issue in Seine-et-Marne, where there has been an increase in the number of inert-waste storage facilities (*Installations de stockage de déchets inertes*, ISDI) and quarries. The Landscape Atlas allows the various sites to be assessed before

any action is taken. It discourages the authorisation of such facilities in the intimate setting of a forest clearing or where there is gentle soil creep, for example. By the same token, a new quarry in a site that already has some form of mining activity would be encouraged, rather than digging up a recognisable and long-standing agricultural landscape somewhere else.

The Atlas offers insight therefore on a landscape's ability to sustain a new project; it is not, however, a substitute for the designer's job of drawing up the plans. It provides recommendations and above all encourages each development proposal to match the situation. This does not mean lining the perimeter of a proposed site with trees to have the project approved, but rather considering what kind of new face and lines a site might offer to the landscape. In the same way, converting a gravel pit into a wetland does not have to be the only solution in every case; it is essential to rebuild a landscape that mixes grassland, woods and farming areas in line with the layout rules of the landscape entity.

From landscape charter to landscape development project: along the lines of the "genius loci"

The restoration of the view of Grand Rocher in Fleury-en-Bière

The landscape scheme took inspiration from the recommandations in the Bière Plain and École Valley landscape charters: "Recognise the parks and châteaux in the urban planning documents and protect them by listing the enclosure walls of the great estates found in the landscape entity maps. Raising awareness of owners and informing them when the perimeter is visible from public domain. Preserve and restore as much as possible the

outer perspectives of old estates in the development of public places."

The Park made a modest financial contribution to the research and work when compared to the overall investment (10%). However, the technical information in the charters and the encourgement to employ a landscape planner were essential in allowing the project to take shape. The coordination and investment of partners such as the CAUE and the Seine-et-Marne departmental architecture and heritage office were decisive in the project's final outcome.

Development of a parking facility near the Santeuil train station

Based on the landscape charter drawn up on the village, several projects were set up, some of which were carried out as part of a rural contract: enhancing the village centre, creating a garden cemetery and building a parking facility near the train station.

For the latter project, the landscape charter detailed a number of points: the creation of a parking area near the station to encourage people to travel by train, the need to provide access to the Vexin Français regional nature park via this mode of transport (starting point for walks, signage), the connection of the Viosne Valley with the village by means of a planned walking area beyond the parking facility.

The continuity given by having the charter and the projects overseen by the same design team helped ensure a quality project. This quality is evidenced in the design, the simplicity of the materials, especially the use of word as a bordering feature (between stabilised soil, grass areas, planted areas), the knot that brings plant diversity and evokes the river, the bench so in keeping with the rural setting that invites daydream to the sound of river Viosne.

The recommendations drawn from this landscape research have greatly benefited today's landscapes while highlighting how

they are rooted in the history of the local landscapes. They also provide a coherent framework for the landscapes to develop while preserving the local character, be it urban or rural.

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The Versailles Plain: from plans to reality

Marie de Naurois
Local Action Group Leader: Versailles Plain

The Versailles Plain is an area that has been closely tied to the château and its park right from Louis 14th's *Grand Parc* up to the protection of a 2,600 ha site in the 2000s. In response to the government's conservation drive, farmers launched a sustainable development initiative with the combined support of elected officials and residents. In 2004, an association was set up on the plain extending to the Alluets Plateau and the Mauldre Valley.

In the 17th century, this western-facing valley was chosen as the natural stage for an outstanding architectural project. Today, it remains an unbroken farming area surrounded by urbanisation to the north, east and south. Although conservation policies put a stop to the rampant urban sprawl, the situation is nonetheless deteriorating due to the insidious encroachment of farmland. In many cases, the regulations are powerless to prevent the infringements. The unchecked construction spawns further urbanisation. Towns get rid of anything they don't want outside their boundaries: industrial estates, Travellers, treatment plants, landfill sites, etc. The Versailles Plain is faced with a paradox. Thanks to the work of local councils and residents, the non-protected part of the plain is better preserved and maximised than the protected part near the built-up areas.

Moving from total preservation to management policy

Local authorities asked that a management document be drawn up in relation to the listing of the site as a protected area. This was done by a consulting firm over a period of almost ten years. Although it contains extremely in-depth analysis, it also represents an expert's vision on the rebuilding of the area's heritage. It also serves as a reference work for an operational programme.

During this time and backed by the departmental council, farmers launched a wide-reaching consultative process to build cooperative links between farming and urban neighbours to ensure the management of environmental quality. This "heritage audit[14]" gave rise to the recognition of a shared heritage and the desire to build ties. An association was soon created in 2004, made up of three colleges (officials, farmers and civil society): The Heritage Association for the Versailles Plain and the Alluets Plateau (Association Patrimoniale de la Plaine de Versailles et du Plateau des Alluets, APPVA). Since 2008, the association has had support from the departmental council's programme for agri-urban areas.

In addition, the Leader projects first arrived in Île-de-France in 2007. Leader is a European rural development mechanism that uses a bottom-up regional strategy in tandem with the public-private support of a local committee. The local action group (LAG) of the Versailles Plain Leader project is provided by the APPVA and has led to the creation of a development strategy, the employment of full-time staff and the financing of the actions proposed by the association's colleges: a

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[14] Based on the method devised by Professor Henry Ollagnon, director of the Institute of Heritage Strategy at AgroParisTech.

hiking guide, heritage map, signage at the approach to villages… Following meetings between farmers, several projects are now underway: Versailles Plain flour, wildlife preservation, farming interpretive signage, network-building between direct-sale producers, services to the community, landscape charter, etc. A group of officials recently took up the task of promoting the identity of the plain by means of a brochure distributed in letterboxes. These officials believe that a genuine area identity is impossible unless it has real meaning for local residents. A slow-burning transformation is taking place, fuelled by interactions between people. As people get to know each other better, projects can get off the ground and this develops a sense of belonging to the area and to the shared heritage of the community.

However, this dynamic is at odds with other forces at work. The reform of regional bodies implies an "administrative" framework built around towns. The natural entity of the Versailles Plain will be broken up into four or five urban intermunicipal bodies (aside from the one rural intermunicipal body being created), and efforts to build an identity there may be in vain. The intermunicipal groups will also be adopting the type of governance currently in use in France. It uses "collective" management, where the responsibility for action is given to a third party, as constituted by the "collective body". The "participative" framework of collective bodies often offers little more than a "consultation" on a project defined by the collective body itself or by an expert. We are a long way from an action "for the common good" built by all the stakeholders involved.

From plans to reality: the keys to implementing real action

The difficulty is addressing multiple issues simultaneously. Various international and local stakeholders have recognised a real heritage. How can we come together to manage it effectively? A number of conditions may be put forward:

– to recognise the existence of a "local heritage in the common interest" for a given area;
– to engage in a strategic approach involving all the stakeholders (co-build concept);
– to secure management resources.

How can all of this be achieved? A "heritage institution" would now be necessary, in which all the stakeholders could participate. It is for this reason that the APPVPA is considering setting up a public interest group (Groupement d'Intérêt Public, GIP), which would increase the involvement of the public sector at various levels without diminishing that of local stakeholders. The answer to the question put by the IAU île-de-France: "how do we turn our plans into reality?" could therefore be to "turn reality into plans" with the help of a suitable policy.

The restoration of the Royal Avenue: a threat or a shared project?

The Villepreux Royal Avenue is listed with the château and the park as a "World Heritage Site" by Unesco. A restoration project is underway and is managed by the Versailles Grand Parc intermunicipal body. To the west of the A12 motorway, this avenue crosses farming land where it is little more than a country trail. The restoration project is seen as a threat by farmers whose land is dwindling away to nothing. To ensure that the project become a reality, it is essential that it be created by them with possibly some innovation and transformations needed along the way[15].

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15   Pierre-Marie Tricaud, *Conservation et transformation du patrimoine vivant* (Conservation and transformation of the living

So rather than negotiate compulsory purchases for a predefined project, why not leave the land with the farmers and give them the time to come up with solutions suitable for them (by incorporating agroforestry for example)? Another strong argument is the existence of a group of active farmers who innovate towards the improved management of farmland, the preservation of wildlife and the education of hikers.

The goal behind the restoration of the avenue will be to rediscover the links between society and nature (as symbolised by the Park of Versailles), not as the pastime (and power) of the King, but as a sign of a new era of "shared heritage management".

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Using landscape to imagine a "post-carbon" land

Sylvie Blaison[16]

Landscape architect

Planning the city of tomorrow that can adapt to predictable changes means thinking about land differently. A global vision built around landscape could be one of the keys to building a land for a "post-carbon" society. How can we envisage a sustainable city-nature alliance, manifested through the landscape and designed as the cornerstone of human settlements? Let us look at the Garden of Two Banks in Strasbourg, a first experimental project.

The model for urban development that has persisted over the last forty years has been called into question. At a time of major change in climate and ways of life, the question of a post-carbon land has come to the fore. It is a question that deals not just with the availability of energy resources but how we utilise our land. It also covers social cohesion problems and economic dynamics.

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[16] Sylvie Blaison is a landscape architect at the Strasbourg Development and Urban Planning Agency (ADEUS) in charge of the Bas-Rhin department landscape database and Strasbourg's cross-border metropolitan strategic plan.

The natural foundation: a key component of a sustainable land

By using the natural foundation, landscape allows us to see land differently. It has the advantage of shifting questions regarding water, climate, agriculture, nature in cities, back to the forefront of analysis and debate. It is closely tied to the notion of an area's permanence, in contrast to a constantly-changing, disoriented urban fabric. It reinforces the identity and individual nature of the land, a factor in its appeal and a driver of economic and social development. Globalisation, on the other hand, belittles the land, and utilising technology creates a distance from the natural foundation. Finally, landscape creates a link with the senses and this is vital in promoting togetherness.

Building the city-nature alliance

Optimising natural resources (water, soil, biodiversity, energy, etc.), tackling global warming, preserving farmland, offering healthier food by promoting local produce, meeting the city's needs in terms of nature, force us to rethink how we utilise the land as part of a new city-nature relationship.

The green networks could be the basis for the area's new infrastructure, tied to the water that is a widespread feature of the Rhine Valley. The water forms a natural reservoir with a substantial water table and has given rise to a host of natural spaces, as well as a dense surface network of streams and rivers. It is a unifying feature that links the urban, cultivated and natural spaces. Through the valleys, the water teaches us about every aspect of the land, at the city level as well as at local level. Water gives the Rhine back its status of major artery. It builds a shared identity among the various built-up areas (cities, towns, villages)

and ways of life. It offers a connection with the senses, which feed the imagination and develop a proximity to nature much sought after in towns and cities.

If the green and blue network is to be the main driver of this new city-nature relationship, it is essential to preserve and develop the framework of not just natural but also farming spaces. This network must also be given a shape and its interface with built-up spaces must be organised; it must be made accessible and new uses must be developed there. Its organisation into a system would allow it to integrate the wide range of functions it represents (biodiversity, risk management, transport, breathing space, attractiveness, functions relating to climate, society and recreation), thereby meeting the many goals of local authorities and the expectations of residents.

Forging links using the public space and mobility

As the city-nature relationship evolves, networking the various parts of the region and mobility (including the active modes: pedestrian and bicycle journeys) are essential ingredients with particular resonance in the current socio-economic context. Given the increase in transport costs, the constraints on the public finances to develop and manage heavy infrastructure networks, public health issues, the need to reduce greenhouse gases, the desire for better quality of life emphasising nature and recreation, our relationship with the land must be re-examined to achieve greater proximity and intensity.

Criss-crossing the city and nearby suburbs with the active modes of the green and blue network achieves more than just a networking effect. It brings nature into the city thanks to a network of tree-lined cycle paths, which promote biodiversity. It weaves new links with natural and farming spaces, and a new type of

proximity that creates attractive spaces not just in centres but also in the in-between space.

This networking also operates on the social and economic level, as well as on the mental representation of the land, by expressing these new links in the life centres, the local places and services, and by making the specific characteristics of the landscape apparent.

A new city-nature relationship that re-examines the urban outline

Given the changes emerging in society that recast urban issues around sustainable development, the question arises of what kind of urban morphology will reflect this dynamic. Using the network of natural spaces as a framework for a new urban layout, designing the land through its (natural but also urban) empty spaces as a starting point rather than the built-up spaces, invites to change the view and to re-examine the resulting urban outline. How apparent is the natural foundation, what kind of scenography of the built-up space is drawn when we employ this new green and blue framework?

Weaving the built-up space into the natural foundation involves taking the city back to water, creating transition areas that benefit the city and nature equally and that showcase a new city that is attractive and dynamic. This also implies greater density along the green networks, locating municipal facilities there and imagining an architectural and urban form that addresses these new concerns.

The Garden of Two Banks: a first step in

changing the relationship with the natural foundation and with the Rhine

By changing our view of a marginalised district into an attractive one, the Garden of Two Banks[17]'s has played a pivotal role in transforming an entire area of the city. With the development of the Strasbourg-Kehl corridor, on either side of the Route du Rhin (RN4), we are today witnessing the urban restoration of an entire city sector, combining municipal facilities, local shops and housing around public spaces tied to water.

In keeping with the vision of building the development of tomorrow, the Garden of Two Banks represents one of the first steps in this new city-nature relationship. With its cross-border presence on either side of the Rhine, it has represented a new reference point in the Strasbourg landscape. This first manifestation of the city returning to the Rhine lent a whole new identity to the river, imprinting it once more into the collective psyche and allowing it to be a showcase for a new living space.

It is the garden that links the river to the city and not the road network or built-up space. By placing the Rhine back at the heart of this Franco-German region, the nature of the river changed and became a place of interaction and coming together, as symbolised by the footbridge over the Rhine designed by architect Marc Mimram.

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[17] The Garden of Two Banks is a cross-border project resulting from the art and landscape festival (*Landesgartenschau*) developed jointly by the cities of Strasbourg and Kehl between 1998 and 2004. Following a European competition won by Rüdiger Brosk, a German landscape architect, the development of the Garden of Two Banks over around fifty hectares became the headline project of the Strasbourg-Kehl corridor.

In addition to its cross-border connection that defines the Strasbourg-Kehl corridor, the Garden of Two Banks also represents the first milestone in the construction of a euro-regional link. This window onto the Rhine binds the city of Strasbourg to Europe, the North Sea and the Alps. A broad horizon called to mind by the endless comings and goings of countless voyages along this river.

Landscape: an indicator of well-being?

Érik Orsenna

Interview by Pierre-Marie Tricaud and Corinne Legenne

Érik Orsenna is a well-known writer who won the Goncourt Prize in 1988 with *L'Exposition coloniale* and who has been a member of the Académie française since 1998. However, he also has other strings to his bow. He always wanted a profession other than writing so he could be free, he explains, to give the book, a realm of total freedom, all the time it needs. For many years, he focused his attention on economics, both in teaching and research, before becoming an advisor to top politicians. He also turned his hand to landscape, writing a biography about Le Nôtre and was chairman of the Versailles National School of Landscape Architecture. His pen-name (a town from *Le Rivage des Syrtes* by Julien Gracq), is a tribute to an author whose work deals with horizons, borders and places.

He is also involved in horticulture and landscape inter-professional initiatives, chairing the Cercle Cité verte (Green City think tank), and taking part in planning the Assises Européennes du Paysage (European Landscape Conference, Strasbourg, 10 -12 October, 2011).

Les Cahiers – You are an adviser to the European Landscape Conference, the theme of which is "Landscape, a source of wealth creation". Do you believe we can quantify landscape as we do for wealth, in terms of monetary units?

Érik Orsenna – I am an economist by profession and I believe economics is becoming intelligent again. For a long time, economics was a human science, linked to history, geography, anthropology and sociology. What we see in the writings of all the great classical economists (Smith, Ricardo, right up to Marx) is a global vision of society. Then, we tried to turn economics into a science and reduced it to mathematics towards this end. This went hand in hand with the predominance of liberal thinking, which reduces economics to the market, a measurable thing.

But this did not work. We reached our limits. This was evidenced recently with the financial crisis. Hence the arrival of new measures of wealth, with the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (chaired by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi). It is not growth that is measured any more but development. We measure differently by adding new factors to wealth such as well-being, health and accomplishment.

Under these new mechanisms, landscape and plant life have a place. As Michel Péna aptly puts it[18], some aspects of landscape are part of the market (an apartment with a nice view) but many are outside it, such as public property. How can we value the invisible long term? Sustainable development gives priority to the invisible and the long term. Landscape shows the link between man and nature in an enriching way and not as a predator. The idea is to broaden our measurements, even if it means using complex equations.

The recent economic events have also put the spotlight on a very interesting trend, where plant life is central. I am writing a book on

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[18] Especially in his interview in this issue of *Les Cahiers de l'IAU*, Sept. 2001, p. 87.

paper and forests. Since the earliest times, paper has been recycled (rags). Rather than a linear economy (we produce, we throw away), we create a circular economy. What we throw away is also a raw material. In the process, we are extending the product life cycle and reducing scarcity.

The answers to landscape questions should be put to use in a very different way. It is strange, but essentially the level of plant life in a city is a good indicator of the level of humanity in that city. Nature and Man are interlinked rather than opposed to one another.

Les Cahiers – Why was the "Grenelle" Environment Forum not able to address landscape?

Érik Orsenna – The "Grenelle" was very useful at breaking down things: an illusion of managing the real world ever since Descartes – whereas landscape is defined by its global nature. How can we put our finger on what is global in nature? Landscape was at odds with this thinking for that reason.

Les Cahiers – Michel Péna, president of the French Landscape Federation, often says that landscape is not so straightforward any more. Do you believe this to be the case and, if so, what is driving these changes and who decides if they are acceptable or not? Is landscape thinking a prerequisite for beautiful landscapes?

Érik Orsenna – Yes, a certain type of "big-picture" thinking is needed. In Africa, the world is not broken up like that. Why are there no gardens there? Because nature is everywhere – it is not nature on one side and the town on the other. We are the kings of specialization, there are specialists everywhere.

And yet, we'd like to make landscapes in five years; whereas the landscapes we admire took five centuries to make. This admiration came after the landscapes were formed: thinking about the landscape was retrospective. Nobody decided to create the Tuscany landscape. What I am really interested in, aside from landscape, is our attitude to the world; which is no simple thing.

Les Cahiers – What can landscape tell us about major global environmental issues (deforestation, desertification, climate change, and so on)?

Érik Orsenna – I am learning about the difference between a stand of trees and a forest. We need stands of trees, but they are not forests. Why bother growing a broad-leaved forest in northern Europe over 40 years when we can have a eucalyptus plantation in southern Europe in 5? There is an interesting paradox here: taking a decision means speeding up time – how should we make our choice by letting time do its work? Landscape thinking is one answer.

Another example of landscape's global influence: we are destroying our horticultural producers and plant nurseries through taxation of stocks, call-to-tender regulations, competition distortion with neighbouring countries… Local authorities are not allowed to give priority to local produce. The landscape question is one that covers global problems such as homogenization, the loss of ties to the land, etc.

Les Cahiers – We, the landscape architects, can't help but feel powerless…

Érik Orsenna – Nonetheless, a lot of progress has been made over the last 20 to 30 years. Mayors are paying closer attention now. This

revival started with architecture with landscape a little slow to follow. Every park is a landscape… France is slowly but surely catching up. We can't see it yet but the new gardens are still youngsters with their whole life ahead of them. You know, even landscape designers have trouble with time!

Les Cahiers – **Can landscape improve our lives? And, if so, how?**

Érik Orsenna – Of course – it improves the standard of living, the quality of life and the reasons to live. There is a very simple reason: plants are an irreplaceable partner, just like living beings that cannot live without other living beings. Humans need life and need to communicate with life and other living beings.

Along with horticultural and landscape specialists, we are researching the effects of new living conditions on health. Allergy problems are ever-present and exacerbated by pollution. But to remove all allergies would mean getting rid of pollen and plants in the process. There are two things I find amazing in our civilisation: our inability to deal with time and risk.

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Architects and landscape architects in the classroom

Anne Gaillard
Violaine Pécot
Val-de-Marne CAUE (Council for Architecture, Urban Planning and the Environment)

Thanks to partnerships between specialists from the architecture, landscape and education fields, an initiative was launched in 1999 by the Val-de-Marne CAUE to give children a greater understanding of their environment.

For thirty years now, the Councils for Architecture, Urban Planning and the Environment (CAUEs) have been coming to schools to educate young people about architecture, urban planning and the environment, in line with their responsibilities as defined by the 1977 Act.

The educational role of CAUEs

Taking possession of the city of today to better imagine the city of tomorrow – this is the important message to pass on to children, so that much later on they too can be well-informed participants. To understand and respect the ever-changing environment, some key concepts need to be put across.

With this in mind, the CAUE 94 launched an initiative twelve years ago (1999) with the participation regional and departmental services of the ministry of Education (Rectorat de Créteil, Inspection académique du department). "Architects and landscape architects in the classroom" was designed to educate children from year 1 of primary school to the last year of secondary school. The idea is to put practicing architects and landscape architects in contact with teachers who would like them to come to their classroom, for a one-off visit, a joint work on a project of the class, a neighbourhood visit and so on. It is a chance for the specialists involved to exchange ideas on the different ways of "experiencing the city" and to interact with their future users. Today, around 150 private-practice architects and landscape architects from Val-de-Marne and Paris East end have answered the CAUE's call. They have volunteered to give their time free of charge in a school (primary or secondary).

The landscape architects can contribute in various ways, depending on the teacher's needs: some give a presentation on their field of expertise, others give children their first taste of gardening or botany and some assist in a project to create a garden on part of the school grounds. Their main objective however is to teach children to consider, observe and decipher landscapes and to understand the issues at stake. There are also several teaching aids that can be used to facilitate the learning process.

"A garden in my hand": a fun and creative experience

The CAUE 94 chose to set up an initiative with the help of landscape artist Anne-Sophie Perrot-Nani. The result was fun and educational workshops called "A garden in my hand". Going for walks, learning how to look, analysing and deciphering what our eyes can see, making things from what we can find, using what we see to imagine and dream – these are the goals of the workshops. All are designed around the same principle and are set in an existing park or garden. The workshops differ depending on the location, as they try to

reveal the individual characteristics of each landscape's site and formation.

The first stage of the session consists of a guided tour of the park or garden. The children are asked to collect various items (fallen branches, pine cones, bark, etc.) while showing respect for the plants and other people of course. Next, back in the classroom or at a materials library set up and provided for the project, the children are free to create miniature worlds, express their own vision of things by building "models" of gardens, parks, nature areas or parts of the town. These can be imaginary or real and are inspired by the walk in the park and the treasures they collected. Once all the designs have been photographed for a future exhibition at the school, the participants leave for home with their "gardens in their hands".

Every year in the Val-de-Marne department, 60-80 classes are able to benefit from the work of the specialists (visit, presentation, workshop, photography work, building models, etc.). Even if the operation is quite limited in scale, it is always a big hit with the children. In addition to learning more about the environment, it gives children their first view of the work environment.

In 2011, a partnership was set up with the regional chamber of architects (Ordre des architectes en Île-de-France) and the regional services of the ministry of Education (Académies de Paris et de Créteil). The Seine-Saint-Denis, Paris and Seine-et-Marne CAUEs have joined that of the Val-de-Marne and are already taking part in the initiative. It is hoped that this region-wide development will allow inspiring the interest and curiosity of many young students.

The sociotopes and landscape of inhabitants

Alexander Ståhle[19]
Spacescape Agency

By using the sociotope method to more clearly understand the needs of present and future inhabitants, Stockholm's new Park program encourages a highly dynamic approach addressing both the "green structure" and the urban landscape, a method typical of the Swedish capital.

Stockholm is considered one of the most attractive metropolitan areas in Europe. The main challenge facing urban planners is to develop along the same lines while maintaining the city's beauty. This challenge is tackled differently at each of the planning stages and the results vary accordingly. At regional level (2 million inhabitants), the regional plan (2001) identifies development lines and a solid green structure based around green urban motorways linking the city-centre with the outlying countryside. However, this urban motorway concept is clearly at odds with the motorway projects outlined in the regional plan. At city level (800,000 inhabitants), the Stockholm city plan (2010) provides for the "building of a pedestrian city towards the centre" under the slogan of "the walking city". This would be achieved by reclaiming urban wasteland and establishing transport links near the city-centre. The traditional urban landscape would be maximised and the existing "green structure" preserved. But the plan says nothing of how this structure might evolve alongside the urban fabric. Finally, in terms of the islands or undeveloped sites, detailed plans were drawn up by developers, but without any real understanding of inhabitants' wishes and practical concerns.

What is missing in today's urban planning is a tie-up between the city and local levels, as well as constructive dialogue between urban planning stakeholders and inhabitants, especially on the green structure. To address this issue, the city of Stockholm outlined new proposals in its recent *Parkprogram* (2011) designed to take better account of inhabitants and based around the idea of "sociotopes". The sociotope map was the fruit of dialogue with inhabitants and focuses on the urban planning of city districts, both from a city and local standpoint.

Creating and using the sociotope map

The sociotope concept was invented by my colleague Anders Sandberg and me at the City of Stockholm Department of Strategic Planning, inspired by the more familiar "biotope" idea. We define a sociotope as "an open space with a specific life world in a given cultural environment" – in this case, that of the inhabitants of Stockholm. The sociotope map of a city district reflects the usage of open spaces in daily life: "green", "grey" or "blue". It is drawn up as follows.

Firstly, the open spaces larger than 0.5ha are defined and designated based on simple categories such as parks, squares, nature, riverbanks, quays, etc.

Secondly, industry specialists (landscape architects) evaluate the open spaces through observation and in line with the protocols developed by national and international research and evaluation work on open spaces.

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[19] Alexander Ståhle is a Landscape architect with a doctorate in Urban planning and is the director of the Spacescape agency.

Experts such as park and garden historians are also called upon.

Thirdly, the inhabitants are invited to evaluate their open spaces and have their say on the sociotope map through several rounds of discussion chaired by officials from each city district. Feedback on the value that open spaces represent for inhabitants is collected via short questionnaires on their "favourite outdoor areas". The surveys are distributed to parents and staff at crèches and nursery schools, published in the local press or on the city district's website. Feedback is also collected using focus-groups and interviews with young people, adults and the elderly. Maria Nordström, an environmental psychologist from the University of Stockholm, drew up the questionnaires and interview guides. Since 1996, the City of Stockholm has carried out around twenty such surveys on the usage and qualities of green spaces. They have confirmed how important parks and nature are to inhabitants and to the attractiveness of Stockholm by extension.

Fourthly, the information collected from this dialogue is combined with that observed by the specialists. Twenty standard qualities or "sociotope values" are identified and these are deliberately expressed in everyday language (play, picnic, peace and quiet, swimming, etc.) to serve as a common base for both development stakeholders and inhabitants. Next, each space is inserted into the sociotope map with its specific combination of values. This georeferenced map can now by used in the green structure research of various urban planning projects.

Accepting that it is impossible to preserve everything

A city's attractiveness creates urban pressure on open spaces. The most frequent response to this pressure is to preserve the open space, which reflects the degree of importance attached to such places. However, it is neither possible nor desirable to preserve "everything" in a city, as it is constantly evolving. Urban renewal and extension projects must take into account the quality of existing or future open spaces near the development site, just as at city-district level. Development stakeholders (urban planners, landscape designers, etc.) must view open spaces as areas liable to be changed, moved or redeveloped. By modifying and widening the green structure as new roads and buildings are built, the urban environment can gain in quality even if there are fewer open spaces. The goal is create a high-quality city that offers varied environments for varied ways of living. Proximity to open spaces is a major plus for new buildings. In return, if the buildings are well located, they can shield these open spaces from traffic noise. Furthermore, the open spaces of city centres can be a solution to the urban sprawl affecting many European cities.

Stockholm's Park program outlines a development strategy and policy for open spaces partly based on the sociotope map and are designed to be used as an integrated development and urban planning mechanism. Through dynamic, qualitative and quantitative guidelines, it seeks to promote an ideal park offering, but also sustainable management and a real "park culture".

The qualitative guidelines are derived from the sociotope map, in other words from dialogue with the inhabitants about the value of Stockholm's open spaces, making them well suited to the needs of the city:

– less than 200m away: green haven, games, calm and relaxation, sunbathing, walking;
– less than 500m away: flowers, community life, picnic, ball games;
– less than 1km away: swimming, agriculture, events, fishing, toboggan, ice-skating, forest, history, viewing point, water activities, wildlife.

The program has shown that some sociotope values, such as swimming or a viewing point, require specific locations. Values such as peace and quiet and children's games are difficult to combine in a park and require specific areas. However, sunbathing and walking can be combined in the development of a park. Parks with a high number of values become attractive and draw in more visitors, which increases wear and tear. Sustainability here depends on the size and maintenance of the parks. If the green spaces are to remain green and preserve their qualities, they need to be big enough. They also need to be part of a well-connected green structure so they can be both accessible and operate as sustainable ecosystems. Appropriate management is essential.

The quantitative guidelines summarise the policies and recommendations of the urban environment expert group from the European Commission, the Nordic Council, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, and from the Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation of Stockholm:

− less than 200m away: a nearby park, 1-5 ha in size;
− less than 500 m away: a city-district park, 5-50 ha in size;
− less than 1km away: a nature reserve, more than 50 ha in size;
− additional open spaces, less than 1ha in size.

These guidelines promote discussion about the resources needed to achieve an ideal park offering as part of the urban planning process. Three major strategies are detailed in the *Parkprogram* to achieve this goal. The first is to extend the open spaces where there are not enough open spaces to develop the qualities desired. The second is concentration. This entails amending existing open spaces and/or reducing the quantity of open spaces while improving the remaining spaces.

Concentration also implies improving all aspects of accessibility: being able to reach a space (e.g. for children), the public nature of a space or being able to pass through a space (e.g. for the disabled). The third strategy is management, which keeps spaces and structures in good working order. There is no point in creating a "good" park if it is not maintained. Equally, there is no point in continuing to maintain a "bad" park. And it is up to the inhabitants to decide what is "good" or "bad".