

AN ECOLOGY OF URBAN FORM: THE IMPERATIVE OF THE BIOREGION

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1 ABSTRACT

Landscape architecture has two areas significant to focus on sustainability, and urbanization, and global cities: landscape planning, i.e., bioregional planning (bioregionalism) and urban design. Compared with urban planning and architecture, landscape architecture's status regarding bioregionalism and urban design has diminished. Bioregionalism and urban design are reconsidered vis-à-vis sustainable urban form, globalization, and landscape architecture's potential role. Landscape architecture's contribution to bioregionalism was established in Olmsted's Yosemite Valley plan and more recently the 1960s environmental movement exemplified by luminaries in the profession, e.g., McHarg, Lyle, Steinitz. Characterizing landscape architecture's "generalist" underpinnings, embracing works of Powell, Marsh, Pinchot as well as those of Mumford, Lynch, Berry, Wilson, and Relph is also significant. Landscape architecture's bona fides in urban design date to urban planning being largely conducted by landscape architects in the 19th century including Nolen, Peets, Manning, Kessler, the Olmsteds, and Wright. Landscape architecture's practice of regional planning and urban design has diminished for two reasons. First, planning regionally is difficult to implement, although this is changing. Second, New Urbanism and Smart Growth have displaced landscape architecture. Nevertheless, landscape architecture is poised for leadership in a number of areas – to realize an "ecological tapestry of urban form" in a global era. Sustainable practices of the land-water nexus while addressing carbon emissions are essential. Ecology's natural systems model within bioregions dictates broadly defining urban form. Interrelationships within watersheds are paramount, e.g., regarding carbon and hydrological cycles as complex bounded systems, conservation of areas of ecological value, multinuclear and multimodal settlement, and urban agriculture.

1.1 Keywords

Regionalism, Globalization, Urban Design, Urban Form