Getting acquainted with their landscape

RESEARCH BY DESIGN AS A TOOL TO UNDERSTAND PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION OF CURRENT AND FUTURE LANDSCAPES

PETER VERVOORT
ANN PISMAN
increasing complexity, policy-making is dispersed across a broad range of actors

new forms of cooperation between public authorities and e.g. citizens under the heading “from government to governance”

focus on actual spatial interventions
  – Importance of local spatial actors
  – Alterations of the character and appearance of landscapes
  – Affects quality of the immediate environment of local spatial actors

need to understand people’s perception of landscapes and underlying qualities
  – Improving quality of spatial interventions
  – Improving landscape quality
  – Improving succes of cooperation between spatial actors and the achievement of policy goals
“spatial quality is constructed by a complex process of dialogue between spatial actors that try to explicit what the concept means on a specific place, specific time and specific context” (Reyndorp et al 1998)

- Determining, maintaining, enhancing landscape quality?

- Deliberative proces: necessity for shared terms for mutual understanding (Hajer & Sijmons 2006)
  - Laymen vs experts
  - Implicit knowledge
  - Abstract concept vs concrete space
  - Unbalanced power and stakes
“when designs are instrumental to explore and to test something or someone within a given context”  (Schreurs & Martens 2005)

DESIGN KNOWLEDGE (Cross 1982)
   – Understanding the nature of a problem by production of alternatives
   – Focus on synthesis rather than analysis
   – Future orientated, focus on possibilities
   – Imaginative communication
   – Exploring abstract concepts through concrete objects
   – Constructive and holistic
   – Capable of dealing with ill-defined problems

Design as a tool to explore people’s perception of current and future landscapes?
CASE-STUDY

Antwerp: **RUGGEVELD - SILSBURG - BOTERLAAR**

Turnhout: **SCHORVOORT**
CASE-STUDY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• To which extend was research by design able to gain knowledge regarding people’s perception of landscapes?

• To which extend and how was this knowledge explicit during the research?

• To which extend did the deliberative process contribute to the mutual understanding of landscape quality?

• What were critical factors for success?
CASE-STUDY RUGGEVELD — SILSBURG - BOTERLAAR

2000-2006

Sportclubs Ruggeveld willen voortaan meer overleg

De crisis: "We hebben erg veel te verliezen"
participatory charter: city and stakeholders

participatory research by design - Maxwan Architects, 1010 Karres & Brands landscape architects and Goudapel Coffeng

inventory and survey

field survey, interviews

Designworkshops at multiple scales: different (groups of) stakeholders

Design X
  Plenary discussion

Design Y
  Stakeholder group discussion

Design Z
  Plenary debate

masterplan
CASE-STUDY RUGGEVELD — SILSBURG - BOTERLAAR
CASE-STUDY SCHORVOORT
Participatory research by design - *KU Leuven*

CASE-STUDY SCHORVOORT

Quickscan, interviews, analysis

- **Design 1:** citizens
- **Design 2:** plenary stakeholders
- **Design 3:** land owners, public officials
- **Design 4:** plenary stakeholders

Project definition → masterplan
CASE-STUDY SCHORVOORT
CASE-STUDY DISCUSSION

“To which extend was research by design able to gather knowledge regarding people’s perception of landscapes?”

- incremental development of knowledge during the process
- design crucial element
  - process of synthesis and discussion
  - clarify implicit knowledge: for researchers and spatial actors
  - medium for shared terms for discussion: experts, laymen, policy makers,... = capacity building
- Discussion on possible future landscape indicates value current landscape
  - e.g. cultural heritage, meaning of public space, legibility...
  - insight in complex urbanised landscapes

- **But:** Schorvoort case indicates unbalance in knowledge due to lack of cooperation private investors
CASE-STUDY DISCUSSION

“To which extend and how was this knowledge explicit, during the research?”

RUGGEVELD-BOTERLAAR-SILSBURG
- design as preliminary synthesis document
- notes of discussion
- masterplan
- current perception less explicit documented, focus on expectations future landscape
- Research that led to design as a product

SCHORVOORT
- mental maps
- design as preliminary synthesis document
- notes of discussion
- project definition
- current perception explicited in project definition as a framework for new masterplan
- explorative research on landscape quality
CASE-STUDY DISCUSSION

“To which extent did the deliberative process contribute to the mutual understanding of landscape quality?”

RUGGEVELD-BOTERLAAR-SILSBURG
- Initial concept similar: park, sports: but other expectations and values (due to scale, different actors, ...)
- Research by design to understand difference in points of view on landscape quality = mutual understanding (landscape quality)

SCHORVOORT
- Mutual understanding, but not all stakeholders due to lack of participation of private investors
- Capacity building citizens
- Research by design to explore and understand nature of the complex landscape = (mutual) understanding landscape quality
CASE-STUDY DISCUSSION

“What were critical factors for success?”

RUGGEVELD-BOTERLAAR-SILSBURG

- **Charter of participation:**
  - explicit status of participative trajectory and possible outcome: stakes are clear
  - explicit participation structure: delegation is clear
- **Independent researchers:** appointed after charter in general assembly: validity of research by design

SCHORVOORT

- **Project definition:**
  - exploration as outcome
  - less discussions on details
- **BUT:** Lack of participation of private investors
  - Expectations clear?
  - Status of own masterplan, architect as *negotiator*
  - Independence researchers?
  - Incentive to cooperate?
- **Scientific framework** (Lynch 1984) to guide and clarify discussion: accelerated mutual understanding
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LITERATURE


Schreurs, J & Martens M (2005) Research by design as quality enhancement, paper presented at the AESOP conference, Vienna

ILLUSTRATIONS SCHORVOORT:

ILLUSTRATIONS RUGGEVELD – BOTELLAAR- SILSBURG: