

From Landscape Preservation to Landscape Governance: European Experiences with Sustainable Development of Protected Landscapes

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1. Introduction

Over the last two decades there has been a significant increase in the appreciation of the cultural landscape by the public and by politicians; this phenomenon is taking place in most European countries. In 1992 the importance of cultural landscapes was recognized on an international scale with their inclusion in the World Heritage Convention. Eight years later, in 2000, the Council of Europe adopted a European Landscape Convention (ELC) and presented it to member states for adoption. Through innovations such as the World Heritage Convention and the European Landscape Convention, cultural landscape has become increasingly central to matters of sustainability and place-making across both urban and rural realms. As a consequence, the thinking on protected areas has undergone a fundamental shift. Cultural landscapes are at the interface of nature and culture. Therefore, both natural and cultural resource conservation converge, creating opportunities for collaboration.

In Europe, the approach to protecting landscapes has generally been one of 'designation', that is, drawing lines round areas valued by experts. The 'designation' approach, however, has come under criticism for a number of reasons, not least the growing realization that neither the ecologic and geomorphologic nor the axiological and aesthetic aspects of landscapes can be safeguarded in the long term on the basis of corraling stand-alone sites. Modern aesthetic, geomorphologic and ecologic objectives rely on a site-in-context approach based on a concern for visual, morphologic coherence and ecological connectivity across the wider countryside. Whereas protected areas were once planned against people, now it is recognised that they need to be planned with local people, and often for and by them as well. Instead of setting landscapes aside by 'designation', nature and landscape conservationists now look to develop linkages between strictly protected core areas and the areas around: economic links which benefit local people, and physical links, for instance via ecological corridors, to provide more space for species and natural processes. As a result, landscape conservation of continuously evolving landscapes is about the management of change - the landscape should not become frozen but kept alive (Bloemers et al., 2010).The

people that live and work in landscapes, be it farmers, residents or entrepreneurs, have to be actively involved in formulating conservation plans, collective decision-making and the performance of landscape management measures.

It is now recognized that protected landscapes (IUCN Category V Protected Landscape/Seascape) and cultural landscapes share much common ground: both are focused on landscapes where human relationships with the biotic and abiotic natural environment over time define their essential character. They can help to conserve both wild biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity, and to conserve human (cultural) history alongside the geomorphologic past (Reynard, 2005; Panizza 2009; Farsani, Coelho and Costa, 2011). Against this background, protected landscapes throughout Western Europe more and more function as flagships for a new and integrated urban-rural public policy. Since landscape conservation and environmental government are aspects of a single whole, conservation, increasingly is seen as an integral part of sustainable management. This is highlighted by a range of protected landscapes in Western Europe, which, since the 1990s, strive towards a regional integration of agriculture, nature and landscape, thereby overcoming the often strong sectoral division of countryside and town planning and natural and cultural resource management.

The adopted approaches for protected landscapes in Europe increasingly recognise the critical links between nature, culture, and community for a long-term sustainable development. Landscape management plans and projects seek to support a 'virtuous circle' in which the socio-economy of a region contributes to nature and beauty, and the environment underpins community and prosperity of the protected landscape (Powell et al., 2000; Selman, 2006). Knowledge about the spatial-temporal aspects of the metabolism between nature and society is needed in order to support this 'virtuous circle'. It is precisely the hybrid character of landscape, that is, that societal and "natural" factors are intrinsically linked to one another that ensure that cultural, aesthetic, economic and social dimensions are as much involved as ecological functioning or abiotic, morphological conditions. Landscape, as a realm of this hybrid human-environmental interaction, is at the centre of sustainability and sustainable development (Wascher, 2000; Reynard and Panizza, 2005).

The re-positioning of cultural landscape within the sustainable development agenda is opening up new challenges for landscape governance. The term landscape governance reflects two contemporary, interrelated changes in the scale and organisation of decision-making about the landscape (Beunen & Opdam, 2011). Government power is decentralized to the lower tiers of command, while a growing number of private parties and citizens begin to actively participate in decision-making. As a result, the term governance has been introduced in the field of protected areas and the term 'protected area governance' has recently been established (Borrini-Feyerabend, 2004; Dearden & Bennett, 2005; Fürst et al. 2006, Stoll-Kleemann et. al., 2006). A cornerstone was the Vth IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban 2003; since then the topic of governance has also been applied to different categories of protected areas, including protected landscapes and, more recently, so-called Geoparks. However, a scientific discussion concerning governance in protected landscapes is still missing.

European landscape conservation is a practice in the making, continuously evolving because of changing political and institutional contexts, new insights in the dynamic relation of

society and nature, and the unfolding of new vectors for regulating socio-economic, cultural and environmental change. In this chapter some European experiences with landscape protection are described and analyzed. On the basis of English-language literature this chapter examines the western European experience with landscape conservation as well as the related governance issues, shifting from 'preservation by designation' to 'conservation through development'. We trace the different conservation attitudes in Western Europe, as well as the subsequent conservation systems that have been created for sustaining cultural landscapes. We focus on Britain, France, and Germany, because of the long history of preserved landscapes in these countries and the relatively large areas of protected landscapes that are managed for recreational, scenic, educational, and heritage purposes.¹ Furthermore, Britain, France and Germany are European nations with a strong spatial planning tradition aimed at handling cultural landscapes.

The core dilemma of protected landscapes in Britain, France, and Germany, is that they are no longer self-sustaining, and the links between landscape, community and economy no longer self-reinforcing. Thus, the key issue for the future is what policy settings are needed to ensure their survival in the face of environmental and cultural homogenization, as part of the general process of globalization. In order to answer this question we discuss the different governance strategies that are developed to re-couple socio-economic activity and landscape quality in these protected landscapes. More and more, these strategies are co-productions of public and private effort. This is a result of an ongoing shift in the above mentioned state-society relations ('from government to governance') away from a top-down approach towards more bottom-up approaches characterised by a decentralised style of policy making that also stimulates the horizontal relations between public and private bodies. Competencies are devolved to the regional level to allow for policy differentiation and an administrative imperative to manage and control the public policy process to ensure the achievement of national policy objectives in countryside areas.

The general aim of this chapter is to contribute to the recently started debate on sustainable development of protected areas by comparing and assessing the different governance strategies in British, French and German protected landscapes. This chapter starts with a short introduction of the history and international context of landscape protection, determining the particular western European experience with landscape preservation and management. This brings us to the different landscape protection systems and strategies adopted by Britain, France and Germany. We describe the identification and maintenance of protected landscapes in these highly urbanized countries and analyze the forces that have shaped them as well as the forces that are currently affecting the ecology and beauty of these valued landscapes. Based on the comparison of the different protected landscapes, we observe that attention for the potential of protected landscapes to stimulate sustainable development is increasing. Despite the ubiquity of 'sustainability' as a concept, within protected landscapes several attempts are made to protect the environment, to promote sound development and to improve the quality of life for people now and in the future. In

¹ English geographer Aitchison (1995) has shown that the regions with the most intensive agriculture, coinciding with the urbanised economic core region of Europe, are also the nations with the largest percentages of protected landscapes. It suggests that the protection of landscapes is less based on biodiversity or on the degree of preservation of 'traditional agrarian landscapes', as it is on the values and needs of an urban population.

the final section, some preliminary conclusions are drawn, and some remarks are given on the future of protected landscapes in Western Europe in a governance context.

2. Protected landscapes: History and international context

Protection of landscapes is not a recent invention. One of the historical landmarks was the designation of the first National Parks in the United States, Yosemite (1864) and Yellowstone (1872), aiming at the safeguarding of 'undisturbed' or 'primeval' nature (Runte, 1997). During the first decades of the twentieth century, a number of European countries followed, with Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Italy in the front line (Hamin, 2002; Besio, 2003). Although the emphasis was on ecosystems that were seen as almost completely natural, gradually it became clear that all of them were in fact partly man-made landscapes. And even when very little human influence was recognizable, the national park designation itself defined these areas within the domain of human society (Mells, 1999). Therefore, the distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' became less strict. From the 1930s onwards a distinction developed between reserves that were protected mainly for their ecological values and a new group of old 'traditional' agrarian landscapes.

The densely populated character and the existence of little wilderness areas have, in contrast to North America, contributed to the fact that cultural landscapes have become an important management category in Europe (see Table 1). Conservation effort in most European countries has therefore focused upon agrarian, lived-in, working landscapes. These landscapes depend on human intervention. Since the European landscape is extraordinarily varied and rich in both natural and cultural interest, designation systems have been developed in order to protect the most beautiful and vulnerable parts. These protected landscapes, focused on the conservation of the specific uniqueness of cultural landscapes, lie at the heart of the identity of rural Europe and potentially enrich the cultural and natural diversity of both people and places (Pedroli et al., 2007).

	United States	Europe
<i>Conservation of...</i>	Wild, 'untamed' nature	Rural, lived-in landscapes
<i>Status</i>	Reserve	Protected landscape
<i>Ownership</i>	Public (state-owned)	Co-managed (Public-Private)
<i>Type of area</i>	Unoccupied	Inhabited

Table 1. Two types of Park Model

Against this background it is not strange to note that the European experience with protected landscapes is varied. Each country has taken a different course according to its geographic and historical characteristics, social structure, political organization and planning culture. As a result European protected landscapes show many differences, in the types and number of designated areas they have established, their legal structures, tasks, as well as in their proportion related to the countries surface. However, certain common characteristics can be identified. It almost always involves (rural) landscapes that are important for their traditional and less intensive land-use. In most cases these landscapes are inhabited by private land-owners (mostly farmers) with some small federal or state holdings and co-managed by public and private parties. Authority, responsibility and accountability for managing the protected landscape are shared in various ways among a

variety of actors like government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations (particularly environmental groups) or private landowners.

Although the officially designated landscapes in Western Europe are often called national or regional parks they are, according to international guidelines by IUCN (World Conservation Union/International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) defined as Category V protected areas. IUCN (1994) defines protected landscapes (Category V) as "areas of land, with coast or sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity". Category V areas represent only some 9% of protected areas globally (6% by area). But in Europe, the UNEP-WCMC database records that some 46% of the total area under protection is in Category V (Chape et al, 2003).

The disparity of landscapes that fall into Category V is substantial. The classifications according to national law include, for instance, *Parco Naturale Regionale* (Italy), *Parc Naturel Régionaux* (France), *Naturpark* (Austria and Germany), and *National Park* (Britain). Recently, so-called *Geoparks* have been established in different European countries, with the specific objective to protect geological heritage.² The perspectives of geological heritage conservation of Geoparks are positioned within the frame of the wider and more complex strategy of conservation of the natural and historical-cultural heritage that the territory presents, acting through efficient management measures able to couple strategies of active protection with actions aiming at the enhancement and the social-economical development, including geotourism. Both Nature and Geoparks are a specific type of category V areas. They are protected landscape areas, which have developed through the interaction of man with nature.

Unlike the term 'nature' suggests, 'nature parks' are not managed for nature and biodiversity purposes but for landscape conservation and recreation. Recreation and amenity oriented purposes, but also culture and rural development, therefore, are mostly dominant over the pursuit of nature conservation. Currently nature parks get worldwide attention under the IUCN protected areas category V (see Table 2). They experience attention due to their increasing attractiveness as areas of leisure and valuable habitats as well as their less strict guidelines and planning objectives. Due to their central task to connect protection and the use of cultural landscapes lastingly they are gaining significance for the future. Only on the basis of continued use the cultural and geological heritage landscapes in Europe and their large biodiversity can be secured in the long term (Schenk; Hunziker & Kienast, 2007; Panizza, 2001; Farsani, 2011).

3. Western European approaches to landscape conservation

Throughout Western Europe more and more landscapes are maintained with the specific aim of preserving the cultural landscape regarded as valuable by the (urban) society. These protected landscapes (Category V) seem to be best supported by sustainable policy

² The Geoparks in Europe are part of a European Geoparks Network that was established in June 2000 and now consists of 37 Geoparks in 15 countries of the European Union. In February 2004 the European Geoparks Network was formally integrated into the UNESCO-endorsed Global Geoparks Network. The Global Geoparks Network, assisted by UNESCO, provides a platform of active co-operation between experts and practitioners in geological heritage.

objectives and measures. The social conception generally considers these landscapes as patrimony; this seems appropriate because changes in traditional cultural landscapes have often been very slow, and they seem to be definitely stable and therefore an appropriate symbol of regional and national identity. We therefore argue that landscapes and the efforts to preserve them are never neutral or objective. The specificity of landscape and its meanings are first and foremost cultural. For instance, landscape is seen by national governments as an important national asset that contributes to national pride and identification (Lekan, 2004).

Initiative	Geographical scope	Type(s) of landscape	Policy perspective
<i>World Heritage Convention (UNESCO)</i>	Global	Landscapes of exceptional, universal importance	Conservation of natural and cultural heritage
<i>Global Network of National Geoparks (UNESCO)</i>	Global	Territories containing geology of outstanding value	Geological heritage and sustainable local development
<i>European Landscape Convention (EU)</i>	Europe	All landscapes: rural and urban, vernacular and extraordinary, designed and planned	Protection, management and development of landscape
<i>Protected Areas (IUCN-Category V)</i>	National/regional	Important agrarian/rural cultural landscapes	Sustainable development and reinforcement of natural and cultural values

Table 2. International perspectives on landscape. Source: Selman (2006); Farsani, Coelho and Costa (2011).

Since landscapes play an important role in building the national identity the origin of the preservation of landscapes is often rooted in processes of nation building. Landscape preservationists often promoted the cultural construction of nationhood by envisaging natural landmarks as touchstones of emotional identification, symbols of national longevity, and signs of a new form of environmental stewardship. For instance, Olwig has shown that with the growth of the power of the state in the Renaissance, the concept of landscape as land and custom became subverted by the state. Landscape, as he argues, became the territory controlled by the state – embodied by the monarch – and made visible as scenery through theatrical and pictorial representations (Olwig, 1996; 2002). The view of landscape as scenery was later adopted by tourists and conservationists, and remains a dominating paradigm in current landscape management and administration by state and other public authorities throughout Western Europe.

Building on the ideas of Olwig, we argue that landscape conservation systems are shaped by socio-cultural patterns of perception and tradition. In order to understand the culturally and historically varied character of western European landscape protection it is necessary to reveal the connections between nation-building and landscape protection. In what follows, we highlight the evolution of different landscape conservation systems in modern Britain, France, and Germany against the background of the mutually reinforcing processes of

nation-building, state intervention and planning peculiarities. The conservation systems we analyze are the British *National Parks*, French *Parcs Naturels Régionaux*, and German *Nature Parks*, all IUCN-Category V protected areas. Each conservation system is described: its objectives and results. Finally, each section concludes with a short overview of current governance strategies to deal with the co-ordination of various actors to pursue a more sustainable development of landscape.

3.1 British national parks

3.1.1 British conservation history

The idea that (national) identity, landscape and history are interlinked is nowhere as manifest as in Britain (Bishop, 1995). Responsible for the emergence of the national parks movement that led to the creation of the British National Parks, are the rapid urbanization, industrialization and agricultural rationalization during the first half of 19th century. In 1815 London had about 1, 5 million habitants, in 1860 3 million; figures and growth never seen before in world history. And London was not the only big city in the country. A stunning 25% of the whole population already lived in cities; urban sprawl was everywhere. The impact of this fast urbanization, and also of the main driving forces behind it, i.e. fast, agricultural rationalization and large scale, coal and steel based industrialization, was very visible everywhere. The effects on nature and the countryside were often very depressing, aesthetically, ethically, socially, culturally and ecologically, and so far reaching and fast that people felt alienated.

It was in this setting that the longing for 'natural' landscapes arose, in the form of nostalgia for a lost past, characterized by beauty, rurality, harmony, proportionality and cohesion. The pioneers of this new line of thinking and feeling were members of the urban elite; men like John Ruskin and William Morris. The obvious negative and certainly hideous effects of the fast agricultural rationalization, urbanization and industrialization shocked them. They called up to appreciate and respect the beauty of the land and criticized the prevailing purely utilitarian attitudes and practices. They stressed the value of social cohesion, and sought to bring it back it by restoring the relationship with the land, based on aesthetic criteria. According to Ruskin 'all lovely things are [...] necessary, the wild flower as well as the tended corn, the wild birds and creatures of the forest as the tended cattle; because man does not live by bread alone' (Ruskin, 1985, p. 226). Morris emphasized that the British people 'must turn [their] land from the grimy back-yard of a workplace into a garden' (Morris, 1969, p. 49-50). In doing so Ruskin and Morris expressed the feelings of a large and fast growing segment of the urban middle classes.

From the second half of the 19th century onward more and more citizens started to organize themselves in voluntary organizations, with the goal to preserve nature and culture. These organizations spread new ideas and ideals about the value of scenic beauty, rural life, cultural heritage and identity and their unbreakable bond with the British landscape, such as the idea of the countryside as the almost sacred locus of British identity, with its hamlets, forests, meadows, cottages and hedges. One of the main characteristics of this new attitude was a huge aversion to the degrading effects of industrialization and urbanization, and a tendency to give in to nostalgia and feelings of alienation and loss, emotions to be compensated by disappearing in the beauties of nature and the countryside. The emphasis

was on beauty, on aesthetical, aspects, and the idea that the good and the beautiful went together and were to be found on the countryside and in nature, and the idea and the bad and the ugly were to be found in the city and industry.

The pre-war national parks movement drew its strength from the convergence of several traditions. There was the cause of protecting the most beautiful scenery that had its roots in the writing of Ruskin, Morris and Blake. But this strand of the national parks movement had a strong class bias and its leaders often feared, and sometimes opposed, the urban masses who wished to holiday in the Lake District for example. It thus contrasted with the democratic, even Marxist leanings of a second strand that was concerned with access, and the rights of the working man to enjoy the open moors and fells, principally around our northern industrial cities. The third strand behind the national parks movement was scientific; its origins can be traced back to the nineteenth century pioneers, like Charles Rothschild, the founder of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Reserves, and its aims were to ensure that nature conservation was placed on a statutory footing.

Only when these forces combined did they create a powerful political pressure for legislation, but it took the Second World War to create the conditions where such legislation could be enacted. Writing in 1947, Clough Williams-Ellis, the visionary who created Portmeirion, dedicated a book about the National Trust to all those beautiful natural and other places that had been destroyed during the war years – “a massacre of loveliness” he called it (Williams-Ellis, p. 7). Beauty was indeed the victim of wartime “collateral damage”, inflicted daily on a huge scale around the country, and indeed across the world. The passions and outrage that this gave rise to among the public and the political elite, and the belief that the nation needed to offer its citizens a better physical environment after the war, made the famous 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act possible (see for a history: Sheail, 1975; MacEwen & MacEwan, 1987; Evans, 1992).

3.1.2 Centralized planning system

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which created the National Parks Commission which later became the Countryside Commission and then the Countryside Agency, provided the framework for the creation of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales, and also addressed public rights of way and access to open land. Currently, 12 National Parks are designated, of which the South-Downs National Park is the last of the 12 areas, designated in March 2009. Their main goal is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas, in mostly poor-quality agricultural upland. Furthermore, since 2003 seven so-called Geoparks have been created in the UK. The first one was the North Pennines Geopark.

The British National Parks were set up in a system of heavy-handed centralized planning. Development control by the National Park Authorities (NPA), that is the detailed system by which approval is sought for building and land use change, is one of the main instruments of park management. Protective measures and financial resources are provided by central government. Because the adopted system manifested major policy performance problems in the 1970s and 1980s the traditional role of the NPAs in controlling development shifted to one of influencing land management (Curry, 1992). The management of land by the NPAs

has focused on mitigating the worst effects of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy. This activity was largely reactive, seeking to swim against the tide of changes forced on the Parks. Protection took place largely in isolation from, or frequently in opposition to, the most important political pressures on rural life.

Because of the emphasis on development control British parks have alienated local farmers and communities, whose cooperation is needed to carry out conservation policy. Therefore, the 1991 Edwards' review of the British National Parks, *Fit for the future*, resulted in the addition of the economic and social well-being duty in Section 62(1) of the Environment Act 1995. The Environment Act 1995 makes a move towards integrating functions in respect of National Parks. The purpose of preserving natural beauty is extended to 'protect, maintain, and enhance the scenic beauty, natural systems, and land forms, and the wildlife and cultural heritage'. According to Edwards' review, Park Authorities should foster the social and economic well being of the Park communities in partnership with those organizations for whom this is the prime responsibility. Experiences in putting this duty into practice, however, are mixed. A co-ordinate planning and partnership working in support of the economic and social well being of park communities is lacking. The (financial) restrictions imposed under Section 62(1) are not helping either.³ Consequently, Park communities feel that their interests are not served well enough.

3.1.3 Park planning and partnerships

In the particular and influential British tradition landscape planning has mainly been concerned with an agenda of protection, preservation, amenity and ornament. This focus has been important, but has remained peripheral to a wider agenda of sustainable development. In the first part of the twenty-first century, however, landscape planning seems to become identified more strongly with the core concerns of sustainable development and spatial planning. Through innovations such as the European Landscape Convention, landscape has become increasingly central to matters of sustainability and place-making. Currently, National Parks are positioned as models for sustainable development in the British countryside, and the National Parks are given money by the national government to encourage individuals and communities to find sustainable ways of living and working, whilst enhancing and conserving the local culture, wildlife and landscape.

The British landscape preservation tradition and its cornerstones, the National Parks, is opening up and hooked on debates about sustainable development across rural and urban domains. However, the failure of socio-economic partnerships within the Parks is a major stumbling block on the road to sustainable development. Since there is a need to seek a new balance between the protection of the natural beauty and the stimulation of the socio-economic needs of park communities, recent initiatives in Britain increasingly respond to the challenge of sustainability in Category V protected areas. For instance, the newly established Scottish National Parks (2002) are to promote sustainable social and economic

³ Section 62(1) of the Environment Act states that NPAs "shall foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so, and shall for that purpose co-operate with local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic or social development within the area of the National Park".

development of the area's communities, next to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and cultural heritage (McCarthy et al., 2002).

Furthermore, a recent review report of the Welsh National Parks calls for a more integrated sustainable development approach in order to ensure a sustainable future for the (Welsh) National Parks. The report recommends a new park purpose to "promote sustainable forms of economic and community development which support the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the areas" (Land Use Consultants, 2004: iv). In order to act upon these new proposals, British park planning and management must be carried out in close partnership with the local community, private sector and relevant government organizations. According to Phillips and Partington (2005) recent innovative policies in Wales already use protected areas as places where sustainable forms of rural development are pioneered and promoted, giving substance to the British National Parks' new purpose.

3.2 French parcs naturels régionaux

3.2.1 French conservation history

The origins of the French landscape conservation movement that led to the creation of the *Parcs Naturels Régionaux* can be traced back to the late 19th century, when French politicians and administrators in the capital city of Paris developed their ideas about a centralized nation-state (Alard et al., 1992). The overall aim of the famous French centralization efforts of the 19th and early 20th century was to remould all aspects of regionally bounded life, socially, culturally, politically and economically (Weber, 1976). The aspiration was to reforge rural and village France with its small peasant farms, by destroying the benumbing diversity in regional languages and cultures, and create a new unity, a new 'imagined community', as Benedict Anderson has put it, by blending and sometimes inventing new identities, goals and preferences. A clear example is to be found in the explicit efforts to create the impression that there was and always had been an unique French identity, embedded in and symbolized by the French countryside and French farmer, a process very present in the work of the famous French historian Jules Michelet, 'the man who invented the idea of France' (Braudel, 1998), for instance in his *Histoire de France* (1883).

The explicit purpose of centralization and modernization was to destroy existing old local identities and cultures, in particular the strong and very old links between region, identity and culture. To mention just one example, all existing regions and 'pays' in France, some of which already existed since Roman times, were intentionally split up in new small administrative units: departments. The borders of those departments intentionally cut across pre-existing cultural and political borders. Before the modernization and centralization of rural and village France, there existed no such idea as a unified French identity; identity was locally bounded, so completely self-evident that there was no need to talk about it. Or to put it differently: rural populations had heretofore been in France but not of it. For most French peasants and farmers local identity was all encompassing, replicated in the daily activities, rooted in the natural environment, and mirrored by the cultural environment. It is no coincidence that the most common and oldest French word for farmer is 'paysan', and that for landscape is 'paysage'. Identity in France was that what connected farmer, landscape and country(side): paysan, paysage and pays. Until the late nineteenth

century many of the French people belonged, by language, outlook, and culture, only to their rural pays; at most their frame of reference was the province.

The modernization of rural and village France became a relative success: the rural culture was assimilated into the national culture, as well as regions and their *paysage*, and Paris developed into a capital city, overruling all other cities. However, around 1950 the planned socio-cultural and economic centralization had become so successful that their combined outcome tended to turn into a problem. France had indeed become a one nation state, with one broadly shared language, culture and identity. It also had become a nation completely dominated by the city of Paris. In 1950 almost 5,5 million people, more than 10% of the French population, lived in Paris, and the expectation was that this number would rapidly increase in the near future. The capital and its direct vicinity thrived. Every economic, political or cultural institution of any importance was located in Paris; every decision of any weight was taken there. The dominance of the central city and the central culture was so strong that the province, the other cities and other parts of the country, started to crumble, demographically, economically and culturally. Therefore, the French government decided to change course.

Post-war planning effort in France, known as the 'aménagement du territoire', attempted to more evenly redistribute the French population across the country as a means, in part, of boosting its economy. Particular growth regions were designated, new administrative units bigger than the existing departments, evenly spread over the country. The intention was to stimulate the economic growth of those regions, improve their accessibility and attractiveness, and reduce the pressure on Paris. Motorways and high-speed rail would connect these regions, with each other and Paris. Each region would have its own main urban centre, with all the necessary services and cultural and natural facilities. This step was the first one towards a more decentralized policy, the first time in decades that (some) power was delegated back from central government to the regions.

Provincial and agricultural France, whose memory, cultural and landscape legacy was lost in the centralization efforts of the 19th and early 20th century, was in many ways rediscovered. The ambition to allow regions space to reclaim their own identity, and the first hesitant steps to cautiously promote these regional identities, became visible in the idea to establish so-called *Parcs Naturels Régionaux* (PNR), a concept formalized by law in 1967. These parks were designated by the central government in selected regions, and had to combine the protection of the valuable natural and rural patrimony with regional rural development. The underlying inspiration was "to contribute, in line with the general policy, to a better distribution of the population over the whole of the territory, and the human and economical revitalization of the rural zones" (Minister André Fosset, June 11, 1976). So, in a way, the parks were a plan-led effort to mitigate the negative side-effects of decades of modernization and centralization, processes that themselves had been object of state-led planning.

3.2.2 Bottom-up approach

From the beginning most regional parks employed very strict rules with regard to land and property development and architectural styles. They became breeding grounds for landscape architects and architects, specialized in 'critical regionalism' (Lefavre & Tzonis,

2004). In 1987 the idea of sustainable development was introduced. This resulted in 1988 in a reformulation of the main objective of the parks, namely: "to protect and manage the natural and cultural patrimony, promote economic and social development, and function as examples and places for experimentation and research". However, it was only in 1993 that the establishment and mission of PNR was legally formalized. Their formal mission became: "to contribute to the policy of environmental protection, land use, economic development and social and public education ... for the preservation of landscapes and the natural and cultural heritage" (Article 2, Loi Paysages, 1993). Environmental, economic and social issues were seen as mutually dependent, as were the ideas of preservation and development, and those of cultural and natural heritage.

Lessons with community participation and co-production of public and private partnerships can be learned from the French *Parcs Naturels Régionaux* (PNR) with their dual purpose of (1) preservation of the natural and cultural patrimony; and (2) economic development through more efficient agriculture, recreation, local handicrafts, and tourism. The French areal protection system also distinguishes national parks; these however are focused on biodiversity and nature conservation. The French regional parks have a history of developing the countryside while at the same time protecting the environment. This is reflected in the PNR emphasis on 'conservation through appropriate development' as Dwyer (1991) has argued. However, in contrast to the British parks, the French PNR lacks strong regulatory and enforcement powers. Consequently, a 'bottom up' rather than a 'top down' system has been developed that actively engages local park communities and organizations in a cooperative manner. The French PNR do not provide specific legislation for environmental protection, but instead functions through local coordination of existing land-use regulations.

Each French PNR is governed officially by a Charter, a statutory instrument which sets out its goals, the strategy designed to achieve them and a broad outline of the supporting actions. A 'chartered authority', made up of representatives of local, regional and national government stakeholders, is responsible for implementing the Charter. Consequently, the Charter, a contractual document that is approved by several representatives of local and regional agencies and NGO's, signs up Park plans. Under the Charter, rural communities accept the obligation to apply constraints to them selves concerning the treatment of the environment (Lanneaux & Chapuis, 1993). The chartered authority, a so-called *Syndicat Mixte*, enjoys planning powers at the sub-regional level relatively similar to those held by the National Parks Authorities in Britain. It will draw up a ten-year action plan. When that period is up, a review procedure examines the parks past accomplishments and if the park merits renewal of its charter, the objectives for the next ten years will be agreed by the authority and endorsed by the relevant regional environment directorate.

3.2.3 Regional rural development

Although in the early years (1970s and 1980s) the French parks mainly emphasized economic development of disadvantaged rural regions, from the early 1990s onward a shift in attitudes away from rigid economic utilitarianism can be observed. Currently, the French PNR develop strategies that either seek directly to support local economic activities or stimulate new socio-economic benefits that strengthen local cultural and natural heritage. Therefore, PNRs adopt a multi-functional approach: protecting both biological and cultural

diversity, and with preserving special landscapes and geological heritage-sites, while implementing a programme of social and economic development. PNRs evolved from a rather introspective organisation dedicated almost solely to the protection of the natural heritage and traditional ways of regional life to an outward-looking body determined to utilise local assets and communities involvement to achieve its goals. Furthermore, park authorities give advice to towns and villages regarding urban organization and the insertion of buildings in the landscape. Underlying is the idea that environmental protection and economic development are not mutually exclusive. Even more so, it is believed that economic decline could be harmful to the protection of the valued landscape and heritage. After all, in the French context, rural depopulation and marginalization are serious threats. As Buller (2000) has argued, the PNRs have made 'local economic revitalization their central mission'.

Since the late 1990s the French central government has committed itself to the idea that PNRs are perfect units for sustainable policy making (FPNR, 2007). The PNRs play a key role in contemporary regional rural development by applying the principles of sustainable development. Although some regional parks fail to implement the conservation objectives of park Charters, comparative studies on the British and French system have shown that the French regional parks surpass the British national park system in achieving a balanced regional development (Dwyer, 1991). According to LaFreniere (1997) the Park Chartres have had a moderating effect on the scale enlargement and intensification of agricultural practices and, furthermore, contributed significantly towards raising the awareness of local park communities regarding environmental impacts of economic development. The Charter model used by all French PNR to set goals, draw up action plans and measure both outputs and outcomes has proved particularly useful to involve local communities and indigenous attributes and resources, rather than on attempting to import economic success from somewhere else.

In 2007 there were 45 regional nature parks in total, covering 12% of France, involving 21 regions and more than 3 million inhabitants, and about 5% of the population (Historique de Parcs Naturels Régionaux, 2007). The regional parks have become icons of French landscape planning, of the possibility to combine protection and conservation of nature, landscape, culture and local identity with rural economic development and tourism. The regional parks give regions identity and attractiveness. They are key eco-tourism attractions, for the French themselves and for foreigners. This great emphasis on historicity, locality and rurality, however, also has its drawbacks. It limits the scope of possible development and tends to stiffen planning efforts. The emphasis in French planning on the physical aspects of spatial identity intensifies this process. The emphasis on locality also easily prevents the emergence of supra-local planning, for instance the realisation of ecological corridors between parks, and it easily confines interest for sustainable or responsible landscape development to regional parks.

3.3 German nature parks

3.3.1 German conservation history

The German nature and landscape conservation movement, responsible for the German Nature Parks (*Naturparke*), was very much influenced by the concept of *Heimat*, home or

homeland; a concept that – up until today – influences German society at large (Lekan, 2004). For instance, in 1984 the first eleven parts of a series called *Heimat*, written and directed by the German filmmaker Edgar Reitz, appeared on German television. The series was about the development of Germany (former Federal Republic) between 1919 and 1982. The successive members of a family, but above all their native region and village, their so-called *Heimat*, played the leading part. The series was about the tension between on the one hand the desire for identity, locality, security and belonging and, on the other hand, the craving for freedom, liberalization and cosmopolitanism.

The German concept of *Heimat* expresses a “feeling of belonging together” (Applegate, 1990). It has a connotation that roams somewhere between the French idea of *pays*, the English notion of *home* and the Dutch notion of *heimwee*. *Heimat* is about the myriad emotional ties that link up someone’s identity with the identity of ones birthplace (i.e. home, village, and region), expressed by the landscape, nature, agricultural practices, handicrafts, dialects, people, history and customs of that place; in short: all the ‘places, objects, practices and images’ that generate and sustain those (nostalgic) emotions, in the first place the parental home and village. It refers simultaneously to a *état d’âme*, a sense of place, the place itself, and the objects and practices at that place.

In the late 19th century German people started to seek refuge in so-called *Agrarromantik* (dreams that glamorize rural live and the countryside). This trend was especially strong amongst the (new) urban middle classes, most notably amongst teachers, civil servants and the clergy (Bergmann, 1970). They developed a new vision on the good live, based on new ideas about belonging, wholeness, culture and identity; ideas that rooted in sentiments that opposed the city to the countryside, and the present to the past. They ‘decided’ that the heart of German identity was to be found in the *Heimat*, conceptualized out of a mixture of traditional pre-industrial rural regions, villages and landscapes. That (imagined) *Heimat* had to be taken care off, protected where that was needed, and restored where that was possible. Those ideas and sentiments were bundled by E. Rudorff in a new practice oriented concept, the Heimatschutz (‘Protection of native country’).

The motivation behind the Heimatschutz movement was based on emotions, ethics, and aesthetics (Rollins, 1997). The aim of Heimatschutz was to explicitly protect, study and strengthen the *Heimat*, in all its aspects. One important component, in fact a cornerstone, was the protection of the countryside and it’s history-rooted customs, practices, architecture and landscapes: the parental country, ‘home of the German soul’. This ambition was not to be taken lightly; it went beyond pure aesthetical considerations, as a Saxon Minister articulated strikingly in 1915: ‘Heimatschutz is no game, but rather a far-reaching cultural movement, whose influence pervades every corner of the nation... no more and no less than the preservation and re-creation of the basis of all culture: the raising of the feeling of *Heimat*, the protection of beauty and of historical uniqueness, the artistic education of people to good taste, and thereby also the raising of the economic power of our people’.

In 1904, a number of associations dedicated to these conservation ideals merged to form the “Bund Heimatschutz” (homeland conservation alliance). It was difficult to achieve contextual unity and solidity within the alliance, one reason being the often regional and landscape-related self-conception of the member associations, and the alliance therefore became an umbrella organization. The nature conservationist groups split off in the mid-

1920s as they felt that their ideals were always seen as a mere partial aspect at the conferences of the Heimat and historic monument conservationists. Heimatschutz and nature conservation moved even further apart after the First World War, yet the concerns of both movements were accounted for in the Weimar Constitution of 1919 and both historic monument preservation and nature and landscape conservation were adopted as national objectives. Over time, both the representatives of Heimatschutz and of nature and landscape conservation became receptive to the antidemocratic, racial and nationalist movements in the 1920s and 1930s, allowing themselves to be monopolized through legal measures and more or less adhered to the ideologies of National Socialism.

Heimatschutz remained separated from nature and landscape conservation when work recommenced after the Second World War. Nature protection itself also witnessed a drawback because of the war and the following period of reconstruction. In 1950s and 1960s, however, both conservation bureaucracy and private groups, in particular the Nature Park Society (*Verein Naturschutzpark*, VNP, established in 1909 in Munich) led by Hamburg millionaire Alfred Toepfer, and the German Council for Land Cultivation (*Deutscher Rat für Landespflege*, DRL, established in 1962), presided over by Swedish-born Count Lennart Bernadotte, promoted the extensive conservation of nature and landscapes in German-speaking regions. On 6 June 1956 in the former capital city of Bonn at the annual meeting of the Nature Reserve Association, the environmentalist and entrepreneur, Toepfer, presented a programme developed jointly with the Central Office for Nature Conservation and Landscape Management and other institutions to set up (initially) 25 Nature Parks in West Germany. Five percent of the area of the old Federal Republic of Germany was to be spared from major environmental damage as a result. In the following years, the *Verein Naturschutz Park* won state and federal (financial) government support and different regional and local governments set up nature parks (Ditt, 1996).

For Toepfer, patron of Germany's nature parks, life and love of the outdoors was part and parcel of his combat against the perceived ills of modern society (Toepfer, 1957). Obviously, the pre-war Heimatschutz movement influenced Toepfer's view on nature and landscape conservation. The expanding cities of West Germany and their population had to be given space for recreation and leisure activities (walking, cycling, water sports, etc.). Furthermore, nature parks, had to provide opportunities for people to come face to face with nature. The ideal of Toepfer was to establish recreational 'oases of calm' in idyllic rural settings to offset the 'mechanization' of daily life in 'denatured' cities (Chaney, 2008). But as federal and state governments devoted more resources to spatial planning at the end of the 1950s, the nature park program also became a planning project overseen by technocratic experts who could settle competing claims on German space by multiple parties.

In the 1960s and 70s regional planners' involvement with nature parks forced social conservationists like Toepfer to view nature parks not merely as scenic landscapes for rejuvenation but as "model landscapes" that might illustrate how to use the country's territory more efficiently and equitably. The emphasis on "model landscapes" was strengthened in the 1970s with the emergence of the ecology movement and the Green Party. As a result, the German nature parks, once commenced from a predominantly conservative, often nationalistic (*Heimatschutz*) cause, gradually became associated more clearly with the political left and the international movement to protect the global

environment, though without losing its traditional base of support among social conservatives (up until today the sponsors of nature parks are usually clubs or local special purpose associations) and without completely abandoning its critique of modern civilization.

3.3.2 Protection trough usage

As shown, the original and central idea of Nature Parks was man's encounter with nature, the experience of the beauty of nature and scenery and the equal value of nature conservation and recreation. As was the case with the British national parks, German nature parks were mainly associated with public recreation. Emphasis solely was on stimulating public access of the German countryside, for instance by setting up visitor information centers. In keeping with this central idea, the tasks of landscape-based recreation were initially in the foreground: reasonable control of the increasing number of visitors, recreational facilities compatible with nature, and resolution of the conflict between nature conservation and recreation. The socio-political aspect of nature parks – to provide opportunities for recreation, especially for city-dwellers – was considered very important too.

Although the parks were popular and had a positive image, nature conservationists and environmental groups lamented that they were poorly administered, since few restrictions were placed on use (farming and forestry were permitted). Furthermore, nature areas were inadequately protected. As a result, conservation goals got more important, especially since the introduction of the 1976 *Bundesnaturschutzgesetz* (Nature conservation law) which gave the nature parks a legal status. The definition of the category of Nature Park was laid down in federal law (§ 27 of the BNatSchG). Paragraph 27 of the BNatSchG determined that natural parks are large areas that are to be developed and managed as a single unit, that consist mainly of protected landscapes or nature reserves, that have a large variety of species and habitats and that have a landscape that exhibits a variety of uses. Basically all actions, interventions and projects that would be contrary to the purpose of conservation are prohibited. Nature parks are to be considered in zoning and must be represented and considered in local development plans. This is called an acquisition memorandum. They are binding and cannot be waived because of a higher common good.

From the late 1970s onward the aim of Nature Parks is to strive for environmentally sustainable land use. The underlying idea is "protection through usage". Self-evidently, the acceptance and participation of the population in the protection of the cultural landscape and nature is very important. In doing so the nature conservation and the needs of recreation users are linked so that both sides benefit: sustainable tourism with respect for the value of nature and landscape is paramount in today's Nature Parks. It was also in the late 1970s that management authorities were installed, trying to stand up for the best interests of the areas. Since then the regulation of the German Nature Parks are organised as a special purpose association (*Zweckverband*). However, they have been dominated by, for example, agricultural associations who opposed against land use regulations that would endanger their idea of agricultural modernization. Since 1995, following updated legislation and responses to international calls for sustainable development, most notably the Rio summit in 1992, as well as the reunification of West and East Germany, there has been a change in orientation towards much more active involvement of local stakeholders in the management of Nature Parks (Stoll-Kleemann, 2001).

3.3.3 Model landscapes

About 97 Nature Parks now cover about 25 % of Germany's area. They play a forward-looking and important role in the protection of nature, landscape-based recreation and the conservation of Germany's cultural and geological important landscapes. Their contribution is therefore decisive for the identity, preservation and development of the regions. Since the late 1990s there is a growing governmental interest in the conservation and recreational use of Germany's Nature Parks. This attention has to do with a shift to a post-productivist rural policy, as well as with a renaissance of cultural and natural heritage issues, like regional identity. As a result, most Nature Parks are subject of special funding from the federal government. This money is used to cover the purchase of agrarian land, to fund special conservation measures, and as compensation for limitations of existing land use. In addition, money from the state government (Länder) is geared to funding particular conservation contracts with farmers to maintain cultural and natural heritage.

The German federal state currently sees Nature Parks as "model landscapes" with their aim to preserve unique landscapes for and with man and to contribute to a sustainable regional development (Deutscher Bundestag, 2007). Therefore, the Association of German Nature Parks (*Verband Deutsche Naturparke* [VDN]) is supporting Nature Parks in correspondence to their tasks by law in the promotion of an environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism, in the establishment of an ecological land use, which protects and recovers biodiversity and in proceeding regional development, which is maintaining cultural landscapes (VDN, 1995). To widen the possibilities of environmental education for visitors and the local population therefore is another task the Association, together with the help of the different park authorities, takes care of.

In the parks emphasis is being placed on promoting regional agricultural and forestry products and tourism services and in this way encouraging appropriate variants of land use. In addition to nature and landscape conservation, German natural parks also play an important role in preserving local customs, traditional crafts, historical settlement patterns, and regional architecture. Different projects, therefore, attempt to guarantee the economic advantages deriving from rural economic renewal and the advantages of a rediscovered sense of regional identity. The management philosophy of most Nature Parks embraces the peaceful coexistence of nature conservation with sympathetic economic enterprise and sustainable use of natural resources.

4. Landscape conservation and sustainable development

4.1 Converging conservation strategies

As the previous paragraphs shows, the origins, objectives and management of landscape protection systems throughout Western Europe differ significantly (see Table 3). In the Britain the case was, first and foremost, to conserve the most spectacular, wild or geomorphologic valuable landscapes by establishing National Parks. The establishment of National Parks reflected a particular aesthetic tradition, that was influenced by writerly and artistic conventions, and was applied to areas agreed by a relatively like-minded community of campaigners. It also affirmed the notion of British landscape as something which could be framed and separated from its less worthy surroundings. In France the main goal was to

enhance rural development in fragile but interesting cultural or geological landscapes. The establishment of PNRs was influenced by the particular French tradition of territorial planning and affirmed the notion of the landscape as something that could strengthen regional identity. In Germany, at last, Nature Parks were conceptualized as antidote for an urbanizing society longing for leisure space. The establishment of *Naturparke* was inspired by social conservationist thinking, and idealized a rural Germany, which had to be rediscovered ('Heimat neu entdecken').

	Britain	France	Germany
<i>Category</i>	National Parks	Parcs Naturel Régionaux	Naturpark
<i>Objective</i>	Protection of landscape, stimulating outdoor recreation	Conservation of cultural or geological heritage and stimulating of rural economy	Sustainable development of the countryside to protect and enhance nature and valuable landscapes
<i>Number (in 2009)</i>	14	45	97
<i>Area (of total country)</i>	10%	13%	25%
<i>Administrative organisation</i>	Park Authority	Syndicat Mixte	Zweckverband (Special Purpose Association)
<i>Preservation</i>	Development control	Sectoral legislation and cultural history	Landschaftsschutzgebiete (landscape protection areas)
<i>Management</i>	Conservation contracts Zoning of Land Use Protected areas Ecosystems services Branding	Landscape contracts Ecomuseums Education Regional products Architectural restrictions Branding	<i>Wettbewerbe</i> (contests) Conservation contracts Eco-Tourism Regional products and crafts markets Branding
<i>Finance</i>	National government Heritage Lottery National Trust European Funds	Municipalities Regional governments Civil society organisations European Funds	Municipalities Kreise (regional governments) European Funds

Table 3. Protected landscapes (nature parks) in Britain, France and Germany. Source: Janssen et al. (2007)

Although different in (cultural and historical) origin and objective, recent policy proposals for protected landscapes in Britain, France and Germany converge towards a broadened sustainable development perspective. The original (pre-ecological) idea of protected landscapes as synonymous with scenery, farming as a protector rather than industrialiser of the countryside, and a system of enhanced (spatial) planning controls to safeguard the environment became outdated and obsolete. The narrowly preservationist concept, focused on applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of

landscape, gradually evolves into a more inclusive and social view of conservation that links nature and culture, protection and development, top-down planning and bottom-up approaches. It is recognized that designated landscapes are essentially evolving, changing, with new layers continually being superimposed on older ones. This is true for natural change, even more so for change caused by human impact. Human beings have shaped and changed the landscape they live in. The cultural landscape cannot stay the same, as culture means action, experience, experiment, progress, and change.

Since the late 1990s British National Parks, French *Parcs Naturel Régionaux* and German Nature Parks have begun to serve a wider set of social, economic, geological and ecological purposes, including, for instance, addressing quality of life, climate change, conservation of biodiversity, and protecting cultural and geomorphosite heritage. The apparently unbreakable relationship between landscape and visual matters, such as 'scenery' and 'aesthetics', is, therefore, forced open. Obviously, landscape in these modern parks means more than just a scene appealing to the eye. Increasingly, landscape is used as a holistic concept around which a wide array of disciplines can coalesce to explore the integration of human-nature relationships. Furthermore, a shift has taken place in the governance approach of these protected landscapes. Governing of protected landscapes in Britain, France, and Germany more and more relies on networks of interconnected actors from the public, private and voluntary sectors rather than a hierarchy dominated and defined by the central government.

Today's governance of protected landscape designations in Britain, France, and Germany takes place in partnership with those who work and live in the landscapes. Local communities are engaged in the enjoyment, understanding and stewardship of the cultural landscape. Partnerships are set up by the governing park authorities (National Park Authorities, *Syndicat Mixte*, *Zweckverband*) in order to build capacity, especially in the commercial and voluntary sectors, to ensure that in the long-term there is the critical mass of skills and expertise needed to sustain informed conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in protected landscapes. The devolving impulse of the British central government, for instance, has resulted in a growing awareness on the part of the Park Authorities of the potential benefits of action in (regional) partnership with local actors. NGO actors, businesses and private parties are involved in setting up landscape management strategies. Partnerships are seen as the key to successful implementation, with the different Park Authorities acting primarily as an enabler for sustainable (regional) development, undertaking or commissioning work where its skills and expertise, or its national and/or regional remit, will make the critical difference.

4.2. Living models of sustainable use

Throughout western Europe, and most notably in Britain, France and Germany, development of protected landscapes is no longer seen as a threat, to be repulsed by an additional layer of planning bureaucracy or authority. The acceptance of the paradigm of development, of course, is stimulated by a number of trends, such as urbanization and the rapid growth of outdoor leisure, the post-productivism of the rural sector, shifting state-society relations, as well as new insights in conservation science (ecology, geoparks) and spatial planning (multiple-use theories). Infusing all these trends is the emergence of the

sustainable development discourse, popularised in 1980 by the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN et al., 1980), and firmly established in 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. By the close of the twentieth century, all areas of nature and landscape policy are being expected to demonstrate their contribution to more sustainable living.

The re-emergence of landscapes as cultural action arenas for sustainable development is inseparable linked to the dual process of globalisation and regionalisation. In the final quarter of the twentieth century the solidification of the concept of the nation-state and its unwieldy structure has been weakened, and with it the (homogenizing) notions of modernity and universality (Harvey, 1989). Local and regional specificities of space, form and place (territorial distinctiveness) are put forward to counteract the dislocation and lack of meaning in modern society. Contextual forces are to give a sense of place and meaning in a globalizing world. Increasingly cultural landscapes are seen as such a contextual force. After a period of nationalism we observe a renewed interest in the region all over Europe: regional differences and traditions are cherished, the issue of regional identity is widely debated, and new regional movements are emerging (Keating, 1998). Some even speak about the 'rise of regional Europe' (Harvie, 1994). The spatial and material dimension of this 'regional Europe' is symbolised by the manifold European cultural landscapes. The outstanding richness, regional diversity and uniqueness of landscapes form collectively a common European natural and cultural heritage (Pedroli et al., 2007). The existence of specific regional identities, each with its typical landscape heritage, is actively promoted, defended and helped by EU policy, programmes and funds, like the LEADER Rural Development programmes, INTERREG, and networks like the European Geoparks Network, built up with the support of European Union initiatives.

As a result of the emerging sustainability agenda a commitment to maintain and enhance the landscape quality of rural and urban areas is a central theme of several state and European visions of a sustainable countryside. Against this background protected landscapes throughout Europe more and more function as flagships for a new and integrated public policy for rural areas. Since landscape conservation and countryside development are aspects of a single whole, conservation increasingly is seen as an integral part of sustainable management. This is highlighted by the above-mentioned British, French and German protected landscapes (be it National Parks, Nature Reserves, protected landscapes or Geoparks), which, since the 1990s, strive towards a regional integration of agriculture, nature and landscape, thereby overcoming the often-strong sectoral division of countryside, regional and landscape policy.

Already in the 1980s IUCN recognized protected landscapes as "living models of sustainable use" (Lucas, 1992). Recent political commitment to sustainable development on a European level further strengthens the idea of an inclusive approach for protected landscapes (Council for the EU, 2006). The concept of sustainable development encourages policy officials to address the environmental and social as well as economic dimensions of rural areas. Because of the particular origin and nature of protected landscapes, principally the close relationship between landscape and the people connected with it category V protected areas [...] could very well "become pioneers in society's search for more sustainable futures" (Phillips, 2002). Several public policies in Europe have recently

recognized the role of landscape within the framework of sustainable development. The following objectives have accordingly been articulated: regional policy - balanced opportunities for economic development and the provision of services; agricultural policy - compliance with environmental standards, cultural landscape preservation and multi-functionality; transportation policy - assignment of a high priority to railways and public transport; spatial development - rational use of space and the preservation of natural resources; environment and nature conservation - improved quality of the human environment, and the conservation of biodiversity and geomorphologic diversity.

As demonstrated by the European Landscape Convention (ELC) landscapes are more and more recognized "as essential components of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage" (Council of Europe, 2000: 4). The ELC argues that landscape should be valued for reasons of health, education and rural development. The Convention aims to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organize European co-operation on landscape issues. In the light of the perceived acceleration of landscape change, it seeks to "respond to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes and to play an active part in the development of landscapes". Signatories to the Convention undertake to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at protecting, management and planning; to integrate landscape in the wider context of sustainability. By taking into account landscape, culture and nature, biotic and abiotic, the Council of Europe seeks to protect the quality of life and well-being of Europeans from a sustainable development perspective (Council of Europe, 2006).

Despite the ubiquity of 'sustainability' as a concept, within protected landscapes several attempts are made to protect the environment, to promote sound development and to improve the quality of life for people now and in the future. The principles of sustainability, for instance, are applied in a diversity of grassroots projects in order to stabilize and reduce the region's footprint. The intention is not to strive for a zero-growth situation but instead adopt a strategy that develops a mutual compatibility between environmental protection and continuing environmental growth. An interesting question in that regard is to what extent the emerging 'sustainability paradigm', which integrates economic activity with conservation in a sustainable manner, is running the risk of going too far in compromising conservation in favour of developmental interests (Antrop, 2006; Mose, 2007; Janssen, 2009).

5. Concluding remarks

This chapter has highlighted that cultural landscapes are increasingly understood as something not merely to be protected and preserved. The World Heritage Convention and the European Landscape Convention (Council of Europe, 2000, 2006) as well as the new concepts and strategies for nature parks in Britain, France and Germany propose considering cultural landscapes in general, and protected landscapes in particular, also as a force to promote sustainable (regional) development. The notion of development and change is a key component of the concept of sustainable development itself. Indeed, sustainable development not only involves sustaining what has been realised as Brundtland defines, but also sustaining future development (Brundtland, 1987). It means the preservation of opportunities, but also the creation of new resources and opportunities for future generations.

In order to realize sustainable territorial development, the emphasis in protected landscapes is shifting from maintenance to development. As a result, landscape conservation strategies not only protect cultural and natural heritage of cultural landscapes, but also enhance territorial dynamics that strengthen and requalify the (weakened) territorial assets, such as (regional) identity and nature. Sustainability - and thus the challenge for protected landscapes - is increasingly positioned in the character of change itself and not in terms of any optimal state, pattern or blueprint. Common historical roots, special landscape features, typical products, cultural traditions, as well as innovative projects are possible initial points for identity-based processes. In connection with governance arrangements cultural landscapes can be constituted as action arenas for sustainable development. As a result, cultural landscapes are not only public interest goods and services that directly affect the social well-being of individuals but also represent important urban and rural development assets. Cultural landscapes are part of a region's capital stock and base for the development of countryside communities.

Given the limitations of our current institutions to respond to landscape-scale change, landscape governance will require a high degree of collaboration to bridge disparate sectors, to integrate complex institutional layers, and to engage a wide array of actors in the sustainable development of cultural landscapes (Görg, 2007). Since multi-sectoral and multi-level partnerships are essential to an inclusive and participatory approach to landscape conservation, the intention is to stimulate and integrate mutual gains between sectoral interests by a 'conservation through development' approach. By working cooperatively with local and regional stakeholders, local, regional and national governments try to increase regional wealth creation, giving greater importance to rural areas, and creating more acceptance for landscape conservation among the local population and increasing awareness of nature and the environment among visitors.

Building multi-sector and multi-level partnerships for sustainable development of protected landscapes, however, is not an easy task for protected landscape authorities and institutions. Considerable conflict and opposition can easily arise. Most often causes of resistance have less to do with possible economic losses to local livelihoods arising from designation, but rather lie in the manner of consulting and involving local interests. Participation processes are often too late, too formal, and too narrow in compass. In addition, there can also be much miscommunication and misunderstanding between landowners, farmers, businesses and residents on the one hand, and the landscape conservation officials and experts on the other. Governance experiences with protected landscapes in Western Europe, therefore, emphasize the importance of communication skills, and capacity to create consensus among those who live and work in protected landscapes, to reduce scepticism and suspicion regarding the purpose of landscape conservation (Thompson, 2003, 2006; Janssen et al., 2007). It is only via the process of collaboratively acting together that full understanding and co-operation is achieved (Healey, 2007). Involvement and building capacity is key to securing sustainable stewardship of cultural landscapes (Selman, 2001).

We assume that governance for sustainable development of protected landscapes remains a challenging task in the 21st century. In that regard it is gratifying to note that there is an emerging (academic) debate on the influence of protected landscapes on local and regional development (Mose, 2007). Both in the academic debate and in conservation practice

protected landscapes are recognised as keystones for sustainable development initiatives. National parks, Geoparks, eco-museums and landscape parks are unique constellations of 'nature', people, heritage, tourism and culture. These resources are managed with under appreciated pools of drive and expertise. Such areas demonstrate the real meaning of sustainable development, whilst conserving the exceptional natural and cultural heritage. We have attempted to contribute to the emerging (albeit under-theorised) area of protected landscapes within academic discourse by comparing British, French, and German landscape conservation approaches. However, given the large number of protected landscapes in Western Europe, and their increasing responsibilities in wider city and countryside development programmes, we think there is scope for more large-scale and in-depth (comparative) studies. Fortunately, a diverse range of initiatives is currently developed, focusing on a European-wide landscape research and action programme, substantially funded with a strongly integrative perspective. For instance, under the umbrella of UNISCAPE (European Network of Universities for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention) professional networks are created to exchange information and expertise on landscape conservation and development (see: <http://www.uniscape.eu/>). These networks are essential to encourage and establish new and widely-shared approaches (including theories, concepts and methods) that will support more integrated, sustainable and socially-relevant landscape research as well as landscape management practices.

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