

The role of the planner for resolving conflicts in the cooperative local landscape planning

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1. Relevance for planning knowledge

The resolution of the environmental conference of Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the passed Agenda 21 suggest a special responsibilities to the communities for the solution of environmental problems in the next century. Landscape planning as a tried and tested instrument is at the German communities disposal, to enable environmental planning for development in the precaution principle.

The task of local landscape planning is to describe the local requirements and measures for realising the aims of the German national nature protection law and also to put these aims into practice (BNatSchG § 1(1)). Local landscape planning specifies ideas concerning nature and landscape of the higher levels of planning in the country- and regional planning; it prepares the decisive steps for realising these contents. In landscape planning many objective and connected social conflicts are raised on the way to sustainability. Conflicts of this kind often occur between individual local interests and the general interest in nature protection (Hardin 1968). These conflicts can grow so affecting that the success of landscape planning is in danger and it has been often spoken of its failure (Rat von Sachverständigen für Umweltfragen 1987 T2 411; Kiemstedt et al. 1996:1, Egli et al. 1995).

This is why it is very important for the practice of planning, to give the planner insight and tools to be able to handle the appeared conflicts in a constructive way. It is the aim of this work, to develop a procedure and a method of planning, which does not only deliver professional good results but also facilitate the handling and resolving of conflicts and enable

the communities, to really grasp the suggested responsibility for nature protection (Apel 1993). This knowledge can be used in every kind of environmental planning and in the same way in the local Agenda 21 process, in the practical nature protection or in the environmental education.

2. Main theme of the PhD

In the centre of this work is the question, how conflict resolution in local landscape planning can or has to be shaped in a cooperative way. For an answer it is necessary to elaborate the following themes:

- _ identify and categorize the conflicts in local landscape planning;
- _ the relationship between the kind of cooperation and communication of the persons involved as well as the conflict solving;
- _ strategies for a comprehensive management of conflicts (regarding the successions of conflicts, the handling of topical conflicts and the prevention of or the purposeful use of potential conflicts);
- _ strategies to optimize content and method of conflict resolving in the landscape planning.

3. Research methodology

At first I worked out the central knowledge in the German and English literature concerning environmental and landscape planning (f.x. Ermer et al. 1996; Bechmann 1981, Schutse 1994), cooperation (f.ex. Dienel 1992, Renn 1997; Gamson 1996; Selle 1996; Luz 1994 a+b, Dickhaut 1996), communication (Schulz von Thun 1998; Healey 1993, 1996) and conflict resolution (f.ex. Glasl 1997; Coser 1972; Ury et al. 1996, Fisher et al. 1984; Folberg and Taylov 1984). From the knowledge extracted from this, the focus of the thesis and gaps in research were established. The aim is then to check or validate this in the case studies. This will be done by investigating the newest experiences in the practice by analysis of documents (for example plans, articles in newspapers) and through qualitative interviews (Lannes 1995) in 3 or 4 case studies. From the knowledge extracted from the literature studies as well as from the case studies recommendations, a system of communicative conflict resolving in the landscape planning is intended to be developed.

4. Stage of research

The research project will last another one and a half years. The following steps have been realized in the doctorate so far:

- _ 500 titles of relevant literature have been registered and partly analysed;
- _ in a research practicum at the Center of Technology Assessment in Baden-Württemberg I was able to experience and discuss several aspects of conflict resolving in theory and practice in the environmental planning as well as apply different methods of empirical social research (Meyer-Oldenburg 1997);
- _ a first version of two chapters exists (1. An applied theory of conflicts and resolution of conflicts for environmental planning; 2. Structural potentials of conflicts in the landscape planning);
- _ 20 suitable communities have been found for the case studies (chosen from 120, which were named by the local governments);
- _ the knowledge I have won, I immediately use and test as a lecturer at the Technische Universität München in the education of landscape planners.

5. Major obstacles in developing research

The major obstacles are a result of the main stream opinion, that planning in the nature protection is mainly scientific planning; only little notice is taken of the social and political elements in this kind of planning. Only a small number of statements in social science exists, which can be directly used in a planning discipline, which is orientated to natural science. Today there are only scattered statements about conflicts in the environmental planning; the experience in mediation forms an exception (f.ex. Wiedemann 1994; Wiedemann + Claus 1994). Generally there is lack of knowledge concerning conflict solving at the mesosocial level in particular in environmental planning. In these fields knowledge and experience of other countries are missing very much. Moreover it is not clear, which of the chosen communities will be willing to cooperate.

6. Preliminary results

Generally there is a trend in landscape planning to more cooperation between the communities and the planners (Selle 1996). Therefore the communicative competence and

the constructive ability to argue of the persons involved is growing more and more important. For a modern democracy these capabilities are very important and are seldom sufficiently developed; they therefore have to be practised. Contents of conflicts are different values, interests, positions or facts as well as the style of the relations or of the communication (Apel 1990, Habermas 1973).

Landscape planning will be more successful, if in the planning process not only knowledge, abilities and wishes of persons responsible for nature protection in the communities in the future are considered, but also these persons are actively participated (Senge 1996). If for example farmers are involved in the planning process, it is possible to find innovative solutions for environmental planning, even though the conflicts between agriculture and nature protection are virulent. At the same time these solutions can develop a local economic importance.

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