

Course description:

Landscape Governance and Politics

Summer term 2018

(Fri. 1st June, Sat. 2nd June, Fr. 22nd June, Sat. 23rd June)



Photo: M. Leibenath

1 Introduction

The notion of landscape usually gets associated with pleasant things such as nature, beauty, harmony and feeling at home. By contrast, politics often is related to conflict, to wheeling and dealing and to power play – hence to things which seem to represent quite the opposite of landscape.

Yet no matter how we speak about landscapes, no matter how we describe or analyse, plan or use landscapes: None of these activities is politically neutral. This means that the interests of some people prevail over those of others; some views are privileged while others get marginalised. Therefore we will explore in this course the multiple ways in which landscapes, plans and planners are interwoven with politics and power.

The course is oriented at planning theory and research, although it is also of high practical relevance. Students will read and discuss papers which have been published in international journals. They will learn about theoretic approaches and case studies as well. Hence a good proficiency in English is vital.

2 Objectives

The course intends to encourage the students to realise and to reflect upon the various dimensions of politics and power related to landscape planning and governance. It is supposed to function as a compliment to the more “technical” forms of planning expertise.

More particularly, the course „Landscape Governance and Politics” enables the participants

- To understand the political character of landscapes,
- To distinguish different types of political power, which are relevant for planning and decision-making processes related to landscapes,
- To assess normative claims for landscape justice and landscape democracy, and finally
- To reflect upon the own role as planner.

In sum, the objective of the course is to help participants become more reflective landscape practitioners. By doing so, we hopefully can contribute to making our practices more socially inclusive, just and sustainable.



Photo: M. Leibenath

3 Outline

The course „Landscape Governance and Politics” deals with landscapes from a political vantage point and relies upon a political, reflexive notion of landscape.

Inter alia, the course includes the following themes:

- The concept of political landscapes
- Democracy, power and justice in relation to landscapes
- The interplay of institutions, actors and language in landscape governance
- The power of landscape-related metaphors
- Identities and roles of planners and other planning subjects

Examples refer to issues such as wind energy, green infrastructure and the ecosystem services concept. The case studies are taken not only from Germany and other European countries, but also from South-East Asia and North America.

4 Requirements and teaching format

Participants do not need any specific knowledge of political theories. However, they should be acquainted with planning approaches and policies related to nature and landscape. Furthermore they should be interested in politics and power, in analysing other people’s strategies and in reflecting upon different worldviews.

“Landscape Governance and Politics” includes a combination of lectures, short student presentations and group discussions. The course ends with a written exam.

It is essential to attend all course sessions.

The course imparts primarily: Technical competence – 50%, methodological competence – 20%, system-related competence – 20%, and social competence – 10%.

The course ends with a written exam.

5 Introductory reading

Arler, F. (2011), Landscape Democracy in a globalizing world: The case of Tange Lake. *Landscape Research*, 36, 4, 487-507.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2011.583009>

Gailing, L. & Leibenath, M. (2017), Political landscapes between manifestations and democracy, identities and power. *Landscape Research*, 42, 4, 337-348.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2017.1290225>

Leibenath, M. & Lintz, G. (2017), Understanding ‘landscape governance’: The case of wind energy landscapes in Germany. *Landscape Research*, (online first).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2017.1306624>