

Participatory Planning of Recreational Areas – Landscape Development Concepts in Switzerland

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In recent years, Landscape Development Concepts (LDC) have emerged as an instrument for landscape planning on municipal and regional level in Switzerland. By the end of the 1990s it attained an official meaning in the course of the Swiss sustainability policy (BfR 1996, BUWAL 1998). LDCs are to be regarded as a response to the current state of landscape planning in Switzerland. In contrast to housing zones, there is no official planning instrument that coordinates the development of the landscape (in sense of green space) of the whole municipal area, including recreation areas. An LDC is planned to include all functions and uses of a landscape (e.g. recreation, agriculture, forestry, flora, fauna, housing), treating them comprehensively rather than separately. As the LDC is a not legally binding planning instrument, wide acceptance and support for the project implementation are crucial for its success. Thus, an LDC has to be developed successively, bringing together stakeholders, authorities, experts, directly affected people and a wider public, assessing and considering their interests and needs (Bolliger et al. 2002, Winter 2000).

However, it is still unclear is how the concept of LDC has been adapted in practice and which experiences have been made with this new planning instrument. This paper addresses the above stated gap in existing research, specifically regarding the potential of LDCs for the development of municipal recreation areas. The evaluation is based on our research in several Swiss municipalities during the past two years. In the first part of our study, a semi-standardized questionnaire was mailed to local experts of all German-speaking municipalities that had finished the elaboration of an LDC (n = 17). In the second part of our research, we selected a com-

munity in the peri-urban region of Zurich that had recently started the elaboration of an LDC. In this case study, we applied multiple research methods. The results presented here are based on the qualitative analysis of meetings held by the LDC committee and interviews with participants.

In the survey among all LDCs in Switzerland, we explored how recreational needs and demands are considered in the elaboration of LDCs. In a first step, we show which participatory techniques were used to assess recreational interests and needs. Organized interest groups, i.e. leisure, sport or nature protection associations were mainly involved by communicative interaction techniques like round tables, field inspections, workshops and informal discussions. In contrast, non-organized persons were merely informed by information letters, internet and newspaper articles. The implications of these results for the acceptance and the reputation of the LDC in the municipality are discussed. According to the survey results, recreation was, together with agriculture, forestry and the conservation of flora and fauna, an issue in most LDCs. However, only few representatives from the fields of leisure and recreation were involved in the LDC planning phase. This is rather surprising, because these fields are regarded to be essential issues in LDCs. Possible reasons for this underrepresentation are discussed. From the qualitative analysis of interviews and the LDC committee meetings, we identified problems that typically arise during the participatory planning process of an LDC. For example, participants were often confronted with the scepticism of other persons regarding the results of the LDC. Specifically, for persons responsible for the LDC, doubts regarding the appropriateness

of their work and a weak interest shown by stakeholders and the local population became considerable obstacles for them. Finally we outline the potential of the LDC as a concept for participatory planning of municipal recreation areas as well as recommendations for further projects of participatory landscape planning.

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