

Successful 11th workshop of the German-speaking working group on landscape research 'Strategies, processes and actors of climate change'

On 10 and 11 October 2024, the 11th workshop of the German-speaking Landscape Research Working Group took place at the Ostwestfalen-Lippe University of Applied Sciences (TH OWL) at the Detmold School of Design. The two-day event focussed on innovative strategies, processes and players dealing with the effects of climate change on spatial planning and design.

In many municipalities, planning associations, companies and institutions, climate protection and climate adaptation measures have long been a central, complex and challenging issue.

Nevertheless, the activities and, above all, the speed of planning and implementation are currently not sufficient to achieve the 2030 climate targets. The latest IPCC report (2022) also points this out. In order to successfully implement targeted strategies to achieve the climate targets and establish climate protection and adaptation measures, decisive and focussed action is required from political, planning and social stakeholders. Above all, this means that routines in institutional, social and individual behaviour must be consciously broken. At (administrative) political level in particular, courage and perseverance are needed to consistently implement far-reaching measures that change everyday life and routines. Political decision-making processes need to be accelerated, which certainly harbours risks when you think of participation and voting procedures, for example.

The 11th workshop of the German-speaking Landscape Research Working Group was opened by the Vice President of the TH OWL, Professor Dr Yvonne-Christin Knepper-Bartel, and Prof. Dr Ludger Gailing, spokesperson of the Landscape Research Working Group. In his keynote speech, Prof Dr Martin Hein, Chairman of the Climate Protection Council of the City of Kassel, focused on the social challenges in the context of climate change. He called on institutions and citizens to scrutinise and break up existing structures in order to enable sustainable change. In her presentation, Professor Dr Susanne Kost (TH OWL) explained that existing routines and regulations often inhibit the willingness of actors and institutions to change.

The workshop then focussed on 4 key questions:

1) **What role do different political, economic and social actors play in the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures?**

The focus here was on the role, interests and opportunities of the stakeholders and how they affect the planning, implementation and effectiveness of measures to tackle climate change. Dr Christina Grebe from Zweckverband Raum Kassel spoke about the role of local politics in the implementation of a cross-municipal settlement framework concept. Verena Weber (TH OWL) explained the need for co-operative processes in rural areas in municipal heavy rainfall prevention. It is essential to understand landscape policy and planning in the policy cycle in order to be able to successfully implement complex climate adaptation measures that often

transcend municipal boundaries. Dr Gerd Lintz from the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development in Dresden described this clearly.

2) **What innovative approaches and instruments are available to strengthen cities, regions and landscapes against the effects of climate change?**

Bianca Porath and Ute Aufmkolk (DIE PLANERGRUPPE, Essen) presented the ambitious 'Parkway Patrick-Henry-Village' project, which was developed as part of the International Building Exhibition in Heidelberg, as an example of sustainable urban development and climate-neutral living. A wide range of digital tools are already being used in the field of climate data collection and climate modelling. Thorsten Stock from the Ruhr Regional Association (RVR) explained how the large amount of data generated in regional planning can be efficiently analysed and interpreted. Prof Dr Christian Jolk (TH OWL) placed a specific focus on the generation of GIS-based landscape and environmental models in landscape architecture and environmental planning. Katharina Pilar von Pilchau (TH OWL) explained her research approach to decision-making aids in the selection of suitable locations for nature-based solutions in flash flood prevention. In the field of climate-neutral construction, Lisa Pusch (TH OWL) spoke about R-strategies as an instrument for circular construction, such as Refuse, Rethink and Recycle. The first day of the event ended with a presentation by Prof. Jens-Uwe Schulz (TH OWL) on possibilities for the sustainable production and utilisation of cattail on fenland sites in Lower Saxony (RoNNi).

3) **What challenges and opportunities arise from the integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into existing planning processes and structures (local, regional, national)?**

Different planning approaches and strategies as well as their interaction at different (administrative) political levels, between different municipalities, cities and districts, but also in the interplay of different political, economic and social interests are of interest here. Dorothee Boesler (Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, Münster) vividly explained the challenges in the context of climate adaptation measures for the historic cultural landscape and the resulting necessities and strategies for planning. Evelyn Behre and Boris Stemmer (TH OWL) followed on from this with their presentation on how the development and promotion of green infrastructure can contribute to climate adaptation in rural areas.

4) **How can participatory approaches help to increase the acceptance and effectiveness of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures among the population and stakeholders?**

Jan Werneke (GermanZero e.V. & University of Kassel) focussed on the need to involve local stakeholders and the local population in order to achieve a high level of acceptance and effectiveness on the path to climate neutrality. Mariam Diagayété (Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden) presented how urban-regional open

space policy can succeed against the background of precise analyses of political decision-making processes. In her discussion of participatory approaches, Paulina Malys (University of Kassel) asked 'Are we planning through debate?' and pointed out the need to involve marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, more in urban and open space planning.

The workshop ended with a lively discussion on future topics and strategies for landscape research. The participants agreed that sustainable solutions to climate change can only be found through interdisciplinary cooperation, intensive exchange between science and practice and a willingness to change.

The next workshop of the Landscape Research Working Group will take place in autumn 2025. Further information can be found on the working group's website (<https://landschaftsforschung.de/>).

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