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GOVERNANCE IN GREEN SPACE PLANNING – EDITORS’ NOTES

THOMAS B. RANDRUP, TIM DELSHAMMAR,
MADELEINE GRANVIK, CLAUS BECH-DANIELSEN AND
ANNI VARTOLA

Green space planning has become ever more in focus during recent years, as a result of urban green spaces supplying numerous ecosystem services for the benefit of an increasing urban population. However, although many urban landscape planners are aware of the value of ecosystem services, the ecosystem service framework has not yet been integrated in spatial planning and governance in a systematic way. This may be due to the fact that ecosystem services as such are not a tool, but a comprehensive set of values attributed nature for the benefit of humans.

Likewise, de-centralized, community based and participatory approaches and processes as a part of planning of green spaces increase the prospects for democracy, accountability and transparency. It also promotes the development of local involvement and enablement. This has long been acknowledged as international conventions frequently have suggested public participation in planning. However, how to involve locally and create enablement is basically left for the local planners to figure out.

Through the years, many concepts and perspectives have been placed in relation to public participation – from Arnstein’s iconic and much debated “A ladder of citizen participation from 1969¹ to James, et al.’s “Towards an integrated understanding of green space in the European built environment” from 2009,² who discussed how to establish an international research agenda for urban green space, which can contribute to the better understanding of people’s relationship with urban areas. People’s relationship to urban areas is intertwined with green space development. Therefore, this theme issue of *Nordic Journal of Architectural Research* focus on governance as the process of public decision-making and thus, the processes by which decisions are developed, implemented and engaging with the public.

Participatory governance may not be different in its results from traditional government actions, but the processes leading to the results and

- 1 Arnstein, S.R., 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *JAI*, 35(4), pp.216–224.
- 2 James, P., et. al., 2009. Towards an integrated understanding of green space in the European built environment. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 8, pp. 65–75.

outcomes, e.g. in green space planning, may be significantly different because of the active involvement of the public. Governance is about creating the rules and conditions of this engagement.

This theme issue presents six papers, which are all presenting new and innovative approaches to governance in green space planning. There are four Nordic/European based papers, the fifth paper includes cases from both Europe and Asia, and the last one is presenting a case from Christchurch in New Zealand. All papers focus on the public – private relationship, how civil engagement is initiated, implemented and steered in relation to a public planning situation. With this as a common denominator, the six papers creates a new and comprehensive overview of state-of-the-art approaches and concerns related to governance in green space planning.

In the paper *Participatory governance of urban green spaces: Trends and practises in the EU*, Alexander van der Jagt and his colleagues from the European GREEN SURGE project (<http://greensurge.eu/>) provide a new basis for planners and practitioners. The paper is based on an improved understanding of how to harness the potential of civil society in urban green space management. Building on results of the EU FP7 GREEN SURGE project, the authors identify, describe and categorize participatory governance practices characterized by non-governmental actor involvement in planning or management of urban green spaces. A total of 20 cities in 14 EU-countries were included in the study. The authors identified four broad trends influencing participatory governance policies and practices in the EU. Further, they categorized these practices relating to urban green spaces into seven clusters. As a significant new contribution to the international governance literature, van der Jagt, et al. presents a new two-dimensional matrix depicting clusters of participatory governance practices by mode of governance and means of participation.

Two other new planning tools are presented in the following papers. In his paper *Identification of space for urban agriculture through transformative governance*, Rob Roggema states that urban planning often limits the growth of urban food production. Therefore, he has explored new ways to incorporate urban agricultural landscapes into urban planning schemes, by the use of co-creation processes, in transitions and in participative planning processes. Roggema introduces the “design charrette” as a tool to provide a pathway for participative inputs in planning processes. The role and outcomes of three case studies was tested and presented. Roggema concludes that food production could be a powerful driver of urban development in the form of structuring principles, which are based on the conditions for food production (i.e. available and type of space, fertility of the soil, availability and quality of water). However, the attention for food should not be a single-issue, as social aspects need to be integrated in the development process as well. Further, Roggema concludes that the Action Research method, which was used in the three case studies, is an applicable way of harvesting results.

Where Roggema is presenting a short term methodology, Helena Mellqvist, Lone Kristensen and Cecil Konijnendijk van den Bosch explores the potential of green structure planning for urban-rural integration in a long term landscape development perspective in their paper *Participatory green structure planning for linking urban and rural landscapes – a case study from Ronneby, Sweden*. The authors apply a policy and governance “arrangement model” developed by Arts, Leroy and Van Tatenhove,³ and through this investigate the social and inclusive dimensions of a long term planning approach.

The working method for developing Ronneby’s green structure plan has been highly participatory, aimed at creating a document in which the respective qualities of rural and urban areas are mutually strengthening. Local “connoisseurs” being representatives from local associations were involved in identifying the most important places, routes, and landmarks in their respective villages and its surroundings. Further, they took part in exploring whether the green structure planning instrument can also contribute to a sense of belonging, strengthening the relations between people and their everyday landscape at a municipal level.

The long time span and repeated meetings were evaluated to be important for raising awareness of the potential in visionary green structure plans. Their findings not only support the continued municipal planning process, but also contribute to the current debate on how “green infrastructure” can be applied as an interdisciplinary concept covering e.g. green space spatial pattern, aesthetic values, biological diversity, and ecosystem services. Mellqvist, Kristensen and Konijnendijk van den Bosch argues for the long term involvement of local residents, and present specific ideas to how this may be done in a systematic and long term perspective – all in order to secure maximum input from those who are believed to be the most knowledgeable about the local landscapes.

This type of engagement and respect for the local user is in contradiction to the case presented by Nicola Thomas, Patrick Oehler and Matthias Drilling in their paper, *The power of the many – The fight for allotment gardens in Basel, Switzerland*. This paper presents a case where the civil society uses the structures of a representative democracy (here in form of allotment garden organisations) to actually overrule the formal political establishment. Thomas, Oehler and Drilling describe the planning dilemma of having sites within the city borders undergoing significant transformations as new, younger and more affluent users are discovering the gardens and changing the culture and community from within. At the same time, the public administration is recognizing the profit potential of using the garden sites as land for new housing constructions and public parks.

3 Arts, B., Leroy, P. and Van Tatenhove, J., 2006. Political modernisation and policy arrangements: a framework for understanding environmental policy change. *Political Organization Review*, 6(2), pp. 93–106.

The authors describe the process of the local authority planning to close down three garden sites to make way for housing constructions. This decision was fiercely opposed by a coalition of heterogeneous actors, with key drivers in the protest movement being the local allotment garden associations. The paper analyses the role the allotment garden associations in Basel played in the protest movement and describes how the organization structure of the associations enabled the interests of threatened allotment gardeners to actually be powerfully represented.

Powerful representation in planning processes is a dilemma that Peter Parker and Staffan Schmidt discuss further in their paper, *Commons-based governance in public space: user participation and inclusion*. Through a case study from Malmö, Sweden, Parker and Schmidt discuss how participatory governance has been critiqued for benefiting only select groups of users. This situation is ambiguous, with participation held to be both empowering in the sense of developing use-values in locally relevant ways and exclusionary in representing select interests.

The paper addresses the question of, if and how a particular form of participatory governance – park commons – may be compatible with inclusive public space. The authors find that park commons may be understood to contain a mix of different types of shared resources. The specific mix explains different expressions of user-generated boundaries and particularly the extent that these boundaries are permeable. The paper also presents forms of public sector intervention that influence the ways boundaries are constructed. The findings indicate a potential for public managers to strategically enable commons as a means to increase civic engagement and potentially increase rather than diminish inclusiveness of parks.

The final paper, *Bottom-up governance after a natural disaster: A temporary post-earthquake community garden in Central Christchurch, New Zealand* by Roy Montgomery, Andreas Wesener and Fran Davies, is – in principle – summing up the previous papers, as they address the inherent logics of a sudden disaster, creating an opportunity for locals to create common places, based on social and meaningful activities such as urban gardening.

Montgomery, Wesener and Davies describe the case of Christchurch, which experienced a dramatic change after the city was hit by an earthquake and several damaging aftershocks in 2010 and 2011; temporary uses emerged on post-earthquake sites that ran parallel to the “official” rebuild discourse and programmes of action. The paper examines a post-earthquake transitional community-initiated open space (CIOS) in central Christchurch. Local community groups as bottom-up initiatives relying on financial sponsorship, agreements with local landowners who leave their land for temporary projects until they are ready to redevelop, and volunteers who build and maintain the spaces, have established CIOS.

The study analyses and highlights the evolution and actions of the facilitating community organisation (Greening the Rubble) and the impact of this on the project. It discusses key actors' motivations and values, perceived benefits and challenges, and their current involvement with the garden. The paper concludes with observations and recommendations about the initiation of such projects and the challenges for those wishing to study ephemeral social recovery phenomena.

New overviews, ideas and concepts are needed in order to fulfil the future needs for public engagement. With this theme issue, we have created a contemporary overview of actual cases highlighting, discussing, analysing and suggesting concrete means to engage users in planning and management of urban green spaces. We hope you will find both interest and inspiration – in order to enrich both green space planning and management and its related governance activities.

November 2016

